

# North Dakota Ethics Commission Report

Testimony presented by

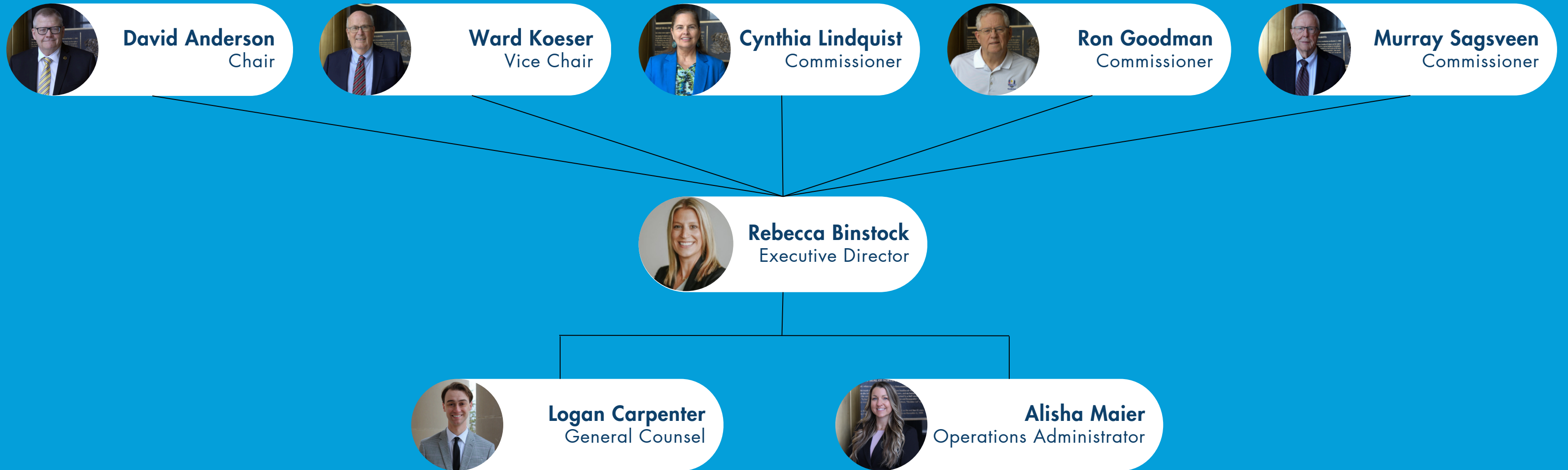
Executive Director Rebecca Binstock

Senate Appropriations - Human Services Division

January 14, 2025



# Organizational Chart

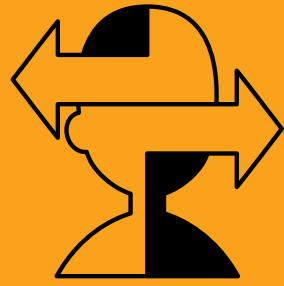


# Strategic Initiatives

To fulfill its constitutional duties and meet its mission, the Commission has adopted five (5) strategic initiatives.

- 1. Education & Outreach**
- 2. Relationships & Communication**
- 3. Rules Review & Creation**
- 4. Positive Work Culture**
- 5. Meaningful Enforcement**

**A Historical  
Exploration of  
Ethical Conflicts**



**A Practical  
Application of  
Conflict Rules**



**Navigating the  
Complaint Process**



**Lobbyist Gifting,  
Naughty or Nice?**



**28  
Education Sessions  
1,000  
North Dakotans**



# Relationships & Communication

**North Dakota Ethics Commission**  
100 followers  
ETHICS COMMISSION  
Strengthening the confidence of the citizens of North Dakota in their Government by ensuring and promoting transparency and accountability.

**FREQUENTLY ASKED Questions**

**Q:** Does the Ethics Commission have a flow chart demonstrating the six-step process to disclose potential conflicts of interest?

**A:** Yes, the Ethics Commission created a flow chart walking through the disclosure process. It is available on the Commission's website.

