



# **Federal Election Commission**

**FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Federal Election Commission's (FEC) Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years (FYs) 2022-2026 identifies the Commission's strategic objectives and provides a road map for meeting those objectives. It also describes current challenges facing the FEC and addresses future trends that may affect the achievement of the agency's goal.

The mission of the FEC is to protect the integrity of the federal campaign finance process by providing transparency and fairly enforcing and administering federal campaign finance laws. *The Federal Election Campaign Act* (FECA/the Act) reflects a belief that democracy works best when voters can make informed decisions in the political process—decisions based in part on knowing the sources of financial support for federal candidates, political party committees and other political committees. As a result, the FEC's first strategic objective is to inform the public about how federal campaigns and committees are financed. Public confidence in the political process also depends on the knowledge that participants in federal elections follow clear and well-defined rules and face consequences for non-compliance. Thus, the FEC's second strategic objective focuses on the Commission's efforts to promote voluntary compliance through educational outreach and to enforce campaign finance laws effectively and fairly. The third strategic objective is to interpret the *FECA* and related statutes, providing timely guidance to the public regarding the requirements of the law. The Commission also understands that organizational performance is driven by employee performance and that the agency cannot successfully achieve its mission without a high-performing workforce that understands expectations and delivers results. Consequently, the FEC's fourth strategic objective is to foster a culture of high performance in order to ensure that the agency accomplishes its mission efficiently and effectively.

In an average fiscal year, the FEC receives campaign finance reports, statements and other disclosure documents from more than 16,000 political committees and other filers. In FY 2020, the FEC received 90,605 campaign finance disclosure documents filed disclosing nearly 244 million transactions, which were included in the FEC's campaign finance database. Campaign finance reports and statements filed electronically are made available on the FEC website upon filing, and reports and statements filed on paper with the FEC are placed on the FEC website within 48 hours of receipt. The Commission facilitates transparency in the federal campaign finance process through a state-of-the-art web-based disclosure system for all campaign finance activity, ensuring that the vast quantity of campaign finance data reported to the FEC is available to the public quickly and in a manner that is easy for the general public to sort, search and comprehend. The agency is committed to continuously improving its campaign finance disclosure database and the information and resources available to the public at [www.fec.gov](http://www.fec.gov).

Besides making campaign finance reports available to the public, the FEC works to ensure that the information disclosed is accurate and complete. The Office of Compliance's Reports Analysis Division (RAD) reviews an ever-increasing volume of information to track compliance with the law and to ensure that the public record provides a full and accurate representation of reported campaign finance activity. If RAD's review identifies an apparent violation or raises questions about the information disclosed on a report, RAD sends a Request for Additional Information (RAFI) to the committee, affording the committee an opportunity to take remedial action or correct the public record, if

necessary. If the committee is able to adequately respond to the items noted in the RFAI, it may avoid an enforcement action. If not, and the issue meets RAD's thresholds (as approved by the Commission) for further Commission action, the agency has several tools available to it, such as the Administrative Fine Program, the Audit Program, the Alternative Dispute Resolution Program and the Office of General Counsel's traditional enforcement program.

Commission initiatives, congressional action, judicial decisions, petitions for rulemaking or other changes in campaign finance law may necessitate that the Commission update or adopt new regulations. Consequently, the FEC undertakes rulemakings either to write new Commission regulations or revise existing regulations. The Commission also provides guidance on how the *Act* applies to specific situations through the advisory opinion process and represents itself in most litigation before the federal district and appellate courts.

The FEC has exclusive jurisdiction over the civil enforcement of the federal campaign finance law. Following procedures set forth in the *FECA*, the Office of General Counsel's Enforcement Division investigates alleged violations of the law, recommends to the Commission appropriate action to take with respect to apparent violations and negotiates conciliation agreements, which may include civil penalties and other remedies, with respondents or their counsel to resolve the matter. If an enforcement matter does not resolve through conciliation during the administrative process, the Commission may authorize suit in district court, at which point the matter is transferred to the Litigation Division.

In order to promote compliance with the *Act*, the Commission devotes significant resources to the widespread dissemination of educational materials. The Commission has redoubled its efforts to ensure that it uses the most effective and current communication techniques and technologies to disseminate its educational and compliance information.

