

Item 05 - Disclosure and Engagement Report



Ryan Micik, Chair
Francis Upton IV, Vice Chair
Tanya Bayeva
Alea Gage
Vincent Steele
Karun Tilak

Nicolas Heidorn, Executive Director

Public Ethics Commission | CITY OF
OAKLAND

TO: City of Oakland, Public Ethics Commission
FROM: Alex Van Buskirk, Lead Analyst, Compliance and Disclosure
Jelani Killings, Lead Analyst, Education and Engagement
DATE: January 14, 2025
RE: Disclosure and Engagement Monthly Report for the January 29, 2025,
Public Ethics Commission Meeting

This memorandum provides a summary of major accomplishments in the Public Ethics Commission's (PEC or Commission) Disclosure and Engagement program activities since the last regular meeting. Commission staff disclosure activities focus on improving online tools for public access to local campaign finance and other disclosure data, enhancing compliance with disclosure rules, and conducting data analysis for Public Ethics Commission projects and programs as required. Engagement activities include training and resources provided to the regulated community, as well as general outreach to Oakland residents to raise awareness of the Commission's role and services and to provide opportunities for dialogue between the Commission and community members.

Compliance with Disclosure Requirements (Includes Program Milestones in 2024)

Commission staff conducts filing officer duties as required by state and local law and aims to help candidates, lobbyists and City officials submit required disclosure reports and ensure residents can easily access campaign finance, lobbyist, and ethics-related data and information.

Campaign Finance Disclosure – On April 15, 2025, there is a Special Election in the City of Oakland for the positions of Mayor and City Council District 2. As of January 14, 2025, there are 13 candidates for Mayor and five candidates for City Council District 2 who have filed with the PEC.

The nomination period for Mayoral and City Council District 2 candidates in the April 15, 2025, Special Election will close on January 17, 2025 (the nomination period first opened on December 23, 2024).

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Commission staff is in the process of coordinating with the California Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) on finalizing a special filing schedule, which will include pre-election statements, for the April 15, 2025, Special Election. Commission staff anticipates this filing schedule will be finished before the January 29, 2025, PEC meeting, though after the writing of this report, so the exact date cannot be provided here. Commission staff will provide details of the Special Election filing schedule to relevant Oakland committees and include a copy of the schedule on the PEC website for education and information purposes.

The next campaign finance filing deadline is the semi-annual statement due January 31, 2025, covering activity from the most recent report in 2024 through December 31, 2024. All candidate-controlled committees raising or spending \$2,000 or more must file semi-annual statements for their committees as well as any other committees that they control. These filings are made on the Form 460.

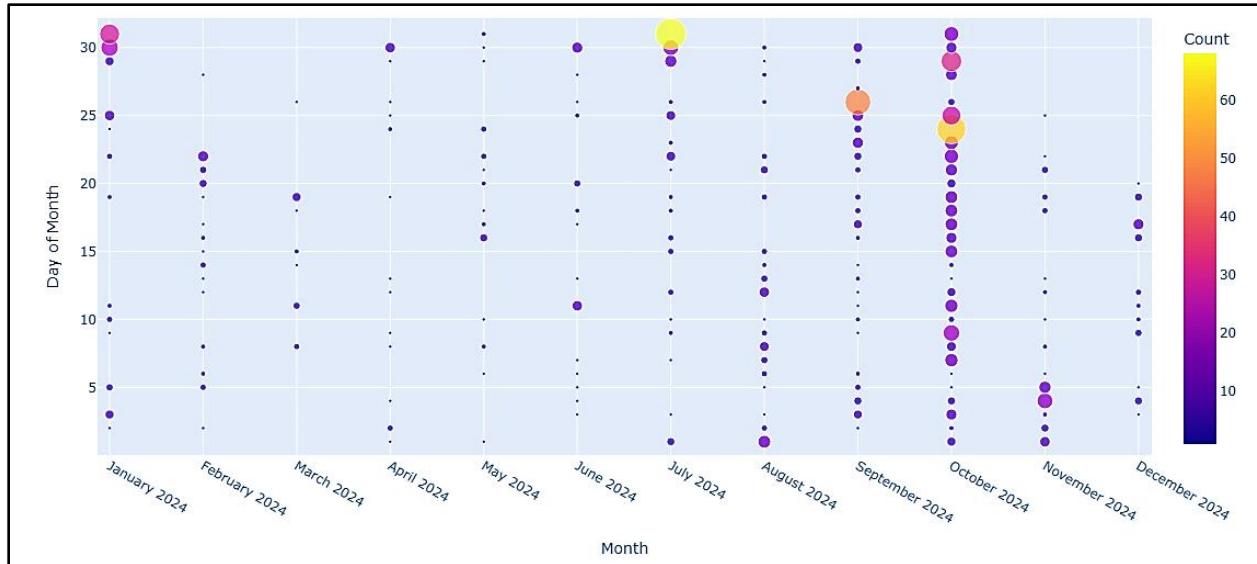
Campaign statements are available to view and download at the Commission's [Public Portal for Campaign Finance Disclosure](#). Campaign finance data, graphs, and visualizations are available via the [City's Open Data portal](#) and Commission-sponsored apps [Show Me the Money](#) and [Open Disclosure Oakland](#), as well as links on the PEC website.