[www.ethicscommission.nd.gov/conflicts-interest](http://www.ethicscommission.nd.gov/conflicts-interest)

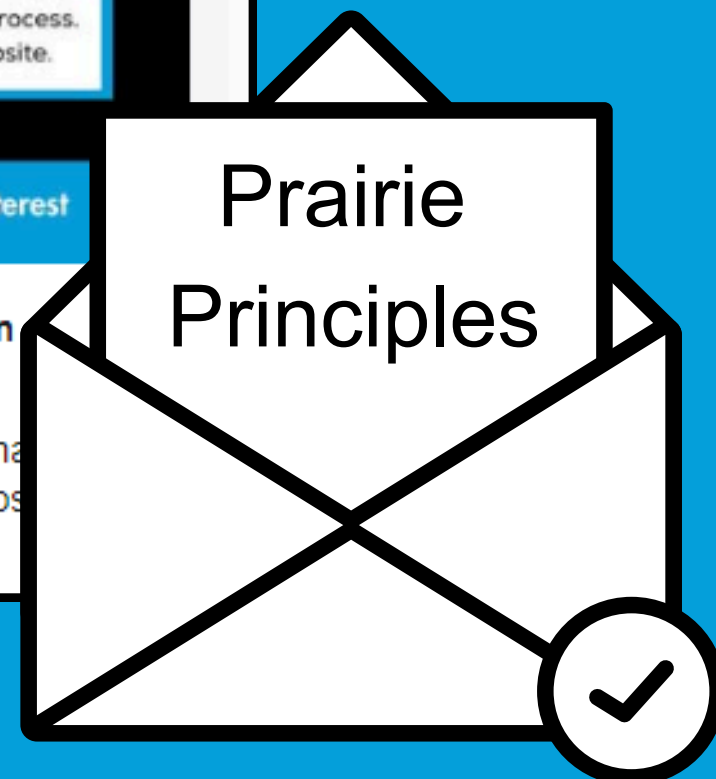
**North Dakota Ethics Commission**  
about a month ago

Does the Ethics Commission have a flow chart demonstrating the six-step process to disclose potential conflicts of interest?

*Who?* **HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ETHICS COMMISSION?** *Why?*

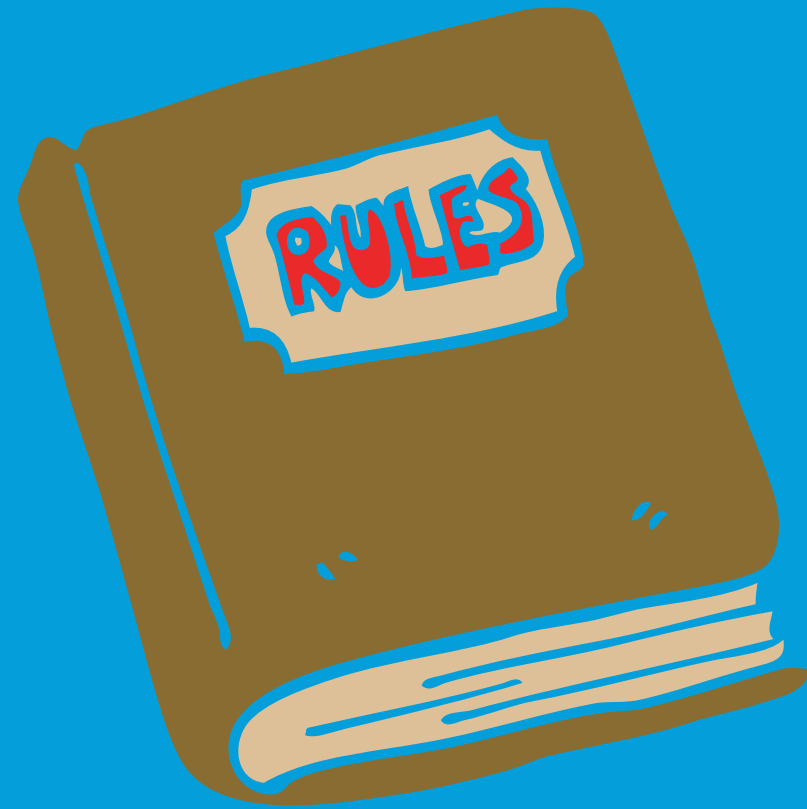
*Where?* *What?*

*See our FAQs!*



Quarterly Newsletter  
Distribution Lists  
Facebook & YouTube  
Website Overhaul