In order to meet these challenges, the FEC must maintain a workforce that is highly qualified to deliver the agency's mission effectively and efficiently. Managing effective human capital requires a strategic approach. Therefore, this strategic plan addresses the operational processes, skills and technology, and the human capital, information and other resources required to achieve the agency's objectives.

Administering and enforcing the *FECA* includes promoting public disclosure of campaign finance activity; providing information and policy guidance on the law and Commission regulations; encouraging voluntary compliance with *FECA* requirements; and fairly and vigorously enforcing the statute through audits, investigations and civil litigation. The Commission believes that this Strategic Plan, 2022-2026, provides a robust plan for the agency to meet the challenges ahead in all areas of its operations and to succeed in performing its mission.

## 1.0 MISSION STATEMENT

### 1.1 FY 2022 – 2026 FEC Mission

The mission of the Federal Election Commission is to protect the integrity of the federal campaign finance process by providing transparency and fairly enforcing and administering federal campaign finance laws.

### 1.2 Scope of Responsibilities

The FEC is an independent regulatory agency responsible for administering, enforcing, defending and interpreting the *Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971*.<sup>1</sup> The Commission is also responsible for administering the federal public funding programs for presidential campaigns. This responsibility includes certifying and auditing all participating candidates and committees and enforcing the public funding laws.

To accomplish its legislative mandate, the FEC is directed by six Commissioners, who are appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate. By law, no more than three Commissioners may be members of the same political party. Each member serves a six-year term, and two seats are subject to appointment every two years. Commissioners may serve beyond their six-year terms until new Commissioners are confirmed. The position of the Commission Chair rotates among the members. The Commissioners are responsible for administering and enforcing the *Act* and meet regularly to formulate policy and to vote on significant legal and administrative matters. The *Act* requires at least four votes for the Commission to approve certain official actions, thus requiring bipartisan decision-making. The FEC has its headquarters in Washington, D.C. and does not have any regional offices.

Under the *Act*, all federal political committees, including the committees of presidential, Senate and House candidates, must file reports of receipts and disbursements. In an average fiscal year, the FEC makes disclosure reports filed by more than 16,000 political committees and other filers, and the data contained in them, available to the public through the Commission's Internet-based public disclosure system, as well as in a public records office at the Commission's Washington, D.C. headquarters. The FEC also has exclusive responsibility for civil enforcement of the *Act*, and has litigating authority independent of the Department of Justice in U.S. district court and the courts of appeals. Additionally, the Commission promulgates regulations implementing the *Act* and issues advisory opinions responding to inquiries.

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<sup>1</sup>The Commission's primary responsibilities pertain to the *Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971*, Public Law 92-225, 86 Stat. 3 (1972) as amended (*codified at* 52 U.S.C. §§ 30101-30145) (the *Act* or the *FECA*). The Commission's responsibilities for the Federal public funding programs are contained in the *Presidential Election Campaign Fund Act*, Public Law 92-178, 85 Stat. 562 (1971) (*codified at* 26 U.S.C. §§ 9001-13) and the *Presidential Primary Matching Payment Account Act*, Public Law 93-443, 88 Stat. 1297 (1974) (*codified at* 26 U.S.C. §§ 9031-42).

## 2.0 STRATEGIC GOAL

### 2.1 FY 2022 – 2026 FEC Strategic Goal

To fairly, efficiently and effectively administer and enforce the *Federal Election Campaign Act*, promote compliance and engage and inform the public about campaign finance data and rules, while maintaining a workforce that delivers results.

### 2.2 Strategic Goal Context

Congress created the FEC to administer and enforce the *FECA*. The *Act* reflects Congress's efforts to ensure that voters are fully informed of the sources of candidates' financial support. Public confidence in the political process depends not only on laws and regulations to ensure transparency, but also on the knowledge that those who disregard the campaign finance laws will face consequences.

Disclosing the sources and amounts of funds used to finance federal elections is one of the most important duties of the FEC. The FEC provides the public with data concerning where candidates for federal office derive their financial support. Effective disclosure enables the Commission to fulfill its other responsibilities. The FEC relies on a robust IT infrastructure to fulfill the agency's responsibilities, and this infrastructure serves not only the FEC staff, but also the public. While the demands on the IT infrastructure peak around federal elections, the demands continue throughout the election cycle, just as the filing schedules continue throughout the election cycle. The agency is committed to providing accessible and user-friendly information to the public.