Campaign Finance Compliance Program Milestones in 2024 – In 2024, the City of Oakland had 64 registered filers with the PEC, including more than 50 committees. Two Oakland elections were conducted in 2024: a Special Election on March 5, 2024, and the General Election on November 5, 2024.

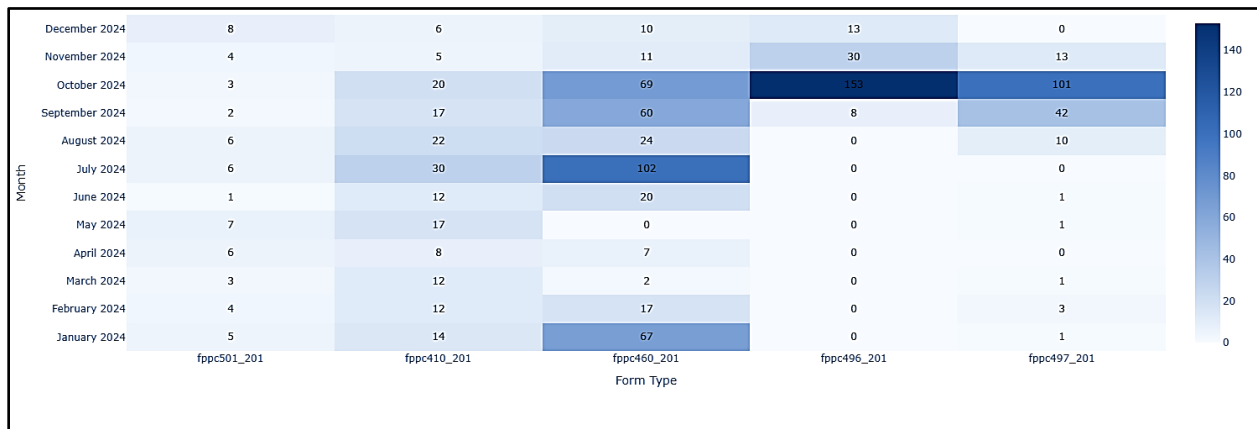
There were six campaign statement deadlines in 2024, and PEC staff processed and reviewed (through a combination of manual and programmatic processes) over 1,000 campaign-related filings – this includes Form 410, Form 501, Form 460, Form 470, Form 496, and Form 497, etc. – which covered nearly \$5.2 million[*] in Schedule A reported campaign contributions ([*]this data is through mid-October 2024 for most committees, as contribution reports through the end of calendar year 2024 are due January 31, 2025, and thus have not been factored in with this total).

The *Calendar View of Filing Activity* visualization below highlights daily filing activity with the PEC in calendar year 2024, represented by bubble size and color intensity. The day of the month is plotted along the Y-axis, while the X-axis spans the months of the year. Larger, brighter bubbles indicate days in a given month with higher filing counts. Key activity spikes are evident at the end of months like September 2024 and October 2024, coinciding with filing deadlines and pre-election reporting requirements.

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The *Filing Patterns Heatmap* visualization below shows filing intensity by form type and month from January 2024 through December 2024. The months of September 2024 and October 2024 stand out, with high filing activity concentrated in forms such as the Form 460 (Recipient Committee Campaign Statement), the Form 496 (24-hour/10-day Independent Expenditure Report), and the Form 497 (24-hour/10-day Independent Expenditure Report).



