


THE VOICE OF ETHICS

A Publication of the Ohio Ethics Commission

2024 Quarter 1



People don't notice
whether it's winter or summer
when they're happy.

- *Anton Chekhov*

50 Years of Ohio Ethics Law

This year, the Ethics Commission is commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Ohio Ethics Law, the majority of which became effective on January 1, 1974. In fact, Ohio was one of the earliest states to pass laws governing conflicts of interest in public service. As a result, even though we'll review annual statistics from 2023 in this newsletter, we can't neglect to first travel a bit further back in time...to 1974!

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF 1974!

Which film won the Oscar for Best Picture in 1974?

- A.) Save the Tiger
- B.) The Sting
- C.) The Way We Were

Which film contained the Oscar winning Best Song of 1974?

- A.) Save the Tiger
- B. The Sting
- C.) The Way We Were

What was the cost of one dozen eggs in 1974?

- A.) 45 cents
- B.) 15 cents
- C.) One dollar

(Answers at the end of this newsletter)

Reflecting on 2023

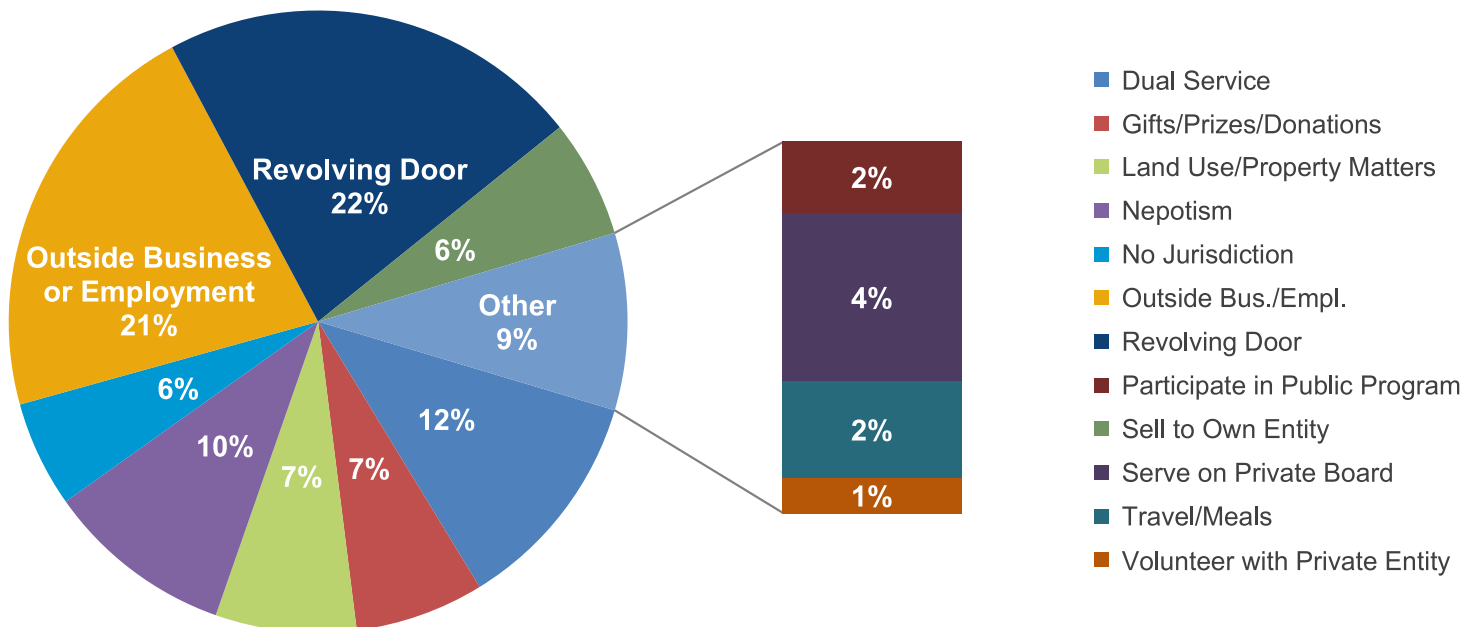
As we tackle a new year with gusto and integrity, we also want to take a moment to reflect on the work of the Ethics Commission in the past year. You'll find some of the highlights below, but please know there is so much information on [our website](#) for you to peruse and explore!