Voluntary compliance with the requirements of the *FECA* is also a focus of the Commission's efforts, and its educational outreach and enforcement programs are both designed to ensure compliance with the *Act's* limits, prohibitions and disclosure provisions. The FEC maintains a robust enforcement program to ensure that the campaign finance laws are swiftly and fairly enforced. Because of the large number of political committees and the growing number of financial disclosure reports filed with the FEC, voluntary compliance is essential to enforcing the requirements of the *Act*. Accordingly, the Commission devotes considerable resources to encouraging voluntary compliance through educational outreach programs directed to the public, the press, political committees and state election officials.

### 2.3 Consultation with Congress / Other Stakeholders

As a first step in drafting the FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, the FEC conducted a comprehensive review of its past strategic planning activities and researched sources that could provide insight into ways the agency could improve upon these efforts. The Draft Strategic Plan will be made available to the public for comment on the FEC website, and the FEC will provide staff from the agency's House and Senate authorizing committees and Appropriations Subcommittees with the draft and solicit their feedback on the agency's proposed goal, objectives and strategies.

### 3.0 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

#### 3.1 FY 2022 – 2026 FEC Strategic Objectives

<b>Objective 1:</b> Engage and Inform the Public about Campaign Finance Data	<b>Objective 2:</b> Promote Compliance with the FECA and Related Statutes
<b>Objective 3:</b> Interpret the FECA and Related Statutes	<b>Objective 4:</b> Foster a Culture of High Performance

#### 3.2 Strategic Objective Context

<b>Objective 1:</b> Engage and Inform the Public about Campaign Finance Data	<p>The <i>Federal Election Campaign Act</i> requires accurate and comprehensive public disclosure by federal candidates and political committees of all contributions and expenditures. In an average fiscal year, the FEC receives campaign finance reports, statements and other disclosure documents from more than 16,000 political committees and other filers. In FY 2020, the FEC received 90,605 campaign finance filings. Campaign finance reports filed during the year disclosed nearly 244 million financial transactions, which were included in the FEC’s campaign finance database.</p> <p>During FY 2022-2026 the Commission will facilitate transparency in the federal campaign finance system through a state-of-the-art, web-based public disclosure system for all campaign finance activity, ensuring that this vast quantity of campaign finance data is available to the public quickly and in a manner that is easy for the general public to sort and search. In addition to ensuring greater access to a larger quantity of campaign finance data, the FEC will also promote public engagement, usability and greater understanding of campaign finance data through targeted educational and communication initiatives.</p>
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## Objective 2:

### Promote Compliance with the FECA and Related Statutes

The Commission's statutory obligation is to administer, interpret and enforce the *FECA*, which serves the compelling governmental interest in deterring corruption and the appearance of corruption in financing elections. In doing so, the Commission must remain mindful of the First Amendment's guarantees of freedom of speech and association, and the practical implication of its actions on the political process.

Public confidence in the political process depends not only on laws and regulations to assure transparency and limits and prohibitions on the amounts and sources of contributions, but also on the knowledge that those who disregard campaign finance regulations will face consequences for non-compliance. In FY 2022-2026, the FEC will focus on administering fair, effective and timely enforcement and compliance programs.

Complementing the FEC's vigorous enforcement and compliance programs are the FEC's increased efforts to promote voluntary compliance. Because of the large and rising number of political committees and the ever-growing number of financial disclosure reports filed with the FEC, voluntary compliance is essential. Accordingly, the Commission will devote significant resources in FY 2022-2026 to encourage voluntary compliance through the widespread dissemination of educational materials related to campaign finance laws to the public, the press, political committees and to state election officials.

## Objective 3:

### Interpret the FECA and Related Statutes

The Commission responds to questions about how the *Act* applies to specific situations by issuing advisory opinions (AOs). In addition, Commission initiatives, Congressional action, judicial decisions, petitions for rulemaking or other changes in campaign finance law often necessitate that the Commission update or adopt new regulations.

Consequently, the FEC undertakes rulemakings either to write new Commission regulations or revise existing regulations.

The Commission represents itself in litigation before the federal district and circuit courts and before the Supreme Court with respect to cases involving publicly financed Presidential candidates. It also has primary responsibility for defending the *Act* and Commission regulations against court challenges. In addition, the *FECA* authorizes the Commission to institute a civil action in enforcement matters that cannot be resolved through voluntary conciliation.