Lobbyist Registration Program – The Oakland Lobbyist Registration Act (LRA) requires any person that qualifies as a lobbyist to register annually with the Commission before conducting any lobbying activity. Registration renewals are due January 31, 2025.

To date, as of January 14, 2025, three lobbyists are currently registered with the City of Oakland for 2025. (In 2024, 15 lobbyists registered as Oakland lobbyists within the first two weeks of the calendar year. The sharp drop in registrations in 2025 in the first two weeks of 2025 is not entirely clear at this time.) Commission staff is in the process of working with these registered lobbyists in 2025 who need to pay the \$500 registration fee – as noted in prior

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reports to the Commission, the registration fee process can take several weeks after an initial registration, as invoices need to be created and issued, then paid.

Note that Commission staff is pleased to report that with the assistance of the Information Technology Department over many months in 2024, a new point-of-sale (POS) system has been implemented that went live on January 13, 2025. This new POS system will allow new lobbyists to pay their fee electronically upon registering with the PEC. The benefit is real time service and a greatly reduced burden for Commission staff in processing/issuing invoices to these new lobbyists. (Lobbyists are still able to submit a waiver application, which will be reviewed for determination on a case-by-case basis.)

January 31, 2025, is the deadline for lobbyists to file their Quarterly Activity Report for Quarter 4 2024. Commission staff will monitor filing statuses once the deadline passes and will impose the required \$10/day late fee related to late filers, where applicable.

Note that in November 2023, the Oakland City Council adopted amendments to the Lobbyist Registration Act including a new annual lobbyist registration fee as well as a requirement that lobbyists take an online training provided by the Commission. Registered lobbyists have 60 days from their date of registration to complete the online training provided by the Commission. Commission staff is working with newly registered lobbyists to ensure full compliance with this training requirement.

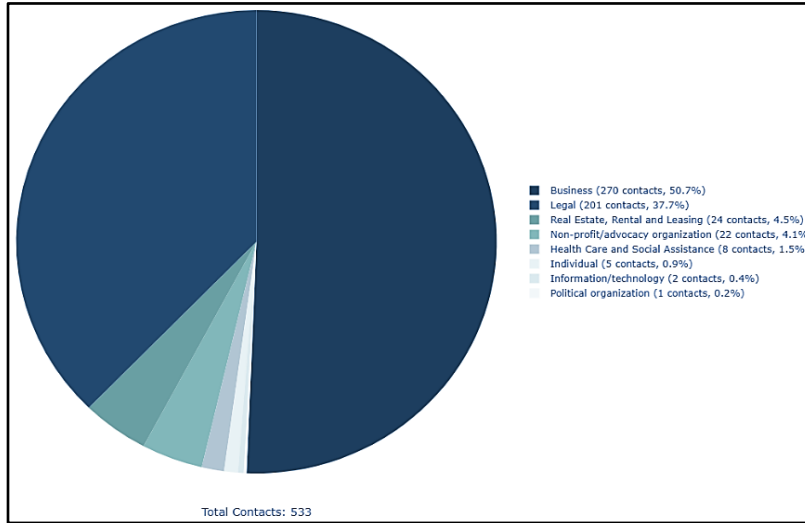
An up-to-date list of registered lobbyists and lobbyist activity reports with links to view and download individual reports is available at the Public Ethics Commission's [Lobbyist Dashboard and Data](#) webpage.

Lobbyist Compliance Program Milestones in 2024 – In 2024, 64 lobbyists registered with the City of Oakland representing over 100 clients.

Oakland lobbyists reported a total of 533[*] contacts with City officials. Commission staff processed and reviewed 171[*] quarterly lobbyist activity reports in 2024 ([*]this data is through Quarter 3 2024 for lobbyists, as Quarter 4 2024 reports, through the end of the calendar year, are due January 31, 2025, and thus have not been factored in with these totals).

