

Administration of the
Harford County Ethics Law
Calendar Year 2022

Report to the Harford County Executive
and the Harford County Council



Harford County Ethics Board
October 1, 2022

County Executive and Council Members:

The General Assembly passed legislation amending § 5-807 of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland to require that local ethics boards provide to the local governing body a report on the administration of the local ethics law. This report summarizes the work of the Harford County Ethics Board (Board) over the past calendar year in each of the following areas:

1. Financial Disclosure
2. Lobbying
3. Legislative and Regulatory
4. Advisory Opinions
5. Administration

Financial Disclosure

The Harford County Public Ethics Law (Ethics law) requires certain officials, employees and members of certain boards to file financial disclosure statements. The Board is responsible for reviewing all financial disclosure statements for compliance with the provisions of the Ethics law. All disclosure statements are public records available for review. Financial disclosure statements are due by April 30 of each year. The Board provides those officials and employees required to file financial disclosure statements the ability to complete and file their statements either electronically or through submission of a written pdf form. The overwhelming majority of disclosure statements are filed electronically.

To assist filers who are required to disclose certain interest that they may have with businesses that contract with the County, the Board maintains a comprehensive list of County vendors. The list of vendors is published on the Harford County Law Department website.

Lobbying

The Board is responsible for maintaining all lobbying registrations and reports filed under the Ethics law. An individual must register as a lobbyist if the individual: (1) personally appears before a County official or employee intending to influence the individual in performance of their official duties; and (2) in connection with the intent to influence, expends or expects to expend in the calendar year in excess of \$100 on food, entertainment or other gifts for officials or employees of the County.

A registered lobbyist must file an activity report within 30 days after the end of any calendar year disclosing: (1) the value, date and nature of any food, entertainment or other gift provided to a County official or employee; and (2) the identity of any official or employee who received a gift or series of gifts exceeding a \$100.

The Board provides, via the Harford County Law Department website, forms for lobbyist registration and reporting as well as a list of registered lobbyist and filed reports.

Legislative and Regulatory

The Board is responsible for determining whether legislative changes are necessary to the County's Ethics law to ensure compliance with the State law. The General Assembly recently changed several provisions in the ethics law. These changes will be reviewed. Once this review is complete, any necessary changes will be recommended to the Administration.

Advisory Opinions

Advisory opinions are public documents and may be found on the Harford County Department of Law website under the Board of Ethics Section. There was one advisory opinion during this reporting period.

Administration

The Board in compliance with the State law, posts notice of all meetings, agendas and minutes on the County's website. Copies of the agenda and minutes for the Board's meeting are attached to this report.