## Objective 4:

### Foster a Culture of High Performance

The Commission understands that its greatest resource is its employees. Organizational performance is also significantly improved when internal management processes are efficient and effective. The Commission will take steps outlined in this plan to ensure that the agency's working environment promotes and supports the best efforts of its staff.

### 3.3 Strategies for Achieving Strategic Objectives

The strategic objectives described in Section 3.2 represent the FEC’s high-level performance commitments for FY 2022-2026. To distill those objectives into actionable next steps, the FEC has further enumerated strategic activities to be accomplished by FY 2026.

The FEC is committed to the successful completion of each strategic activity. The agency identified a leader for each activity, and heavily involved those leaders in defining and finalizing the strategic activities. Leaders will be required to provide the Commission with a brief on staff’s progress on the strategic activities on a quarterly basis.

#### **Objective 1: Engage and Inform the Public about Campaign Finance Data**

**Strategic Activity 1: Evaluate and improve existing procedures to ensure the timely processing of reports and disclosure data made available to the public.**

**Activity Description:**

The FEC will continue to review its procedures for processing and coding data received in campaign finance filings to improve the speed of data processing while maintaining its current high level of data accuracy.

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**Strategic Activity 2: Make improvements to ensure the continued stability and resiliency of the campaign finance disclosure database and campaign finance API.**

**Activity Description:**

The number of financial transactions reported to the FEC has nearly doubled each election cycle for the past several election cycles, resulting in a steep rise in the number of transactions that must be received, processed and made available to the public. This increase in reported activity places a strain on staff, systems and databases. For example, the number of financial transactions received during October 2020 alone was more than what was received during the entire 2016 election cycle. The FEC will take steps to ensure it can continue to meet the agency’s disclosure mission in future years even as the amount of reported activity continues to rise.

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## **Objective 2: Promote Compliance with the FECA and Related Statutes**

### **Strategic Activity 1: Hold instructional conferences, workshops and webinars.**

#### **Activity Description:**

One of the greatest strengths of the FEC's educational outreach program is that it gives the public the opportunity to speak directly with FEC Commissioners and senior staff members who set policy for the agency. The FEC will provide conferences and workshops that are comprehensive and cost effective for the public.

### **Strategic Activity 2: Continually engage with FEC customers to identify opportunities to improve their experience when interacting with FEC staff, systems and information.**

#### **Activity Description:**

Track and measure customer engagement through feedback to identify opportunities for the agency to improve customer experience. Tracking feedback on an ongoing basis will help the agency to identify trends, draw conclusions and improve customer satisfaction over time.

### **Strategic Activity 3: Process cases in an efficient and accurate manner through each stage of the enforcement and compliance processes.**

#### **Activity Description:**

The Commission's statutory obligation is to administer, interpret and enforce the FECA, which serves the compelling governmental interest in deterring corruption and the appearance of corruption in financing elections. In doing so, the Commission must remain mindful of the First Amendment's guarantees of freedom of speech and association, and the practical implication of its actions on the political process. To meet its statutory obligation, the FEC strives to process cases timely and accurately, while making the best use of the Commission's limited resources.

### **Strategic Activity 4: Timely inform committees of potential violations found in reviews of reports, providing consistent guidance for corrective actions.**

#### **Activity Description:**

The FEC works to ensure that the campaign finance information disclosed is accurate and complete. The Reports Analysis Division (RAD) reviews all reports to track compliance with the law and to ensure that the public record provides a full and accurate representation of campaign finance activity. If RAD's review identifies an apparent violation or raises questions about the information disclosed on a report, RAD sends a Request for Additional Information (RFAI) to the committee, affording the committee an opportunity to take remedial action or correct the public record, if necessary. If the committee is able to adequately respond to the items noted in the RFAI, it may avoid an enforcement action. If not, and the issue meets RAD's thresholds (as approved by the Commission) for further Commission action, the agency has several tools available to it, such as the Audit Program, the Alternative Dispute Resolution Program and the traditional enforcement program.