# Rules Review & Creation



The Complaint Process

Lobbyist Gifts

Appearance of Bias

Conflicts of Interest

# Positive Work Culture



Community Engagement

Staff positions filled from quality applicant pools

Executive Assistant ➡ Operations Administrator



Strong applicants to serve as commissioners

UND Law Legislative Intern

No vacant positions



# Activity Levels



*(as of December 31, 2024)*



# Activity Levels

Level of Activity - Statistical Data											
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total				
Advisory Opinion Requests	0	0	0	2	3	3	8				
Complaints	2	3	9	14	15	41	84				
General Conflict Disclosures	0	0	0	0	6	16	22				
Meeting Notices	0	0	52	132	112	151	447				
Quasi-Judicial Disclosures	0	0	0	8	6	30	44				
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>605</b>				
Meetings											
Public Administrative Hearings	0	2	1	2	0	2	7				
Regular Meetings	3	10	8	12	10	12	55				
Special Meetings	2	0	0	5	12	3	22				
<b>Total All Meetings</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>84</b>				

*(as of December 31, 2024)*

# Complaint Resolutions

Year	Total Complaints Received	Summarily Dismissed		Informally Resolved		Pending	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
2019	2	2	100%	0	0%	0	0%
2020	3	3	100%	0	0%	0	0%
2021	9	9	100%	0	0%	0	0%
2022	14	5	36%	1	7%	8	57%
2023	15	11	73%	1	7%	3	20%
2024	41	21	51%	0	0%	20	49%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>37%</b>

Note: This table categorizes resolution by the year in which the complaint was filed and does not necessarily reflect the year in which the resolution occurred.

# 2023-2025 Budget Overview

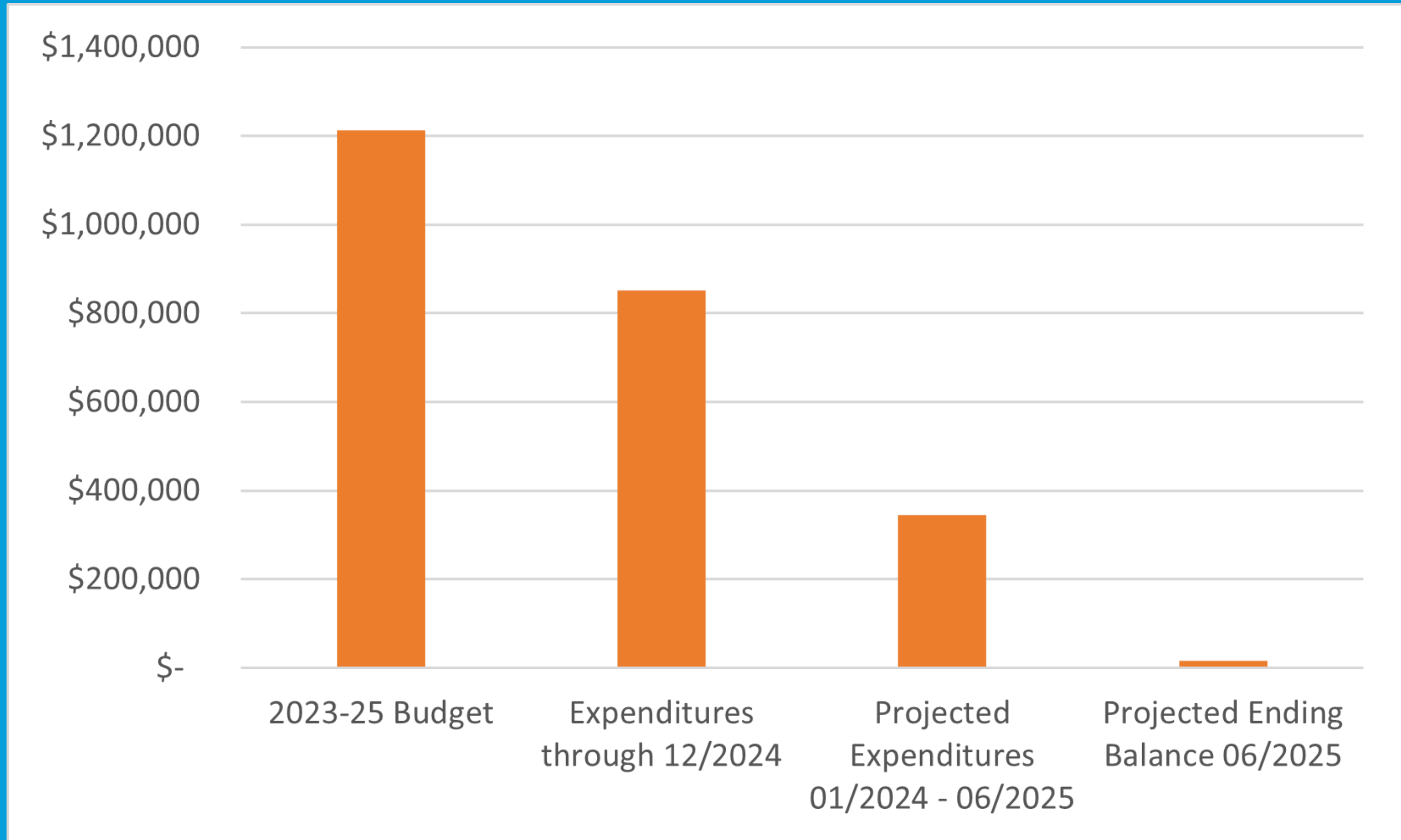
- **2023-2025 Legislative Appropriation (SB 2024) = \$1,138,242**

