



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Government Ethics Commission

3218 Pringle Rd SE, Ste 220

Salem, OR 97302-1680

Telephone: 503-378-5105

Fax: 503-373-1456

E-mail: mail@ogec.oregon.gov

Website: www.oregon.gov/ogec

October 24, 2025

Honorable Senator Kate Lieber
Honorable Representative Tawna Sanchez
Joint Interim Committee on Ways and Means

Re: Legislative Reduction Request – OGEC

Dear Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez,

On behalf of the Oregon Government Ethics Commission (OGEC), thank you for taking the time to review our reduction options and how they will impact our agency and the services we provide. Our goal, in putting together our reduction options, was to identify options that would allow OGEC to maintain its high level of service to Oregon's constituents and public officials with the least impact on the quality or timeliness of services.

OGEC's Mission and Core Programs

OGEC's mission is to impartially and effectively administer and enforce Oregon's Government Ethics Laws for the benefit of Oregon's citizens. OGEC will emphasize education in achieving its mission. OGEC's jurisdiction also includes enforcement and education for Oregon's Public Meetings Law and Oregon's Lobby Laws.

Our core programs and services include:

- **Enforcement** – OGEC staff conduct investigations, within statutory timeframes, and if appropriate, the Commission makes findings of violation and imposes civil penalties. All penalties collected go to the General Fund.
- **Education** – OGEC staff provide trainings (in-person, webinars, and on-demand) on all three areas of law in our jurisdiction. We also provide guidance through written advice and opinions.
- **Compliance** – OGEC staff assist lobbyists, clients, and Statement of Economic Interest (SEI) filers with registering in the Electronic Filing System (EFS) and with filing their required reports.