### Objective 3: Interpret the FECA and Related Statutes

**Strategic Activity 1: Give timely and well-written advice to the Commission so that it can conduct and complete rulemakings and advisory opinions necessary to clarify the requirements of campaign finance laws.**

**Activity Description:**

The Policy Division of the Office of General Counsel (OGC) works with Commissioners and staff from other divisions throughout the agency to draft various rulemaking documents for Commission consideration, such as Notifications of Availability of Petitions for Rulemaking, Notices of Proposed Rulemakings (NPRMs) and Final Rules and Explanations and Justifications. NPRMs provide an opportunity for members of the public to review proposed regulations, submit written comments to the Commission and testify at public hearings, which are conducted at the FEC when appropriate. The Commission considers the comments and testimony and deliberates publicly regarding the adoption of the Final Rules and the corresponding Explanations and Justifications, which provide the rationale and basis for the new or revised regulations. Advisory opinions (AOs) are official Commission responses to questions regarding the application of federal campaign finance laws to specific factual situations. The *Act* generally provides the Commission with 60 days to respond to an AO request. For AO requests from candidates in the two months leading up to an election, the *Act* provides the Commission with 20 days to respond to the request if the proposed transaction or activity is connected to the candidate's upcoming election.

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**Strategic Activity 2: Defend the campaign finance laws and the Commission's regulations against legal challenges.**

**Activity Description:**

The Commission has primary responsibility for defending the *Act* and Commission regulations against court challenges. In addition, the *FECA* authorizes the Commission to institute a civil action in enforcement matters that cannot be resolved through voluntary conciliation. The Litigation Division of OGC represents the Commission in litigation before the federal district and circuit courts and before the Supreme Court with respect to cases involving publicly financed Presidential candidates. The Solicitor General represents the Commission before the Supreme Court in other cases.

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## Objective 4: Foster a Culture of High Performance

**Strategic Activity 1: Increase recruitment efforts and ensure fair, impartial and inclusive hiring, training and promotion opportunities at all levels to attract and maintain a diverse and high-performing workforce.**

**Activity Description:**

The FEC's greatest resource is a well-trained and knowledgeable staff. By increasing our outreach and recruitment efforts and providing a fair, impartial, inclusive and accessible work environment, the FEC can strengthen its diverse workforce of highly performing individuals who offer unique perspectives that will improve the organization's performance.

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**Strategic Activity 2: Modernize IT systems and applications**

**Activity Description:**

The FEC is undertaking a multi-year IT modernization project to reduce overall costs to maintain the FEC's systems and data, improve services provided to the public and better ensure the security of the FEC's networks, systems and data. Ongoing improvements to the eFiling system will provide an opportunity to migrate the eFiling data center to a cloud environment, reducing costs for the support and maintenance of the legacy eFiling physical data center. Migrating additional assets, including legacy applications used by FEC staff to perform their mission, to a cloud environment will result in improved efficiency and effectiveness of these systems and applications and help control the long-term costs of maintaining these systems and applications.

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**Strategic Activity 3: Develop a records management program in compliance with Presidential Directive requirements.**

**Activity Description:**

The FEC will further develop a records management program in compliance with federal records management requirements. The program to preserve and disclose agency activities and decisions will increase efficiency and improve performance by eliminating paper and using electronic recordkeeping to the fullest extent possible.

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**Strategic Activity 4: Implement strategic activities on time and within budget.**

**Activity Description:**

The FEC's focus on disclosure, voluntary compliance and education requires the agency to engage in new technological initiatives to increase data access and availability. As these initiatives represent a large allocation of the FEC's financial and human resources, the agency will closely monitor project schedules and budgets.

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### 3.4 Contributing Programs for Strategic Objectives

The Commission's statutory obligation is to administer, interpret and enforce the *Federal Election Campaign Act*, which serves the compelling governmental interest in deterring corruption and the appearance of corruption in financing elections. In doing so, the Commission remains mindful of the First Amendment's guarantees of freedom of speech and association, and the practical implication of its actions on the political process.

The Commission also administers the public funding of Presidential elections, as provided in the *Presidential Election Campaign Fund Act* and the *Presidential Primary Matching Account Act*. Through the public funding program, the Federal Government provides from the Presidential Election Campaign Fund: 1) matching funds to candidates seeking their party's Presidential nomination and 2) grants to Presidential nominees for their general election campaigns. The Presidential Election Campaign Fund is funded by taxpayers who voluntarily check off the \$3 designation for the Fund on their income tax returns.

