

New Mexico Ethics Commission Now Operational

January 2020

The New Mexico Ethics Commission, created by constitutional referendum in November 2018, gained jurisdiction over ethics complaints on New Year's Day. New Mexico is the 45th state to establish an independent ethics commission.

The commission is comprised of seven members: one chair appointed by the governor who must be a retired judge; four commissioners appointed by the legislature's majority and minority leadership; and two commissioners appointed by the latter five. No more than three members can be from the same political party. Except for the inaugural members, commissioners will serve four-year, staggered terms.

The commission has broad investigatory, enforcement, and advisory authority. It is tasked to oversee the state's laws on campaign finance, lobbying, financial disclosure, and ethics. It will hear complaints - *sua sponte* and submitted by named complainants - against public officials, candidates, lobbyists, and contractors, and will have authority to impose civil penalties for violations.

The commission will begin issuing Advisory Opinions as early as February.

The commission's website can be found at <https://www.sec.state.nm.us/>.

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