



Federal Election Commission

* **FY 2014-2019 Strategic Plan**

A plan for enhancing FEC results, increasing stakeholder satisfaction, promoting efficiency and effectiveness and fostering staff learning and growth.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Federal Election Commission’s (FEC) Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years (FYs) 2014-2019 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 candidates’ financial support. As a result, the FEC’s first strategic objective is to engage and inform the public, educating the electorate about how federal campaigns and committees are financed. Public confidence in the political process also depends on the knowledge that individuals who participate in federal elections follow clear and well-defined rules and face real 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 ensure that campaign finance laws are effectively and fairly enforced. The third strategic objective is to interpret the FECA and related statutes by 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 the agency cannot successfully achieve its mission without a high-performing workforce that understands expectations and delivers results. The FEC’s fourth strategic objective is to foster a culture of high performance in order to ensure that the agency delivers its mission efficiently and effectively.

As part of drafting this new strategic plan, the FEC engaged its full staff and external stakeholders by conducting a comprehensive analysis of its “strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.” The FEC surveyed its employees and external stakeholders and held interviews with selected stakeholders and staff to identify challenges faced by the agency in meeting its stakeholders’ needs while fulfilling its mission. Based on the challenges identified through these surveys and interviews, a Strategic Planning Steering Committee composed of key agency managers drafted a Strategy Map that illustrates high-level activities the agency will undertake to strengthen its ability to fulfill its mission. Leaders for each activity were identified across divisions and the draft Strategy Map was communicated to all FEC staff to ensure that staff remain actively engaged in the strategic planning activities and recognize their roles and responsibilities in successfully moving the agency in the identified direction.

The campaign finance legal landscape has been altered in recent years by a series of court decisions, including *Citizens United v. FEC*, *SpeechNow.org v. FEC* and *EMILY’s List v. FEC*, that have significantly changed the regulatory environment by removing restrictions on the use of financial resources.¹ The Commission provides guidance regarding the application of federal campaign finance law to specific factual situations. For example, the Commission considered 19 advisory opinion requests during FY 2013 to address questions regarding many areas of the law.

In an average fiscal year, the FEC receives campaign finance reports, statements and other disclosure documents from more than 10,000 political committees and other filers. In FY 2013, the FEC received 81,600 campaign finance filings. Campaign finance reports filed during the year disclosed nearly 30 million financial transactions,

¹ In *Citizens United v. FEC*, 558 U.S. 310 (2010), the Supreme Court held that corporations (and by implication, unions) may use their general treasury funds to pay for electioneering communications and independent expenditures. Subsequently, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit held in *SpeechNow.org v. FEC*, 599 F.3d 686 (D.C. Cir. 2010) (*en banc*), that certain political committees that make only independent expenditures, but do not make any contributions to federal candidates, may accept funds in unlimited amounts. These committees have come to be known as “Super PACs.” In *EMILY’s List v. FEC*, 581 F.3d 1, 12 (D.C. Cir. 2009), the D.C. Circuit held that political committees and other non-profit groups may finance certain independent political activity with funds outside the limitations and certain prohibitions of the Act.

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. As new technology continues to emerge, the agency is committed to improving its campaign finance disclosure database and the interfaces it offers to the public at 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 reports 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 (RAI) 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 RAI, it may avoid an enforcement action. If not, and the issue meets RAD's thresholds for further Commission action, the agency has several tools available to it, such as the Administrative Fine Program, audits, the Alternative Dispute Resolution Program and the traditional enforcement program.

The FEC has exclusive jurisdiction over the civil enforcement of the federal campaign finance law. Following procedures set forth in the FECA, the 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. For example, the Commission recently began providing educational conferences and seminars as webinars in order to reach a larger audience at a lower cost and without the expense and inconvenience of travel. Similarly, the agency has created an E-Learning section on its website and launched a YouTube channel. Keeping abreast and ahead of emerging technologies remains a constant challenge for the agency and is a priority for the FEC in FY 2014.

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 activities that include recruiting and retaining a diverse and high-performing workforce; updating agency-wide policies and procedures, especially in the areas of personnel, safety, health and security; and developing a records management program.

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, 2014-2019, 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.

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1.0 MISSION STATEMENT

1.1 FY 2014 – 2019 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* (FECA/the Act).² The Commission is also responsible for administering the federal public funding programs for Presidential campaigns and party conventions. This responsibility includes certifying and auditing all participating candidates and committees and enforcing the public funding laws. 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 can 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 Commission's Chairmanship rotates among the members, with no member serving as Chairman more than once during a six-year term. The Commissioners meet regularly to formulate policy and to vote on significant legal and administrative matters. The Act requires at least four Commissioners' votes for the Commission to approve any official action, thus requiring bipartisan decision making.

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 10,000 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.

²The 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* 2 U.S.C. §§ 431-55). 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 2014 – 2019 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 2014-2019 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 following describes the methodology used:³

- **Document Review** – The FEC analyzed its human capital strategies, IT strategies, budget formulation process, resource allocation, the current state of the campaign finance landscape and how its activities align with *Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)* and *GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRAMA)* requirements.

³ The FEC contracted the services of Grant Thornton LLP to conduct this review. Consistent with the instructions of OMB A-11, the FEC drafted the content for this strategic plan and utilized Grant Thornton LLP for analysis, consolidation and formatting.