The *Distribution of Lobbying Contacts by Client Type* located below on the left reveals that: Self-reported Business and Legal interests dominate the lobbying activity, with Business making up 50.7% and Legal making up 37.7% of all contacts – together accounting for nearly 90% of all

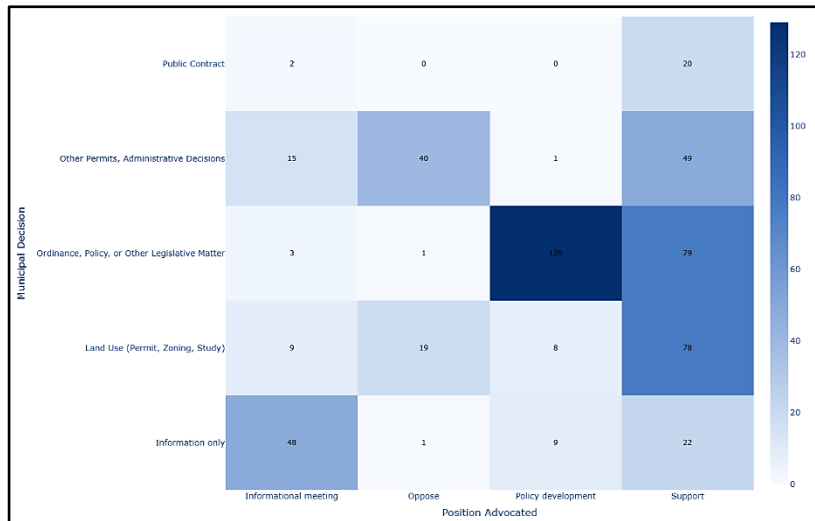
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lobbying contacts. Real Estate / Rental / Leasing and Non-profit / Advocacy Organizations make up the next tier, but with much smaller shares at 4.5% and 4.13% respectively. The remaining client types (Health Care, Individual, Information/technology, and other organizations) each represent less than 2% of total

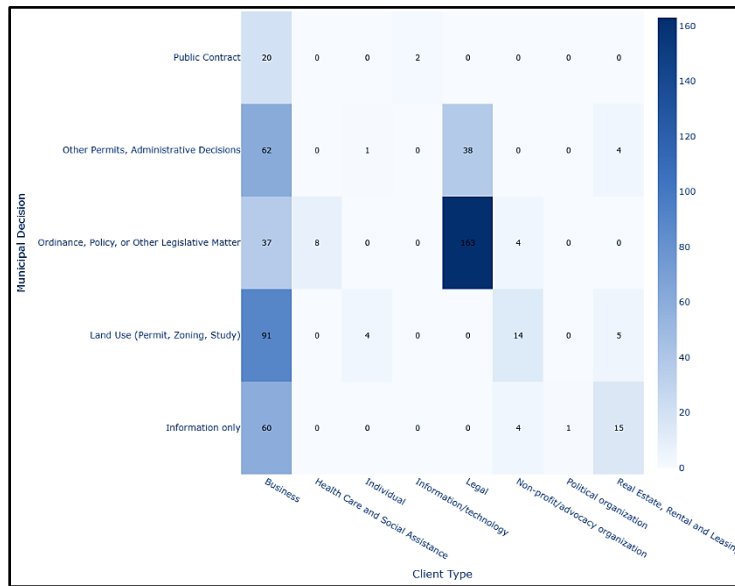
lobbying contacts, showing minimal direct lobbying activity from these sectors.

The *Heatmap of Positions Advocated by Municipal Decision* located on the right reveals several key patterns in lobbying positions across different municipal decisions in 2024: There is a high concentration of “Policy Development” activity for “Ordinance, Policy, or Other Legislative Matter” (shown by the dark blue square).