Advisory Opinions

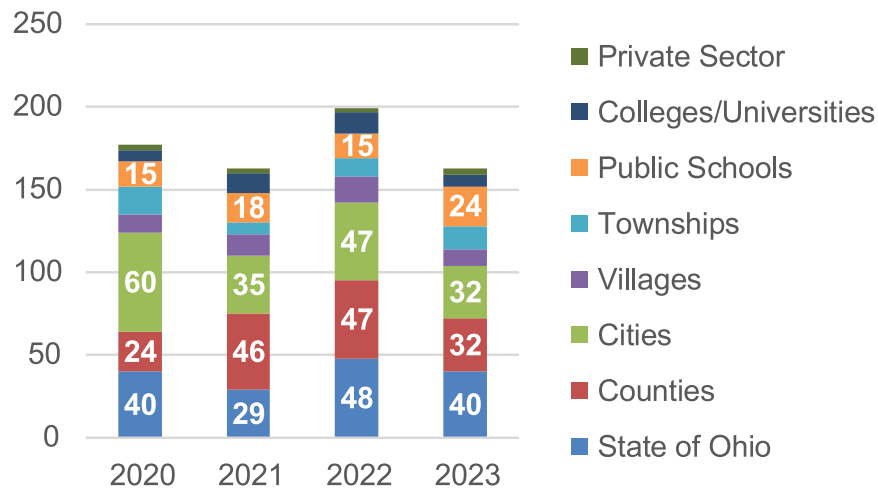
The Ethics Commission is statutorily authorized to provide guidance regarding the Ohio Ethics Law to assist public employees and officials and in understanding and complying with the law. The Commission's Advisory section helps to protect those regulated by that statute and taxpayers from wrongdoing in government. Our Advisory Attorneys had a productive 2023 as outlined below, including responding to 170 written requests from 48 Ohio counties and replying to thousands of emails and telephone inquiries.

Advice was provided to both state and local government officials and employees. Common issues addressed by the Advisory Attorneys included questions regarding general conflicts of interest, dual public service, gifts, prizes, and donations. Notably last year, the Commission issued [Advisory Opinion 2023-01](#) which addresses questions regarding donations to governmental entities.

2023 Opinions Issued by Topic



2023 Opinions Issued by Entity Type



Should you ever have questions under the Ohio Ethics Law, please don't hesitate to contact us or visit the [Advice page](#) of the Commission's website.

Ethics Education

The Commission's Education and Training program provides information about the Ethics Law in readily available and easy-to-understand formats. Our toolkit includes in-person speeches, live webinars, recorded on-demand classes Continuing Legal Education classes, fact sheets, and newsletters. In 2023, the Commission conducted 167 live trainings to nearly 15,000 people while thousands more took advantage of our on-demand online training options.

Webinars

I always enjoy the Ethics Commission's webinars. The quick pace, use of themes, a little humor, along with poll questions always help me stay engaged.

In-Person Sessions

Everyone truly benefits from the knowledge, effort, and fun you place in your presentations. Who knew Ethics training could be so fun?!

E-Course

Your e-training is a great public service...it is as good as it could possibly be...all the work you do is not only not in vain, but incredibly beneficial.