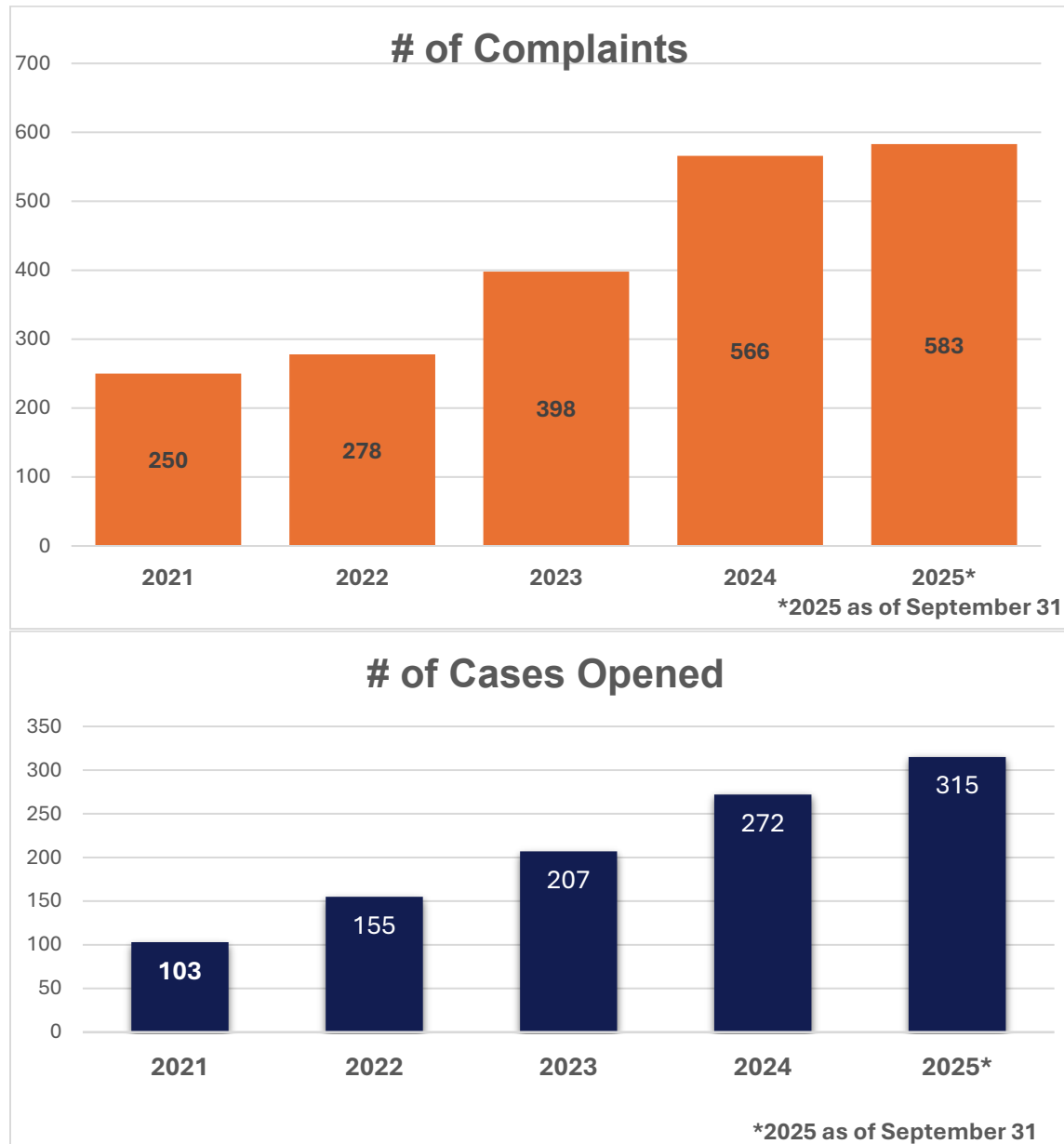
OGEC's Funding Model

OGEC is an other funds agency, but with a unique funding model. 50% of OGEC's budget is paid by state agencies, based on their full-time employee (FTE) numbers. The other 50% of our budget is paid by local governments, local service districts and special government bodies, based on the Secretary of State's municipal audit fee.