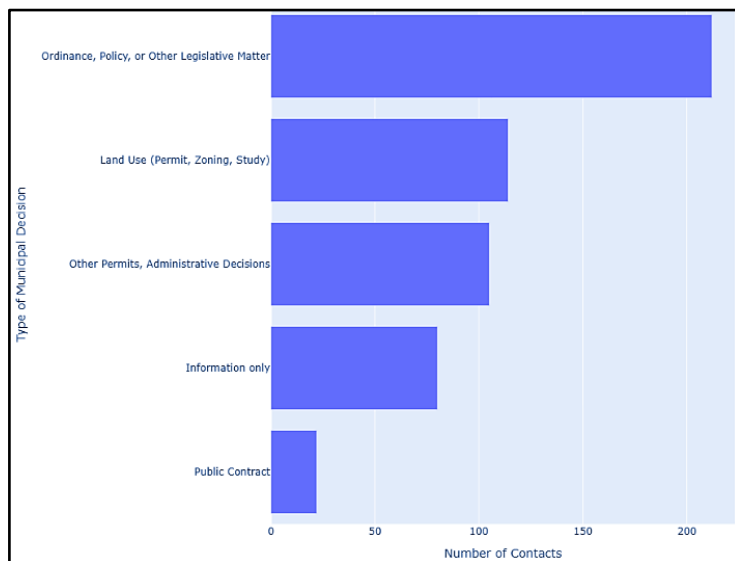


“Support” positions (rightmost column) are more common across multiple decision types, particularly for “Land Use” and “Other Permits, Administrative Decisions” (shown by the blue coloring). “Informational meeting” activity is relatively consistent across different municipal decisions (shown by the similar coloring in the leftmost column), suggesting that informational meetings are a common preliminary step regardless of the decision type.

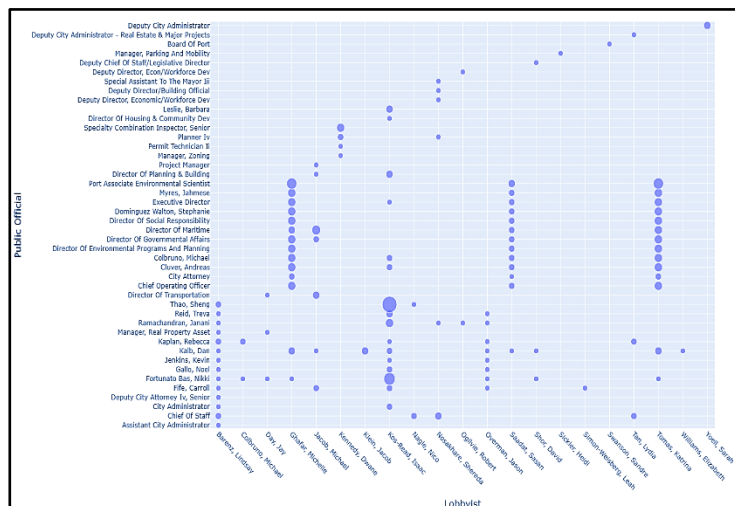
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The *Heatmap of Municipal Decisions by Client Type* visualization located on the left shows the distribution of lobbying activities across different types of municipal decisions and client categories in 2024. The brightest spot indicates that “Other Organizations” such as Business and Legal are most active in “Ordinance, Policy, or Legislative Matter” decisions. The “Business” client type shows moderate to high activity across *all* decision types, while Individual clients show minimal activity overall.



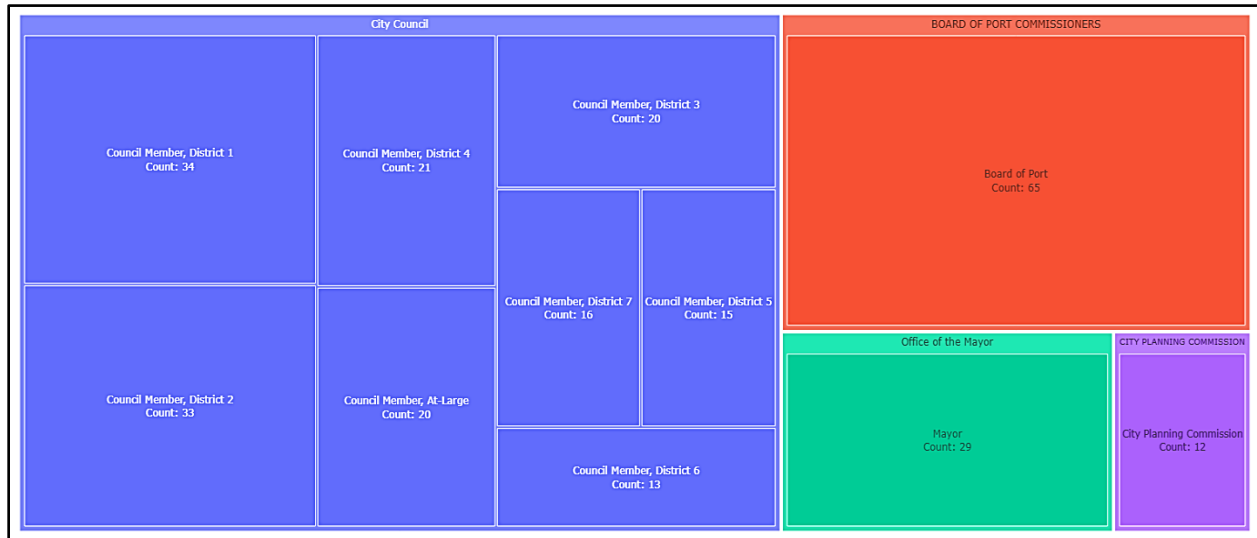
The *Distribution of Lobbying Contacts by Municipal Decision* visualization located on the left shows the volume of lobbying contacts by decision type in 2024. “Ordinance, Policy, or Legislative Matter” dominates with over 200 contacts, followed by “Land Use” and “Other Permits, Administrative Decisions” with approximately 100 contacts each. Public Contract-related lobbying shows the lowest activity.



