

COMMISSIONER OF POLITICAL PRACTICES

MISSION STATEMENT

To monitor and to enforce, in a fair and impartial manner, campaign practices and campaign finance disclosure, lobbying disclosure, business interest disclosure of statewide and state district candidates, elected state officials, and state department directors, ethical standards of conduct for legislators, public officers, and state employees, and to investigate legitimate complaints that arise concerning any of the foregoing.

FY 24 & FY 25 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

(Issued January 2024)

GOAL 1: INCREASE TRANSPARENCY

GOAL 1 OBJECTIVES & STATUS

<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The goal is to provide efficient public access to candidate & committee reports, lobbyist reports, COPP decisions and advisory opinions. Provide access to candidate and committee education and resource materials for proper and timely reporting. The COPP is responsible for both the Campaign Electronic Reporting System (CERS) and the Principal and Lobbyist Online Reporting System (PLORS) applications. Objectives are:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Maintain and update CERS and PLORS database2. Maintain and update COPP website and resources	Target: 6/25; ongoing
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GOAL 2: PROPER STAFFING LEVELS and EDUCATION

GOAL 2 OBJECTIVES & STATUS

<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The goal and objective to properly train staff on those agency tasks that are essential and required<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. COPP Attorney position in base budget (Achieved and Hired)2. Present budget and related activities to OBPP in a timely manner as required.3. Seek appropriate funding from 2025 Legislature	Target: 6/25; ongoing

GOAL 3: CANDIDATE and COMMITTEE EDUCATION

GOAL 3 OBJECTIVES & STATUS

<p>The goal and objective to maintain and update an education and training program for all candidates and candidate and committee treasurers for the proper and timely reporting that meet Montana campaign finance law. Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Use COPP website, social media, and media channels to better communicate resources and answer questions2. Modify position description and hire Outreach/Training Specialist	Target: 6/25; ongoing

GOAL 4: BRING CURRENT ADMINISTRATIVE RESOLUTION CAMPAIGN PRACTICE DECISIONS

GOAL 4 OBJECTIVES & STATUS

<p>▪ The goal is to settle or advance to litigation outstanding sufficiency Decisions. The COPP must next resolve any such sufficiency Decision by settlement or advance the Decision to judicial enforcement where settlement may not be possible. There is a lag time inherent in the enforcement process (sufficiency Decisions are sent to and returned by a county attorney office) such that a sufficiency Decision is not “ripe” for settlement for about two months following the date of the Decision. The objectives are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Administratively resolve new sufficiency Decisions within eight months of the date of the Decision.2. Establish systematic and fair approach between complaint and inspection process when violations are discovered.	Target: 6/25; ongoing
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GOAL 5: WORK ON COPP RESPONSIBILITIES OTHER THAN CAMPAIGN FINANCE

GOAL 5 OBJECTIVES & STATUS

<p>▪ The goal is to increase the amount and focus of the work that the COPP is conducting in the areas of ethics and lobbying activity. Lobbying and ethics have not received adequate attention as the COPP’s resources (staff and funds) have been applied to deal with the markedly increased workload on campaign finance issues. The objectives are:</p>	Target: 6/25; ongoing
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<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and update ethics and lobbying regulations. 2. Develop and publish manuals for reporting of lobbying expenses. 3. Review and define COPP functions in registration of lobbyists and enforcement of lobbying and ethics complaints. 4. Update ethics laws to reflect recent court decisions 5. Update lobbyist code of conduct and standards for licensure review 	
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GOAL 6: DISCUSS ROLE OF COPP

GOAL 6 OBJECTIVES & STATUS

<p>The COPP has significant responsibilities in regard to campaign finance, ethics, and lobbying. Those responsibilities include the implicit responsibility of making its work transparent for access by the press and public. The COPP needs certain additional resources necessary to fulfill those responsibilities. A discussion needs to occur between the COPP and policy makers as to whether or not those needed resources should be provided the COPP. The objectives are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussion of the need for an in-house accountant, given the COPP's inspection, exam and enforcement responsibilities. 2. Discussion of the need for enhancement of the CERS system to allow for further transparency, both in access and reporting (including the addition of lobbyist reports in such as system) 3. Continue to work with the Legislature on issues such as sexual harassment, reporting of such complaints, and a process to investigate and make determinations. 4. The 2023 Legislature increased COPP responsibility with respect to judicial ethics where judicial acts are not involved. 5. Ensure the COPP has the tools and budget necessary to properly provide guidance and resources required to meet their statutory obligation to make referral, investigate, and report thereof credible election and voter fraud allegations and related issues. 	<p>Target: 6/25; ongoing</p>
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