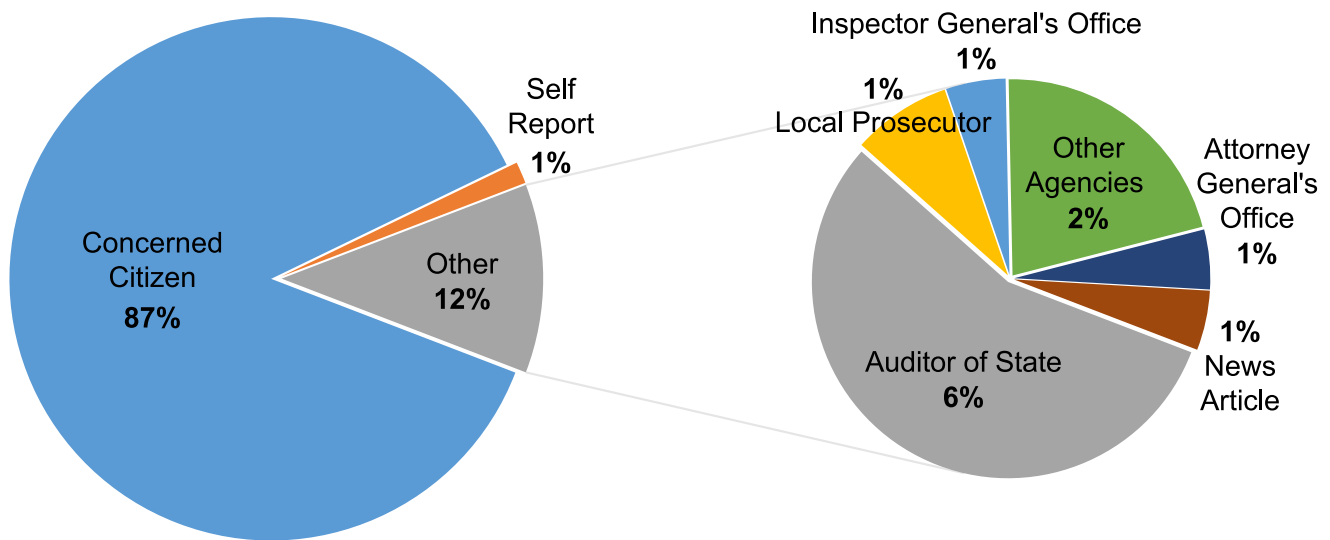
For information on training opportunities in 2024, check out our [website training page](#) or email susan.willeke@ethics.ohio.gov.

Investigations

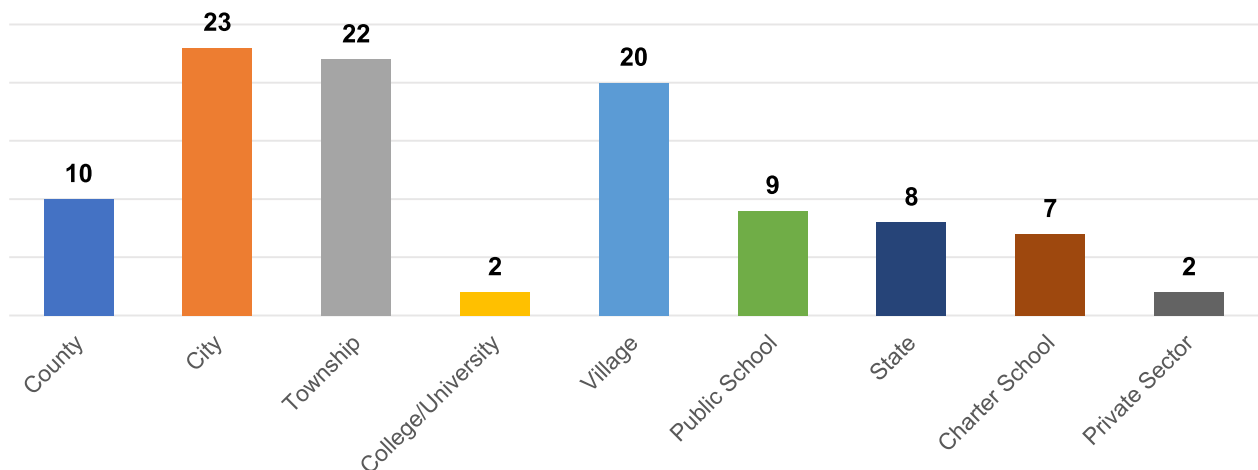
Another important statutory duty of the Ohio Ethics Commission is investigating alleged violations of the Ethics Law. The Commission's Investigative team conducts professional and confidential investigations and refers cases supported by substantial evidence for prosecution or alternative resolution.

In 2023, Investigative Staff responded to more than 1,200 telephone investigative inquiries and processed hundreds of information requests or allegations of wrongdoing. In fact, the investigative team has reached its highest call volume within the last four years.