The *Network of Lobbyist-Official Interactions* visualization located on the left displays the network of interactions between lobbyists and public officials in 2024. Bubble sizes indicate the frequency of contacts. Several concentrated clusters of activity are visible, particularly around certain key officials.

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The *Hierarchy of Lobbying Contacts by Department and Position* visualization below reveals the distribution of lobbying contacts across City departments and positions in 2024. The City Council received the most lobbying contacts (152 total across all districts) – District 1 had the highest number (34 contacts) among Council Districts. The Board of Port Commissioners also shows significant activity (65 contacts), followed by the Mayor's Office (29 contacts).



Advice and Engagement (Includes Program Milestones in 2024)

The Commission's Advice and Engagement Program seeks to ensure Oakland public servants, candidates for office, lobbyists, and City contractors understand and comply with City campaign finance, ethics, and transparency laws.

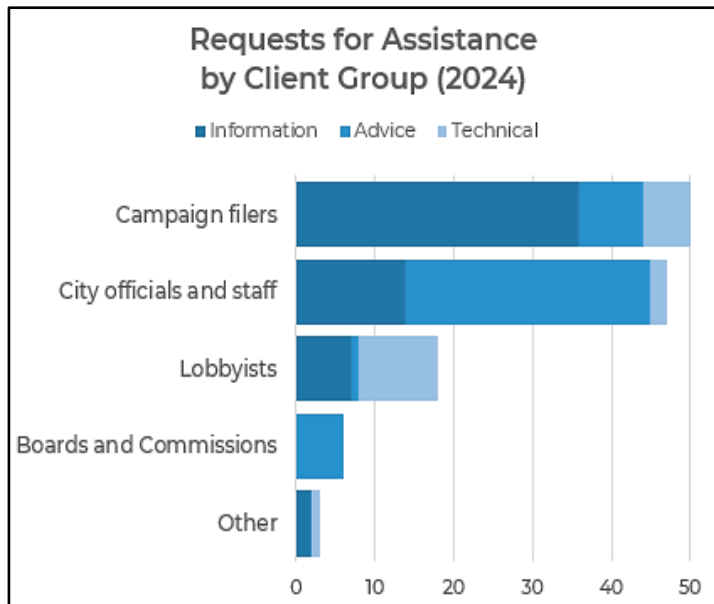
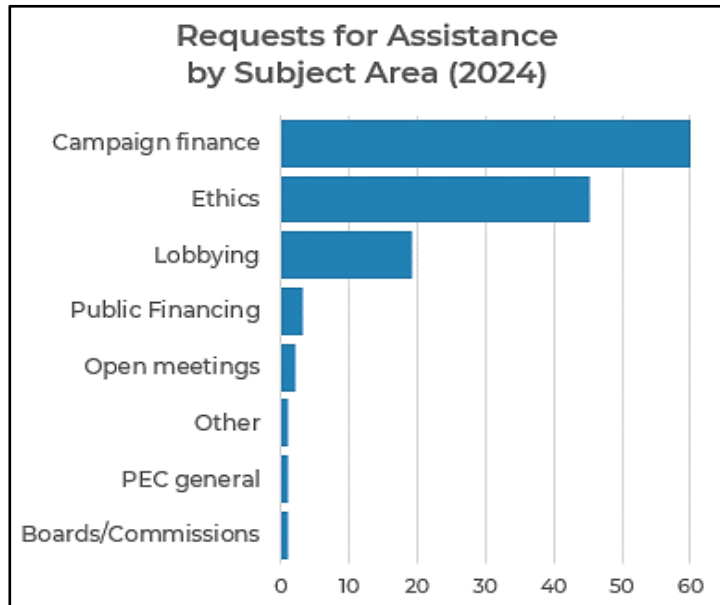


Advice and Technical Assistance – In 2024, Commission staff responded to 134 requests for information, advice or assistance regarding campaign finance, ethics, Sunshine law, or lobbyist issues, fielding an average of approximately 11 requests per month.