Under the Presidential public funding program, the Commission 1) determines a candidate's eligibility to participate in the program, 2) certifies the amount of public funds to which the candidate committee is entitled and 3) conducts a thorough examination and audit of the qualified campaign expenses of every recipient of payments under the program.

The FEC's programs support the Strategic Objectives outlined in this plan, as described below.

#### ➤ **Objective 1: Engage and Inform the Public About Campaign Finance Data**

Providing a transparent system that timely and accurately discloses the reported sources and amounts of funds used to finance federal elections is one of the most important responsibilities assigned to the FEC by the *FECA*. The Commission relies heavily on its information technology systems to make financial reports filed by federal political committees easily and readily accessible to the general public, the media and academics. The Office of the Chief Information Officer is responsible for creating and maintaining a state-of-the-art electronic filing system to collect financial disclosure reports from federal candidates and political committees, as well as a campaign finance disclosure system that presents disclosure data that are easily searched, retrieved and understood.

The FEC is also committed to providing support and aid to the public in finding and understanding the vast store of data available on the FEC website. The Reports Analysis Division makes financial disclosure reports available to the public in a timely, efficient and useful manner, and processes and codes the data contained in campaign finance reports so that the information can be accurately organized, categorized and searched in the agency's databases. The FEC's Public Disclosure and Media Relations Division helps the public find and understand the campaign finance disclosure information available on the FEC website, answers media inquiries about campaign finance information and provides press releases that compile and disclose political fundraising and spending during each election cycle.

➤ **Objective 2: Promote Compliance with the FECA and Related Statutes**

The FEC has developed and implemented a number of programs intended to foster and maintain a high level of voluntary compliance. The agency strives to reduce the number of inadvertent violations by issuing clear guidance to the public through information and outreach activities, such as conferences and webinars, and compliance information available on the FEC website. The FEC hosts instructional conferences and webinars where Commissioners and staff explain the *Act's* requirements to candidates and political committees. These outreach activities specifically address recent changes in the campaign finance law and focus on fundraising, methods of candidate support and reporting requirements. The agency also maintains online resources to detail developments in the campaign finance law and Commission decisions and publishes a series of Campaign Guides written in plain language to help political committee representatives comply with the campaign finance laws. See <https://www.fec.gov/help-candidates-and-committees/>. The agency also maintains its own YouTube channel, which can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/FECTube>. The FEC's online instructional offerings include specific support for filers and general information for members of the public interested in learning more about the campaign finance process. Staff in the Information Division, Public Disclosure and Media Relations Division, Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs and Reports Analysis Division (RAD) are also available by phone or via email to answer general questions about campaign finance requirements, questions about campaign finance data and inquiries about filing requirements and procedures. Filers can obtain the name and contact information of their assigned Campaign Finance Analyst through the "Campaign Finance Analyst look up" feature on the FEC website.

In addition to its programs designed to encourage voluntary compliance, the FEC maintains a robust program to ensure that the campaign finance laws are swiftly and fairly enforced. The FEC has exclusive jurisdiction over the civil enforcement of federal campaign finance laws. In exercising that authority, the Commission uses a variety of methods to uncover possible campaign finance violations. RAD reviews campaign finance reports to track compliance with the law and to ensure that the public record provides a full and accurate representation of campaign finance activity. If RAD's review identifies an apparent violation or raises questions about the information disclosed on a report, RAD sends a Request for Additional Information (RAFI) to the committee, affording the committee an opportunity to take remedial action or correct the public record, if necessary. The FEC's Audit Division conducts audits of any committees that, according to internal thresholds approved by the Commission, have not substantially complied with the law. As required by the public funding statutes, the FEC also audits all Presidential campaigns that receive public funds. Audit Reports and related documents are located at <https://www.fec.gov/legal-resources/enforcement/audit-reports/>.

Instances of noncompliance may lead to an FEC enforcement case, or Matter Under Review (MUR). The Enforcement Division of the Office of General Counsel (OGC) handle MURs through the FEC's traditional enforcement program pursuant to the procedures set forth in the *FECA*. In some cases, respondents may be given the opportunity to participate in the Commission's Alternative Dispute Resolution Program, which seeks to resolve less complex matters more swiftly by encouraging settlement using a streamlined process that focuses on remedial measures for candidates, political committees and other entities. Normally, violations involving the late submission of FEC reports or failure to file reports are subject to the Administrative Fine Program.

