

2024 ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION

The 2024 annual report is mandated by §7-2-104 of the Public Ethics Law and provides a summary of the work conducted by the ethics commission during the calendar year just ended. This and other information about the commission is also available on its website. A copy of this report is also available in print upon request. The information provided in this report refers to the calendar year 2024, unless otherwise indicated.

2024 MEMBERS

Name	Party	Dates of Appointment and Reappointment	Date of Term Expiration
Dale P. Kelberman Chair	Democrat	May 1, 2023 June 3, 2019	April 30, 2027 April 30, 2023
Daniel J. Semick	Democrat	May 1, 2024 May 11, 2020	April 30, 2028 April 30, 2024
Robert J. Mansfield	Republican	January 19, 2021	April 30, 2024
Solon Webb	Unaffiliated	May 20, 2024 October 6, 2021	April 30, 2028 April 30, 2024
Donna L. Rober	Unaffiliated	June 5, 2023	April 30, 2027
Amy Thomas	Democrat	June 5, 2023	April 30, 2027
Brian M. Conrad	Republican	November 6, 2023	April 30, 2025

The commission's staff includes Michael S. Botsaris, Esq., Executive Director and General Counsel, and Gina Scerbo, the commission secretary. Ms. Scerbo is a part-time employee.

In 2024 the commission conducted a majority of its business via email, conference calls and Zoom meetings. It met on a virtual meeting at the call of its Chairman on August 12, 2024.

2024 UPDATE INFORMATION:

INQUIRIES AND ADVISORY OPINIONS

The commission received **46** ethics inquiries in 2024 and issued 2 formal written (emailed) advisory opinions. In addition, the commission’s staff handled numerous lobbying, financial disclosure, and other types of general questions and inquiries. (Inquiries from lobbyists and other filers are not numbered or summarized unless they result in an administrative decision from the ethics commission.) The sources and primary issues raised in these inquiries were:

TOTAL INQUIRIES:

Employees	20
Appointed Officials	11
Elected Officials	5
Citizens	2
Covered Volunteers	5
Lobbyists	0
Anonymous	2
Outside Agency	1
Other	0

The primary issue raised in these inquiries breakdown as follows:

Boards/Commissions	2
Gifts	6
Prestige of office	4
Secondary employment	7
Non-participation	0
Conflict disclosure	13
Asst/Representation	5
Lobbying	0
Financial Disclosure	2
Post-employment	1
Political Activity	5
Other	1

Copies of published Advisory Opinions are available on the commission’s website.

COMPLAINTS

The commission did not receive any formal written complaints of ethics violations in 2024.

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENTS

The commission is charged with the responsibility of reviewing and making available for public inspection, each financial disclosure (FDS) and conflict of interest (COI) statement received from required County employees, elected officials, candidates for elected office, compensated and uncompensated board members, and covered volunteers. Each statement is reviewed for completeness, accuracy, and for potential conflicts of interest. In 2024, the commission received 259 disclosure statements as follows:

Regular employees and covered volunteers	259
Candidates	0

Each statement of covered filers was reviewed for completeness and potential conflicts as required by law and employee filers were directed to correct any omissions or deficiencies. All disclosure statements, including corrections and additions, are available for inspection and copying with advance notice at the commission’s office as required by law. There were no late filing fees assessed in 2024.

There were 8 requests to examine/copy 8 separate disclosure filings. As required by law, all filers whose statements were examined were notified of that fact in writing and any redactions required by law were made prior to producing the records for examination. No copying charges were collected in 2024.

LOBBYING

The commission received 119 lobbying registrations from 48 lobbyists. Lobbying registrations, employer authorizations, and activity reports are public documents. The ethics commission staff received, reviewed, and compiled the statistics on 201 bi-annual activity reports. There were no late filing fees assessed. The following information summarizes the compensation and expenditures reported by registered lobbyists in 2024:

Compensation paid to lobbyists	\$134,280.24
Office expenses in addition to compensation.....	0.00
Professional and technical research and assistance	0.00
Publications or letter writing campaigns	0.00
Witnesses.....	0.00
Meals and beverages for county employees and their immediate families.....	48.00
Special events (parties, dinners, athletic events,	

entertainment, and other functions)	0.00
Food, lodging, or other expenses at a conference or meeting	0.00
Other gifts.....	0.00
Miscellaneous expenses.....	0.00

EDUCATION

2024 On-line Training Completed - 947 Employees and 92 Board and Commission Members.

2024 In-class Training Completed - 37 Dept. of Public Works employees

Training includes the use of an online multimedia training course as well as printed hand-outs and copies of an employee brochure summarizing the ethics law’s conflicts of interest provisions. The on-line Ethics Training Course allows everyone to satisfy the mandatory ethics training requirements, at their convenience, on-line. The training course takes about an hour to complete and consists of several chapters with a few questions at the end of each chapter. Upon successful completion (score of 80% or better) employees are able to print out a Certificate of Completion. The commission also maintains an email list of County employees who successfully complete the training. Training is required by law for all employees, board and commission members, and elected officials, within 60 days of hire, appointment or taking office.

The ethics commission provides copies of the brochure, *What employees need to know about the Public Ethics Law* to the Office of Personnel and other departments and agencies upon request. The brochure is available on-line on the Ethics Commission website at <https://live-aacounty.pantheonsite.io/sites/default/files/2023-03/employee-ethics-brochure.pdf>.

The commission also updates and publishes two other brochures: *What You Need to Know about the Public Ethics Law- Lobbyists* and *What You Need to Know about the Public Ethics Law- Vendors and Contractors*. Both brochures are available at the ethics commission’s office and are distributed freely upon request.

NEW FORMS

No new ethics forms were created in 2024.

BUDGET

Saving money while performing the duties assigned to the commission by the Anne Arundel County Charter has always been a priority. Use of email has largely replaced paper - the commission sends all notifications and disclosure forms to County employees by email in lieu of first-class mail. The commission also requests all disclosure filers (covered volunteers and lobbyists) to accept email notifications and to access all forms via the commission’s website.

Many of these filers have agreed to accept email only notifications. The anticipated budget for FY2026 is unchanged.

RECENT ETHICS LAW CHANGES

Amendment to Section 7-6-101 of the Ethics Code: Persons required to file statements was amended. The list was amended to an alphabetic listing of positions and added Administrative Officer to the County Council; Assistant Administrative Officer to the County Council and Legislative Counsel to the County Council as disclosure filers. Effective date: 8/9/24.

CONCLUSION

The commission schedules its regular meetings for the second Monday of each month at 4:00 p.m. in the conference room at the commission's office on an "as needed or as requested basis". Decisions on whether a physical meeting is called is made by the commission's Chairman. Any citizen or employee is welcome to attend the open session of the meeting or make an appointment to address the commission concerning any ethics issue. Much of the commission's work is done by email, telephone conference and Zoom meetings. Contingent meetings are also scheduled for specific dates, but are only held if specially called by the Chairman. The dates of all scheduled and contingent meetings are available on the ethics commission's website.

Questions or comments about this report are welcome and may be mailed, emailed, or faxed to the ethics commission.

Respectfully submitted on January 20, 2025 by:

Anne Arundel County Ethics Commission:

Michael S. Botsaris, Esq., Executive Director
Gina Scerbo, Secretary
Dale P. Kelberman, Chair
Daniel J. Semick, Member
Solon Webb, Member
Donna L. Rober, Member
Amy Thomas, Member
Brian M. Conrad, Member