Inquiries from campaign filers (40%) and City officials and staff (38%) made up the majority of requests for advice and assistance followed by lobbyists (15%).

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New Employee Orientation – Commission staff continued to collaborate with the Department of Human Resources Management (DHRM) to ensure that every new City employee received introductory Government Ethics training. This year, Commission staff made 11 live presentations and one video presentation reaching over 400 new employees. In addition, staff presented a live ethics training at the Oakland Parks, Recreation, and Youth Development Department’s Summer Orientation reaching 100 new employees.



Ethics Training for Form 700 Filers – In 2024, 224 employees completed the PEC’s online Government Ethics Training for Form 700 Filers via NeoGov LEARN, the City’s online learning management system. In addition, Commission staff, in collaboration with DHRM, held two live Zoom trainings that covered all the content in the PEC’s online ethics training for Form 700 filers to provide additional opportunities to complete the mandatory training requirement. Approximately 30 employees attended the live Zoom trainings.

Supervisor Academy – The City’s Supervisor Academy provides training for supervisors and management-level employees on City policies and procedures, internal systems, and leadership skills relating to day-to-day supervision. In 2024, Commission staff provided ethics presentations at three Supervisor Academies, reaching nearly 90 supervisor-level City employees with an overview of the Government Ethics Act and PEC services, as well as the

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opportunity to dive into discussions of ethical issues and scenarios and skills-based training to deal with ethical dilemmas such as gift restrictions, lobbying activity, misuse of City resources, and public records requests.

Boards and Commissions

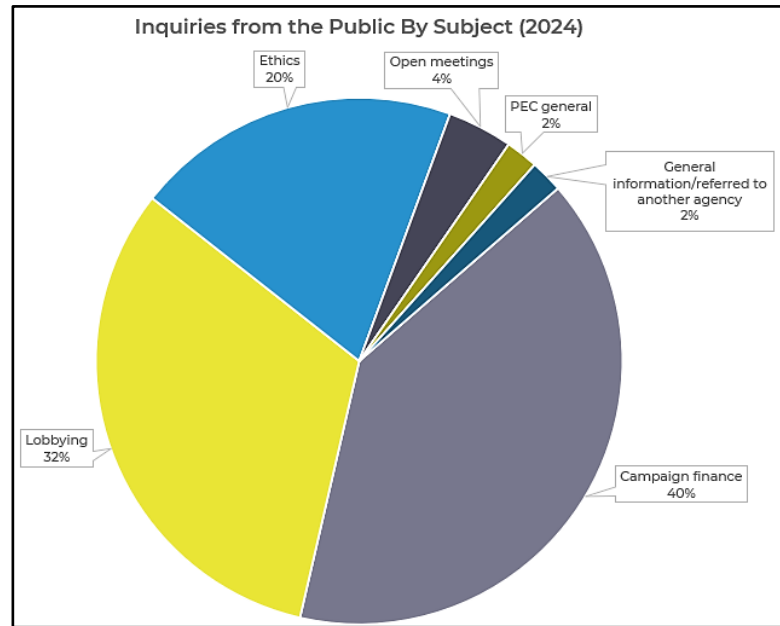
Commission staff participated in a joint effort with the Mayor's Office, City Clerk, and City Attorney to provide a comprehensive training for City

Board and Commission staff liaisons. The training covered all relevant laws and responsibilities, including Sunshine and Government Ethics Act requirements, pertaining to boards and commissions to ensure their understanding of and compliance with these laws.

Candidates and Campaigns – In 2024, Commission staff conducted a joint candidate and treasurer training with representatives from the California Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC). The attendees received a two-hour training on the California Political Reform Act and the Oakland Campaign Reform Act. Topics covered included campaign forms, committee IDs, campaign bank accounts, recordkeeping, contribution rules, and advertising disclosures.

Additionally, Commission staff issued multiple targeted communications to campaign filers to ensure awareness of local campaign finance rules.