### ➤ **Objective 3: Interpret the FECA and Related Statutes**

Commission initiatives, Congressional action, judicial decisions, petitions for rulemaking or other changes in campaign finance law may necessitate that the Commission update or adopt new regulations or provide other guidance.

The FEC undertakes rulemakings either to write new regulations or revise existing regulations. The Policy Division of OGC drafts various rulemaking documents for Commission consideration, such as Notifications of Availability of Petitions for Rulemaking, Notices of Proposed Rulemakings (NPRMs), and Final Rules and Explanations and Justifications. NPRMs provide an opportunity for members of the public to review proposed regulations, submit written comments to the Commission and testify at public hearings, which are conducted at the FEC, when appropriate. The Commission considers the comments and testimony and deliberates publicly regarding the adoption of the Final Rules and the corresponding Explanations and Justifications, which provide the rationale and basis for the new or revised regulations. The Policy Division also drafts for Commission approval advisory opinions (AOs), which are official Commission responses to questions regarding the application of federal campaign finance law to specific factual situations. The *Act* generally provides the Commission with 60 days to respond to an AO request. For AO requests from candidates in the two months leading up to an election, the *Act* provides the Commission with 20 days to respond to the request if the proposed transaction or activity is connected to the candidate's upcoming election.

Through OGC's Litigation Division, the Commission represents itself in litigation before the federal district and circuit courts and before the Supreme Court with respect to cases involving publicly financed Presidential candidates. At the direction of the Commission, staff from the Litigation Division also defend the *Act* and Commission regulations against court challenges. In addition, the *FECA* authorizes the Commission to institute civil actions in enforcement matters that cannot be resolved through voluntary conciliation.

### ➤ **Objective 4: Foster a Culture of High Performance**

The Commission recognizes that its greatest asset is a diverse, inclusive and engaged workforce that supports the accomplishment of its mission. All FEC staff members must collaborate across offices and divisions in order to deliver mission results and ensure the agency maintains the most efficient and effective management processes.

The Office of Human Resources (OHR) plays a critical role in helping the Commission meet its mission and strategic performance goals by providing HR programs and systems that must succeed in identifying, attracting, developing, managing and retaining a high-quality and diverse workforce capable of accomplishing the agency's mission. OHR is responsible for implementing the FEC's performance appraisal system.

The Office of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) promotes the establishment of a workplace environment free from harassment and discrimination by monitoring and analyzing the Commission's personnel policies, practices and procedures; identifying barriers to the recruitment and advancement of special emphasis group members; offering EEO Counseling or ADR services; processing informal and formal allegations of discrimination; and providing staff education and targeted training programs.

The Administrative Services Division (ASD) has overall responsibility for physical security and safety, facility management and maintenance, property and inventory management, fleet vehicle management and mail center services. In addition, the ASD provides centralized services integral to ensuring that the FEC functions efficiently, including copy services, facsimile and duplication equipment, courier and transportation services and furniture and conference room management. The ASD assists with government travel cards, records management and document reproduction.

The Office of the Chief Financial Officer produces timely, accurate and useful financial information, essential for making day-to-day decisions and managing the agency's operations more efficiently and effectively. This office is responsible for fully complying with all financial management laws and standards, and all aspects of budget formulation, execution and procurement.

The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) plans for, develops and maintains an integrated system of hardware and software, including its cloud infrastructure. It helps support the Commission's responsibility for providing public disclosure by aiding in the data analysis of all campaign finance reports. It maintains the agency's databases and IT systems in direct support of the FEC's transparency objective, other aspects of the FEC mission and non-mission related data.

The OCIO secures the Commission's IT infrastructure against the ever-present threats of data misuse, destruction or inappropriate disclosures, while ensuring continuity of operations in the event of a disaster. The Commission continually takes aggressive actions to secure its IT infrastructure, including implementing cybersecurity directives from the Department of Homeland Security as well as holding a mandatory security awareness training program for its employees and contractors. In addition, the FEC must continue to develop strategies and initiatives relating to risk assessments of operations, disaster recovery and continuity of operations in the event of a disaster.