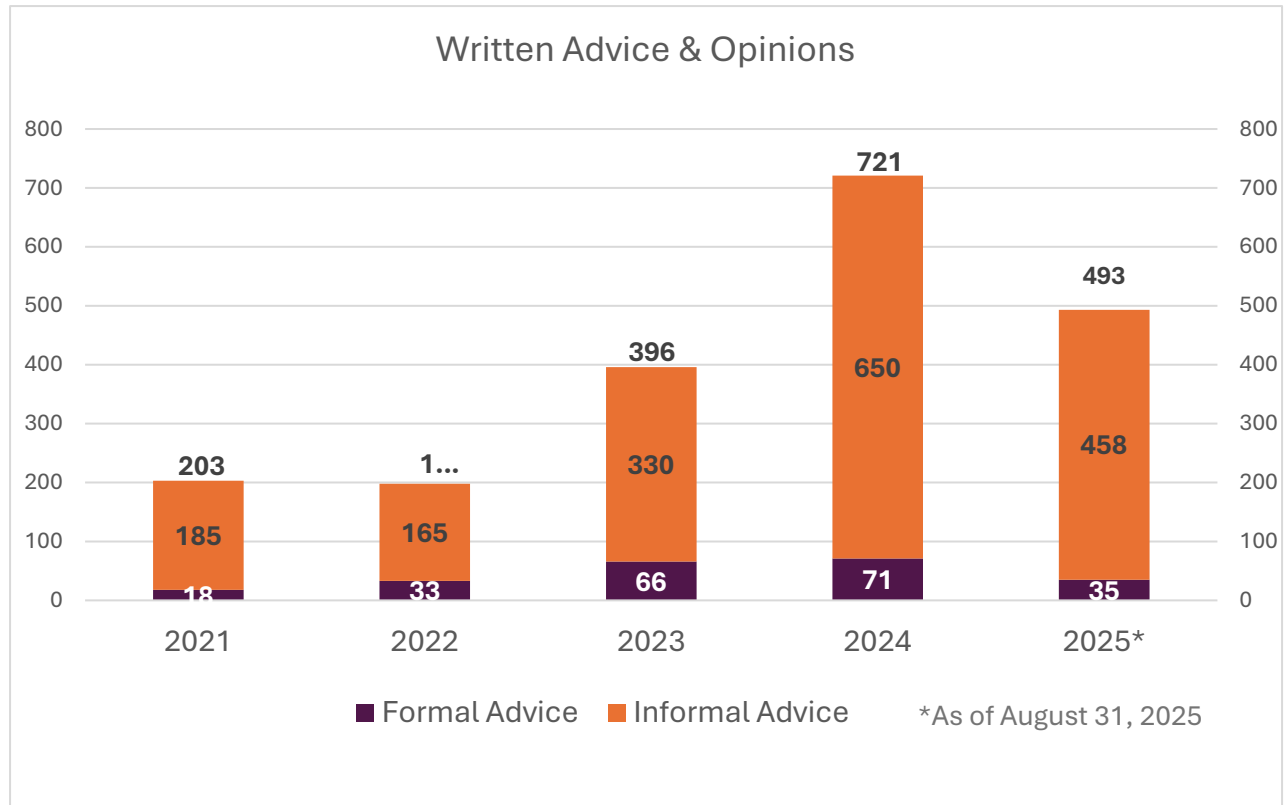
Current Conditions

OGEC has 15 employees: 4 investigators and a compliance & enforcement coordinator, 4 trainers and a training & curriculum coordinator, 3 administrative staff, as well as a senior operations manager and an executive director.

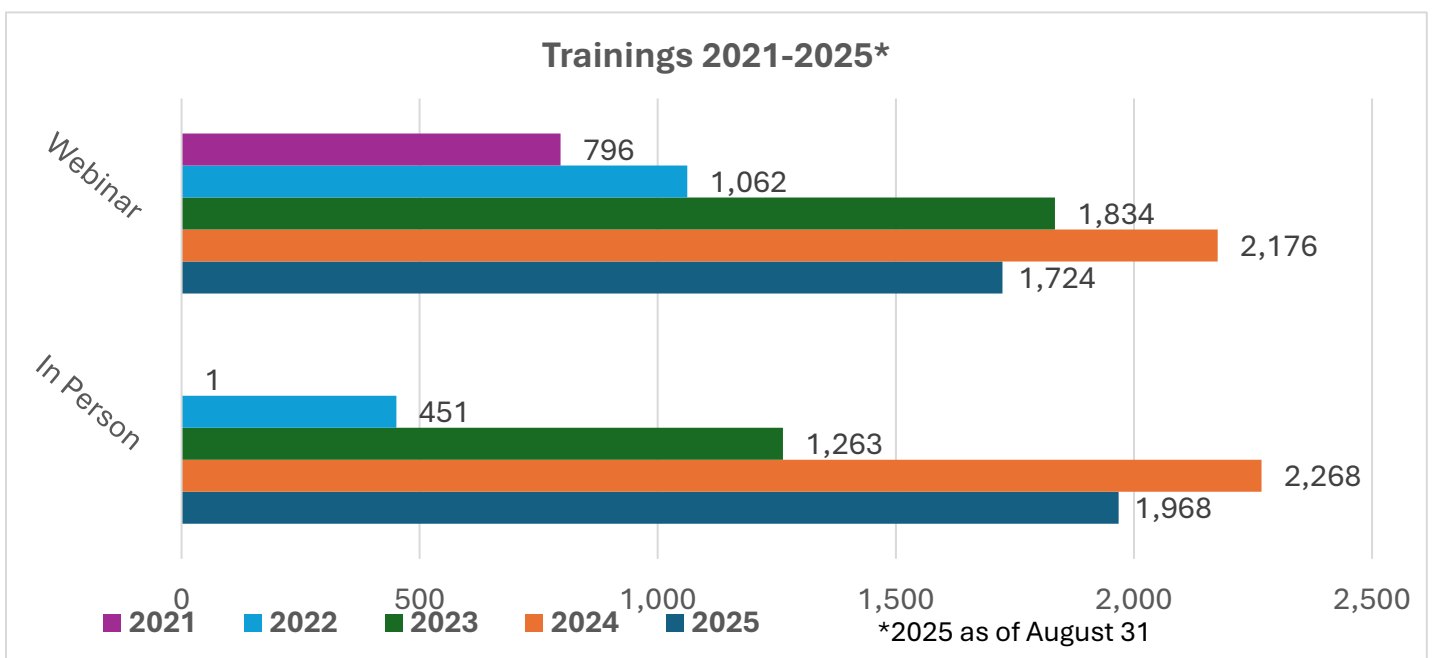
Currently, the demands on OGEC are at an all-time high, with record-breaking number of complaints, cases, written advice, and trainings.



