

# COMPLIANCE & COMPLAINTS

Ethics Commission Rules have the full force and effect of statutes and the Commission is required to enforce its rules. The process is summarized below. For more information, see the *Enforcement and Compliance Guide* at [www.ethics.ok.gov](http://www.ethics.ok.gov).

## PAST DUE REPORTS, FORMAL COMPLAINTS & INVESTIGATIONS

The Complaints process arises via (1) complaints filed with Commission by a member of the public or (2) internal complaint filed by the Commission staff. The cover sheet used for a complaint is found on the “Enforcement” page on the Ethics Commission website.

**Investigations and Complaints.** A written complaint will be filed and considered by the Commissioners of the Ethics Commission. At Commission meetings, the Commission will decide whether to open investigations for alleged violations of the Ethics Rules. Once an investigation is opened, the Commission has the power to issue subpoenas to further its investigation. A formal investigation may be resolved through dismissal, a Settlement Agreement, or may be prosecuted as a civil case in District Court. The Commission will not take action, other than dismissal, until the Respondents have been notified of the alleged Rule violations and provided 20 days to respond to the allegations.

**Compliance Orders.** This process is an enforcement mechanism of the Commission to resolve compliance issues not requiring a formal complaint. The Executive Director may issue compliance orders and assess fees not to exceed \$1,000. Anyone receiving a Compliance Order is provided 30 days to respond to the Order and an opportunity for an administrative hearing before an administrative law judge who may confirm the order or, for good cause shown by the recipient of the Order, the ALJ may modify or set aside the Order. Second and subsequent late filings are deemed an intentional violation of the rules.

## COMPLAINTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED DURING THE “BLACKOUT PERIOD”

The Commission will not accept complaints that allege a candidate or a candidate committee violated the Ethics Rules during an election cycle. This complaint “blackout period” begins April 13, 2022 and ends November 8, 2022. The Commission will begin accepting complaints for 2022 candidate committees on November 9, 2022. **This provision is intended to prevent the complaint process from being used for political purposes during a campaign.**

The blackout period does not prevent the Commission from engaging in investigations during the complaints blackout period. Rule 6.4.

*If there is a conflict between information on this form and the Ethics Rules, the Ethics Rules control.*