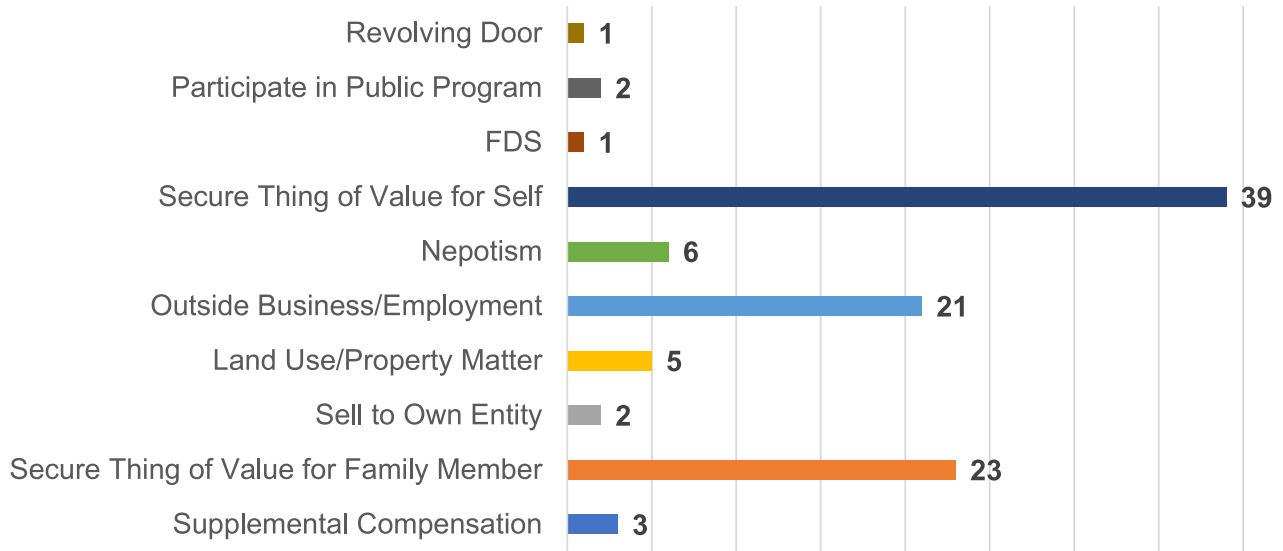
523 Documented Allegations Received in 2023



All Active Investigations by Entity Involved



All Active Investigations by Topics



For more information on the Ethics Commission’s investigative process or information on speaking with a Special Investigator, check out the [Investigation page](#) of our website!

Financial Disclosure

Another statutory responsibility of the Ohio Ethics Commission is administering the financial disclosure program. Financial disclosure statements (FDS) are an important step in assisting some public servants, such as certain elected officials and high-ranking state employees, in identifying potential conflicts of interest and providing transparency to Ohio citizens.

Our FDS team was busy in 2023 as the Commission received nearly 9,000 statements with 98 percent of these filers using the Commission’s convenient and highly professional online filing system.

If you are new to financial disclosure filing or want additional information regarding this program, please visit the [Financial Disclosure page](#) of the Commission’s web site or check out our [FDS FAQ!](#)



2024 Ohio Ethics Law Training Options

The Ohio Ethics Commission strives to provide training on the Ohio Ethics Law that is convenient, informative, and even entertaining! We have numerous options so learners can choose the training path that works best for personal schedules and learning styles. See below for brief descriptions or open the attached document for more details.

- Do you prefer training at your time and location convenience? Check out our e-course: "[The Ohio Ethics Law 2024: 50 Years of Promoting Governmental Ethics](#)"
- Do you like a live interactive training, but without leaving your office or home? Try one of our 2024 [Webinars](#)! Options includes an introductory class, a deeper study, or a customized webinar for your office!
- If you believe electronics just can't replace the dynamics of an in-person session, reach out to me to discuss the possibility of scheduling a session at your public office!
- And we haven't forgotten our attorney friends! Our e-course and webinars are approved for one hour of general CLE. If you are looking for the required 2.5 attorney conduct hours, [register](#) for either a virtual or in-person option in 2024.

We look forward to working with you in 2024 to meet all your training needs. Questions? Don't hesitate to contact susan.willeke@ethics.ohio.gov!

1974 Quiz Answers!

1. Starring Paul Newman and Robert Redford, The Sting was one of the most popular movies of the 1970s, nominated for ten Academy Awards and winning seven.
2. "Memories...light the corners of my mind..." Barbra Streisand's haunting voice from this Oscar winning song may well reverberate through your mind for the rest of the day!
3. One dozen eggs retailed for approximately 45 cents in 1974 – slightly different today, yes?



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