Limited Public Financing (LPF) Program – In 2024, Commission staff administered the Limited Public Financing (LPF) program providing reimbursements to participating candidates for qualified campaign expenditures. Commission staff dispersed a total of \$154,999.95 in processed reimbursements to participating candidates out of the \$155,000 available through the election fund.



Name	District	Total Funds Dispersed
Zac Unger	1	\$22,142.85
Carroll Fife	3	\$22,142.85
Warren Logan	3	\$22,142.85
Noel Gallo	5	\$22,142.85
Erin Armstrong	5	\$22,142.85
Ken Houston	7	\$22,142.85
Iris Merriouns	7	\$22,142.85

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Name	District	Total Funds Dispersed
	TOTAL	\$154,999.95

Publications – In 2024, Commission staff updated three comprehensive guides intended to assist the regulated community in complying with local laws:

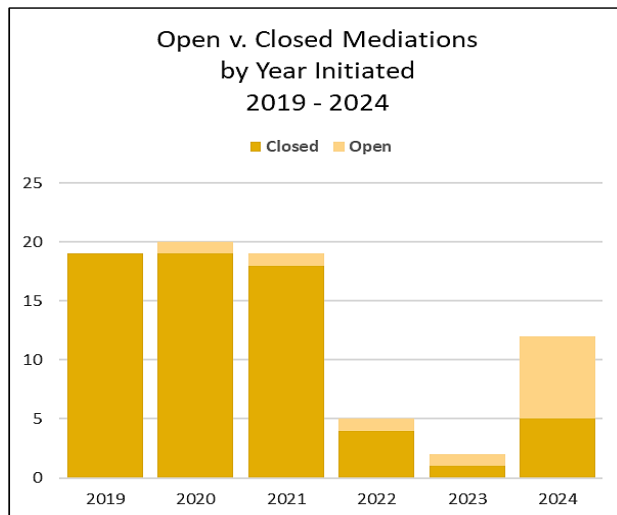
- **Guide to the Lobbyist Registration Act** – Commission staff made substantial revisions to the PEC’s comprehensive guide to the Lobbyist Registration Act, designed to assist the regulated community in complying with local law.

The guide provides a summary of the Oakland Lobbyist Registration Act provisions and was updated to incorporate newly adopted amendments including registration fees and training requirements.

- **Oakland Campaign Reform Act Guide** – Commission staff updated the PEC’s comprehensive guide to the Oakland Campaign Reform Act, designed to assist the regulated community in complying with local campaign finance laws.

The guide provides a summary of the Oakland Campaign Reform Act provisions and was updated to reflect the recent changes from Measure W including new contribution limits and independent expenditure disclosure requirements.

- **Limited Public Financing (LPF) Guide** – Commission staff updated the guide for the 2024 election, updated LPF program forms along with additional edits to ensure that language is consistent with the revised Oakland Campaign Reform Act (OCRA) Guide.



Mediation Program – Pursuant to the Oakland Sunshine Ordinance, the Commission conducts mediation of public records requests made by members of the public to City departments for records within the department’s control.

The Commission received 12 new requests for mediation in 2024 – 14 mediations were completed in 2024.

Online Engagement

Social Media – In 2024, Commission staff continued producing monthly social media content highlighting PEC policy areas, activities, and topics of interest to specific client-groups.

Website Migration – The City of Oakland is in the process of transitioning its website to a new content management system (CMS), OpenCities. The new website is scheduled to launch in 2025. In the initial phase of the migration process, Staff worked with the City of Oakland’s website project team to review the Public Ethics Commission’s current webpages and determine which ones will migrate to the new website.

Targeted Advertising – Leading up to the election, the PEC purchased digital advertisements in *The Oaklandside*, which ran from October 14, 2024, through election day, November 5, 2024, and also posted to social media to promote public awareness of the Open Disclosure Oakland platform. Outcomes of the targeted advertising effort were included in the December 2024 Disclosure and Engagement Report provided to the Commission.

General Outreach

The Commission conducts outreach activities to ensure Oakland residents and the regulated community know about the Commission and that the Commission is responsive to their complaints and questions about government ethics, campaign finance, or transparency concerns.

Commissioner Recruitment – In 2024, Commission staff implemented a robust recruitment strategy to fill its Commission-appointed vacancy that included email blasts to PEC agenda subscribers and community organizations, paid online advertisements, social media posts, and tabling at community events. A Total of 10 applications were received.