## Additional Appropriations:

- FTE Funding Pool (SB 2015 Section 22) = + \$60,798
- Employer Retirement Contribution Pool (SB 2015 Section 23) = + \$1,957
- State Government Student Internship Program Spending Authority = + \$12,472

- 
- **2023-2025 Available Appropriations = \$1,213,489**

# 2023 - 2025 Budget Status



# 2025-2027 Budget Request

- **OMB Adjusted Base Budget = \$1,121,994**
    - Education & Communications Administrator + \$278,922
    - Case Management System + \$195,000
    - Rules Implementation + \$50,000
    - Additional Professional Fees + \$50,000
    - Commissioner and Temporary Salaries + \$43,403
    - Workload Increases + \$32,542
    - Additional IT Software and Subscriptions + \$19,151
    - Increased Travel Expenses + \$7,760
    - Furniture + \$2,348
- 

- **2025 - 2027 Appropriations Request = \$1,801,120**

# Education & Communication Administrator

FTE position will develop & implement the Commission's preventative, educational initiatives.

- Salary = **\$184,320**
- Benefits = **\$ 78,312**
- IT Costs = **\$ 10,979**
- Office Equipment = **\$ 2,599**
- Travel = **\$ 2,712**

**Total: + \$278,922**

# Case Management System

Due to steadily increasing filings, file and case management need to be automated and managed through a platform.

- One-Time Funding = **\$135,000**
  - Ongoing Maintenance = **\$ 60,000**
- Total: + \$195,000**

# Rules Implementation Costs

For the Commission, rules are adopted pursuant to its independent, constitutional authority.

There is currently no funds to implement rules beyond publication of notices, but they likely will be needed in the future as the Commission adopts rules.

*\*\* Funds earmarked for this purpose only. \*\**

**Total: + \$50,000**



# Commissioner & Temporary Salaries

Beginning in 2025, the Commission will collaborate with the UND School of Law to hire summer and legislative legal interns.

- Intern Pay = \$ 28,484
- Overtime Compensation = \$ 4,778
- Commissioner Salary = \$ 10,141

**Total + \$43,403**

# Workload Increases

- Commission identified an additional **\$20,208** in salaries and **\$4,226** in fringe benefits to cover a salary increase for the operations administrator as a result of workload increases.
- Commission has identified an additional **\$6,762** in salaries and **\$1,346** in fringe benefits to cover a salary increase for the executive director as a result of workload increases.

**+ Total:     \$32,542**



*Thank  
you!*

[ethicscommission@nd.gov](mailto:ethicscommission@nd.gov)

or

701.328.5325

**ND** | **ETHICS**  
COMMISSION