As these charts illustrate, the number of complaints received and cases opened has increased steadily and significantly since 2021. OGEC is now receiving approximately 65 complaints per month, and each of our 4 investigators is averaging about 50 open cases. Even with the increased caseload, OGEC investigators continue to meet the statutory timelines and produce thorough, quality investigatory reports.



Handling requests for advice is a major consumer of staff resources. As shown in the chart above, OGE staff issued a record number of advice emails, letters and opinions in 2024, and the current trend suggests we may break that record in 2025. This growth demonstrates the success of OGE's outreach efforts, but also that public officials at all levels of government continue seeking guidance on how to comply with these laws.



This final chart illustrates the tremendous growth in OGEC's training program over the past five years. In addition to regular monthly webinars on ethics, lobby, and public meetings laws, OGEC's trainers provide customized webinars and in-person training sessions throughout the state. The Commission's 4 trainers are now providing more training sessions to more public officials than ever before.

Reduction Options and Impacts

OGEC's approach to developing reduction options focused on finding reductions that could realistically be implemented while still delivering on OGEC's core programs and services. The reduction options we propose consist of both vacancy savings and redirecting funding from an ongoing IT project. These reduction options will reduce OGEC's budget by \$356,533, or just over 5% of the agency's 2025-27 Legislatively Adopted Budget.

Vacancy Savings – The vacancy savings will be achieved by delaying hiring by 4 months for a currently vacant trainer position and an upcoming vacancy for an administrative staff position, and by savings resulting from an investigator being on Leave Without Pay from 9/4/25 to 1/4/26.

Given the small size of OGEC's staff and the increasing demands on those staff, as illustrated above, any reductions to staffing levels, even these vacancies and hiring delays, will negatively impact the ability of the agency and its remaining staff to meet expectations and consistently deliver services in a timely manner. To illustrate:

- Delaying hiring for the vacant trainer position will increase the workload for the remaining 3 trainers and may reduce the number of available training sessions. Reducing the number of training sessions means not delivering on one of OGEC's core programs (education). The vacant trainer position also means there will be fewer trainers available to draft written advice or answer questions when public officials call in; as a result, it will take longer for OGEC to issue written advice.
- Delaying hiring for the vacant administrative position will impact the services OGEC provides to lobbyists, clients, and SEI filers, one of OGEC's core programs (compliance). There will be fewer administrative staff available to assist filers with registering in EFS or filing their required reports. The increased workload for the remaining 2 administrative staff also means they will be less available to assist OGEC's trainers and investigators with other administrative support tasks. Administrative staff also assist the training team by scheduling and arranging trainings, and they assist the investigation team with opening and closing cases.
- One of OGEC's investigators being on extended leave without pay has impacted how the agency addresses one of its core programs (enforcement). Each of the remaining 3 investigators has seen their already full caseloads increased even further. To ensure that the quality and timeliness of the investigatory reports is not

affected, the compliance & enforcement coordinator has taken on additional cases and even the executive director has written some of the investigatory reports. As more and more complaints are filed daily, any reduction to the investigation staff would make it difficult for OGEC to meet its statutory deadlines.

