



April 24, 2025

MEMORANDUM

TO: Ingrid S. Watson, Chair
Government, Operations, & Fiscal Policy (GOFP) Committee

THRU: Joseph R. Hamlin 
Director of Budget and Policy Analysis

FROM: Alex Hirtle 
Legislative Budget & Policy Analyst

RE: Office of Ethics and Accountability
Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Review

Budget Overview

The FY 2026 Proposed Budget for the Office of Ethics and Accountability is \$1,203,500. This is an increase of \$59,300, or 5.2% above the FY 2025 Approved Budget. The increase is due to increased costs from mandated salary requirements, technology cost allocation, and fringe benefit costs.

Budget Comparison - General Fund

Approved Fiscal Year 2025 to Proposed Fiscal Year 2026

Category	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Budget Approved	FY 2025 Estimated	% Change - Est vs App	FY 2026 Proposed	\$ Change	% Change
Compensation	\$ 712,949	\$ 747,800	\$ 737,300	-1.4%	\$ 797,000	\$ 49,200	6.6%
Fringe Benefits	230,879	270,000	244,000	-9.6%	273,000	3,000	1.1%
Operating Expenses	141,533	126,400	124,100	-1.8%	133,500	7,100	5.6%
Total	\$ 1,085,361	\$ 1,144,200	\$ 1,105,400	-3.4%	\$ 1,203,500	\$ 59,300	5.2%

Authorized Staffing Count - General Fund				
	FY 2025 Approved	FY 2026 Proposed	Change Amount	Percentage Change
Full-Time	6	6	0	0.0%
Total	6	6	0	0.0%

Staffing Changes and Compensation

- General Funds are provided for six (6) full-time positions – an Executive Director, Attorney, Investigator, Administrative Aide, Administrative Specialist, and a Compliance Specialist. FY 2026 proposed staffing remains unchanged compared to FY 2025.
- The Office reported one vacancy in its complement of staff. There has been an attrition rate (to date) for FY 2025 of 16.7%.
- FY 2026 Compensation expenditures are proposed to increase by \$49,200, or 6.6% due to the annualization of FY 2025 salaries and anticipated 2026 salary adjustments.

Fringe Benefits

- FY 2026 fringe benefit expenditures are proposed to increase by \$3,000, or 6.6%, as a result of alignment with the projected increased compensation costs.
- A five-year trend analysis of fringe benefit expenditures is included below.

	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Estimated	FY 2026 Proposed
Fringe Benefit Expenditures	\$ 195,165	\$ 190,646	\$ 230,879	\$ 244,000	\$ 273,000
As a % of Compensation	29.4%	31.0%	32.4%	33.1%	34.3%

Operating Expenses

- FY 2026 operating expenses are proposed at \$133,500 and are comprised of the following major items:
 - Office Automation \$78,500
 - General & Administrative 36,400
 - Telephone 7,500
 - Training 5,000
- Overall, operating expenses will increase \$7,100 from the approved FY 2025 level. The accompanying table compares the FY 2026 Proposed Budget operating expenditures with the FY 2025 Approved Budget operating expenditures. In two (2) categories, the FY 2026

Proposed Budget increases planned spending over the FY 2025 level. In one (1) of the categories, the FY 2026 Proposed Budget reduces planned spending from the FY 2025 budget. In six (6) of the categories, the FY 2026 Proposed Budget level remains unchanged compared to the FY 2025 approved level.

Operating Objects	FY 2025 Budget	FY 2026 Proposed	FY 2025 - FY 2026	
			\$ Change	% Change
Office Automation	\$ 69,200	\$ 78,500	\$ 9,300	13.4%
Printing	300	300	-	0.0%
Telephone	7,500	7,500	-	0.0%
Operating Contracts	34,900	36,400	1,500	4.3%
General Office Supplies	8,000	4,300	(3,700)	46.3%
Membership Fees	500	500	-	0.0%
Training	5,000	5,000	-	0.0%
Mileage Reimbursement	500	500	-	0.0%
Miscellaneous	500	500	-	0.0%
TOTAL	\$ 126,400	\$ 133,500	\$7,100	5.6%

** OMB consolidated some line items, and confirmed FY25 GOFP Budget Report Proposed Budget did not agree with Approved Budget. Figures in this chart reflect OMB's updated data, per OMB Budget Analyst April 2nd & 3rd emails.*

- Increases between the FY 2026 Proposed Budget and the FY 2025 Approved Budget include Office Automation and Operating Contracts, mainly due to OIT automation increases and cost increases with contracts due to inflation.
- The notable decrease for FY 2026 from FY 2025 is General Office Supplies, due to decrease in staff supplies. A \$3,700 decrease is proposed.

Highlights

- The Office of Ethics and Accountability provides enforcement of the Prince George's County Code of Ethics, to ensure the ethical conduct of individuals who serve in County Government.
- Core services of the Office include administering public ethics laws, providing ethics training and advice to County employees, reviewing financial disclosure and lobbying records, investigating alleged ethical violations, providing administrative support to the County's Board of Ethics, and providing analysis and recommendations to the Executive and Legislative Branches.

- The Board of Ethics is a five-member board established to administer the County's Code of Ethics. Members of the Board are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the Council. The current Board members are as follows:
 - Charlene Gallion, Member 2nd Term Expired 12/1/2024 - Holdover
 - Melanie Barr-Brook, Member 1st Term Expired 12/23/2023 - Holdover
 - Kiara Hunt, Member 1st Term, Expires 12/1/2026
 - Jason Papanikolas, Member 1st Term, Expires 12/1/2027
- The Board currently has two "holdover" appointments, and has one vacancy. A new appointment is expected later in the calendar year.
- The Office reported the following key accomplishments for FY 2025:
 - Processed approximately 1,200 Financial Disclosure Statements filed for the calendar year 2023, the last year with complete statements. Of those, over 97% are processed via the use of the OEA Web Portal that was deployed in April 2016 to replace the extensive paper-based collection previously in place.
 - Expected to process 100% of lobbyist registrants by the use of its OEA Web Portal. OEA will conduct a review of registrations and annual reports of registered lobbyists for omissions and errors in reporting. In the calendar year 2023, OEA processed 384 annual reports from 84 total registered lobbyists.
 - Continued to meet one of its principal objectives of global ethics education of officials and employees. OEA continues to collaborate with the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) to offer mandatory ethics training and resources to the County's workforce of more than 6,000 officials and employees.
 - Processed requests for investigations, legal reviews, advisory opinions, ethics advice, information provision and financial disclosure fee waivers - largely received electronically. The office continues to see growth with its investigations, lobbying in the County, and public complaints. There has been an increase in cases since its establishment in 2014.
 - Continued to expand the online payment system for late fees and fines from designated filers of Financial Disclosure Statements and lobbyists. This electronic payment enhancement continues to provide convenience to those designated filers and lobbyists, who have been assessed fees for filing their disclosure statements and reports after the filing dates mandated by the County's Ethics Code.
 - Continued its outreach functions, including attending Bowiefest, National Night Out, and Food and Friends in late FY2024 and FY2025.

- The Office reports its top priority for FY 2026 is to sustain and effectively administer the County's electronic filing/case system that allows Prince Georgians, County Government employees, and elected/appointed officials 24/7/365 access to online filing of complaints and required financial disclosure statements and lobbyist registrations/annual reports and efficiently investigate all complaints in accordance with applicable laws to ensure timely responses, analysis, reporting and recommendations to management.