The Office of the Commission Secretary (OCS) is responsible for a broad range of functions that relate to the official operations of the Commission. The OCS serves as the central repository and official custodian for all Commission documents and as a distribution point for the circulation of materials to the Commission. The OCS prepares certifications for all Commission votes. The OCS handles all administrative matters for Commission meetings and hearings. As such, OCS coordinates closely with other Commission staff to ensure that material is distributed timely and accurately. The Commission's Secretary and Clerk is the official archival and reference authority and manager of the FEC's Records Management Program.

### 3.5 External Factors Affecting Strategic Objectives

This Strategic Plan includes an assessment of significant external factors that may influence the agency's success in achieving its goal and objectives. Despite these political, economic, technological and legal factors, the FEC is committed to successfully administering the *FECA*.

In this examination of external factors, the agency considered a broad range of possible events, including the possibility for significant or substantial changes to the *FECA* that could change the nature of the FEC's work; continued and accelerated changes in technology that could require additional skills, training and expertise among FEC staff; and information technology developments that could require the FEC to significantly change the methods it uses to make campaign finance information available to the public.

FEC operations are influenced by a variety of external factors. Some of the most critical of these are:

- Significant and substantive amendments to the *FECA* and significant judicial opinions construing the *FECA*, the Commission's regulations or other final actions taken by the Commission.
- The nomination and Senate confirmation of FEC Commissioners.
- Significant changes in the level of competition in federal election campaigns, the volume and intensity of fundraising and technological developments that significantly alter the way campaign funds are raised and spent, as well as increased public demand for the data.
- The number of candidates who run for federal office, the number of filers involved in the election cycle, the amount of activity reported to the Commission and the number of presidential candidates who participate in the presidential public funding program, and their level of financial activity. (Although the number of elections for federal office held in any election cycle is fixed, various factors, such as the number of open-seat races, can affect the number of candidates running for those seats.)
- Technological developments related to communications and data storage and retrieval that require the FEC to significantly change or upgrade its disclosure systems.
- Unfunded mandates and insufficient resources affecting core mission activities.
- Changes to government-wide human capital requirements or other operating requirements that could require significant changes by the FEC.
- New financial reporting standards and information technology requirements.

These and other unanticipated events can influence the amount of money and specific types of activity to be regulated by the FEC each election cycle. FEC workloads are driven by such factors as the number of reports filed and transactions to be processed, the volume of requests for information, data and assistance, the number of advisory opinion requests submitted and the number of complaints filed with the Commission.

# 4.0 PERFORMANCE GOALS

## 4.1 FY 2022 – 2026 FEC Performance Goals

### Objective 1: Engage and Inform the Public about Campaign Finance Data

Performance Goal	Description
Improve the public’s access to information about how campaign funds are raised and spent.	After campaign finance disclosure reports are imaged for disclosure purposes, the information is coded and entered into the FEC’s database for review to assess accuracy and ensure complete disclosure of campaign finance information. This metric evaluates the timeliness of the coding and entry process.

### Objective 2: Promote Compliance with FECA and Related Statutes

Performance Goal 1	Description
Encourage voluntary compliance with <i>FECA</i> requirements through educational outreach and information.	The FEC hosts conferences and webinars where Commissioners and staff explain how the <i>FECA</i> applies to candidates, parties and political action committees. These outreach programs address recent changes in the law and focus on fundraising, methods of candidate support and reporting requirements. This metric evaluates customer satisfaction with these efforts.
Performance Goal 2	Description
Seek adherence to <i>FECA</i> requirements through fair, effective and timely enforcement and compliance programs.	The FEC has formed strategies for ensuring that its enforcement and compliance programs are fair, effective and timely. This metric evaluates the timeliness of the resolution of enforcement matters.

### Objective 3: Interpret the FECA and Related Statutes

Performance Goal	Description
Provide timely legal guidance to the public.	The FEC undertakes rulemakings either to write new Commission regulations or revise existing regulations. The Commission also provides guidance on how the <i>FECA</i> applies to specific situations through the advisory opinion process and represents itself in most litigation before the Federal district and appellate courts. This metric evaluates the FEC's success in meeting statutory and court-ordered deadlines.

### Objective 4: Foster a Culture of High Performance

Performance Goal	Description
Foster a workforce that delivers results.	The Commission sets quarterly performance goals across a range of mission-critical activities. This metric evaluates staffs' success in meeting internal performance goals.