IT Project - Case Management/Electronic Filing Systems Replacement – The largest proposed reduction comes from redirecting funding for the current IT project to replace the Case Management/Electronic Filing Systems with a comprehensive cloud-based system.

In the 2023-25 biennium, OGEC received \$257,740 in funding to update two aging systems, the Case Management System and the Electronic Filing System. Both systems are approximately 10 years old. Unfortunately, the planned updates were delayed due to a separate legislative mandate that required immediate modifications to the Electronic Filing System. Implementation of those modifications revealed additional concerns about the aging systems and the current vendor recommended replacing the two systems with a singular comprehensive cloud-based system that would be more adaptable for future changes. As a result, OGEC requested an additional \$300,000 in funding in the 2025-27 biennium for the replacement project.

OGEC has started the IT replacement project and related procurement process. We have already received Stage Gate 1 approval from the Department of Administrative Service Enterprise Information Services and are currently working with a contractor to finalize requirements. OGEC has a Request for Information that was released by the Department of Administrative Services Procurement Team to gather additional information from vendors and is expected to have more details in mid-November.

There will be negative impacts from redirecting the IT Project funds. First, such delays will necessarily increase the overall costs of the IT Project, as costs will continue to grow. Second, while the two systems are currently functional, maintaining and updating the systems is becoming more difficult. As more time passes, the risks of the systems breaking down will increase. OGEC relies on its two systems to complete much of its statutorily required services. Delaying the replacement of these systems has the potential to have lasting long-term effects on the agency and the public officials it serves.

OGEC is a small, high functioning agency that is under a lot of pressure with increasing demands for the services we provide. The proposed options will meet the requested 5% budget reduction but will have a detrimental impact on the agency.

Sincerely,



Susan V. Myers
Executive Director

2025-27 Biennium

Detail of Reductions to 2025-27 Legislatively Adopted Budget									
--------------------------------------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Oregon Government Ethics Commission (OGEC)																
2025-27 Biennium																
2025-27 LAB - - 7,129,553 - - - 7,129,553																
Detail of Reductions to 2025-27 Legislatively Adopted Budget																
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Priority (ranked most to least preferred)		Agency	SCR or Activity Initials	Program Unit/Activity Description	GF	LF	OF	NL-OF	FF	NL-FF	TOTAL FUNDS	Pos.	FTE	Gov. Reduction Target Yes / No	One-Time Yes / No	Describe the reduction and associated impact on services and outcomes. Please identify the source of Other Funds reductions.
Dept	Prgm/ Div															

Target (5%)	-	-	356,478	
Difference	-	-	55	

<p><i>Oregon Government Ethics Commission (OGEC)</i></p> <p>2025-27 Biennium</p>

Detail of Programs in the 2025-27 Legislatively Approved Budget that have been established or expanded since 2021-23

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Agency	SCR	Program Establishment / Expansion			Program Description	GF	LF	OF	NL-OF	FF	NL-FF	TOTAL FUNDS	Pos.	FTE	Implementation Status
		Biennium	Effective Date	Authorization											
					N/A										
												\$ -			
												\$ -			
												\$ -			
												\$ -			
												\$ -			
												\$ -			
												\$ -			
												\$ -			
												\$ -			
												\$ -			
												\$ -			
												\$ -			
												\$ -			
												\$ -			
												\$ -			
												\$ -			
												\$ -			
												\$ -			
												\$ -			
				TOTAL		-	-	-	-	-	-	\$ -	0	0.00	

Instructions

Column (6) - Program description should include a summary of the program and the expansion (if applicable), including any partner state agencies.

Column (16) - Current status of program implementation should be summarized, including any future budget requests anticipated upon full program