- **Best Practices Research** – The agency examined how other high-performing agencies with similar missions (independent regulatory agencies) approach strategic planning, performance management and communications.
- **Stakeholder Interviews and Surveys** – The FEC gathered data from both internal and external stakeholders to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the current FEC strategic plan, performance measurements and communication strategies. The FEC sought input from all levels of its employees through surveys and interviews with all senior leadership, as well as the NTEU Chapter 204 President.

To gather input from external stakeholders, the FEC conducted surveys of stakeholder groups, including Congressional committees, interest groups, software vendors, practitioners and a random sample of 700 PACs, state and local parties and candidate campaign committees. The sampling methodology chosen was a stratified random sample with three basic groupings from which 10% of each group was randomly selected. The three basic groupings were PACs, Party Committees and House and Senate candidate committees. The PAC grouping was divided into four segments: Corporate PACs, Labor PACs, Non-Connected PACs (including IEOPCs) and all other PACs. All six of the national party committees were included (in addition to the 10% random sample), and state and local parties were divided into two groups: Democratic and Republican. Lastly, the House and Senate candidate committees were divided into sub-groups based on party and incumbent status.

The stakeholders all demonstrated an interest in the FEC's strategic direction, and the brief questionnaire allowed for comments on the FEC's strengths and weaknesses, as well as the opportunities and challenges the FEC must confront in FY 2014-2019.

The FEC developed a Draft Strategic Plan, FY 2014-2019, based, in part, on information gained from these consultations. The Draft Strategic Plan was made available to the public on the FEC website for 45 days, during which time the agency solicited comments from the public and from internal stakeholders. In addition, the FEC provided staff from the agency's House and Senate authorizing committees and Appropriations Subcommittees with the draft and solicited their feedback on the agency's proposed goal, objectives and strategies. Certain key staff from other committees with jurisdiction over government performance were similarly contacted, so in total the draft plan was provided to 18 Congressional staff. The FEC received no comments on the draft.

3.0 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

3.1 FY 2014 – 2019 FEC Strategic Objectives

Objective 1:

Engage and Inform the Public about Campaign Finance Data

Objective 2:

Promote Compliance with the FECA and Related Statutes

Objective 3:

Interpret the FECA and Related Statutes

Objective 4:

Foster a Culture of High Performance

3.2 Strategic Objective Context

Objective 1:

Engage and Inform the Public about Campaign Finance Data

The *Federal Election Campaign Act* 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 10,000 political committees and other filers. In FY 2013, the FEC received 81,600 campaign finance filings. Campaign finance reports filed during the year disclosed nearly 30 million financial transactions, which were included in the FEC's campaign finance database.

During FY 2014-2019, 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.

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 real consequences for non-compliance. In FY 2014-2019, 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 2014-2019 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. During FY 2014-2019, the Commission will devote significant attention to ensuring that it can recruit and retain a diverse and engaged workforce that is well-trained, well-informed and understands the agency's mission. 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 2014-2019. To distill those objectives into actionable next steps, the FEC has further enumerated strategic activities to be accomplished by FY 2019.

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: Ensure easy public access to both raw data and data summaries on the FEC website and communicate the availability of disclosure resources to the public.

Activity Description:

The FEC seeks to serve as the authoritative source of campaign finance data for the public. In order to fulfill this role, the FEC will provide accurate and reliable data in easily understandable formats. All campaign finance data, including individual transaction data, historical data and data summaries, will be made readily available, retrievable and searchable on the FEC website. The FEC will also ensure that members of the public can access, locate and understand campaign finance data on the FEC website.

Strategic Activity 2: 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 undertake a comprehensive review of 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.

Strategic Activity 3: Ensure staff have the tools and knowledge to provide excellent customer service to the media, the public and other groups regarding campaign finance data.

Activity Description: The FEC will create customer service standards for staff providing support to the public, ensuring that staff have the training and knowledge to do their jobs and the tools and resources necessary to provide complete access to campaign finance data.

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: Respond quickly and accurately to inquiries about existing reporting and other compliance requirements.

Activity Description: To ensure that any individual or entity choosing to participate in the federal campaign process has the knowledge and understanding to comply with the campaign finance law, the FEC maintains an 800 line for public inquiries about the law and invites direct conversation with FEC staff members and, for filers, those who review their reports. The FEC is committed to the highest level of service to its customers.

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 this 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 (RAI) 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 RAI, it may avoid an enforcement action. If not, and the issue meets RAD's thresholds for further Commission action, the agency has several tools available to it, such as audits, the Alternative Dispute Resolution Program and the traditional enforcement program.

Strategic Activity 5: Resolve cases with strategic settlement terms designed to increase future compliance and to deter future violations.

Activity Description: The FEC's enforcement programs are ultimately focused on promoting compliance with the campaign finance laws. In order to measure the success of its enforcement programs in reaching this overarching goal, the FEC will develop verifiable settlement terms.

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 OGC works with Commissioners and staff from other divisions throughout the agency to draft Notices of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRMs) for Commission consideration. 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 regulations and the corresponding Explanations and Justifications, which provide the rationale and basis for the new or revised regulations. Advisory opinions (AO) 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.

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 the Office of General Counsel 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.

Strategic Activity 3: Revise reporting forms to facilitate compliance with regulations.

Activity Description: Commission forms must accurately and clearly explain what is required to be reported under the law. The FEC must allow filers to completely and correctly report their activity, and must receive and disclose this information in a manner that is useful and meaningful to the public, via up-to-date paper filing forms and electronic filing platforms.

Objective 4: Foster a Culture of High Performance

Strategic Activity 1: Recruit and retain a diverse and high-performing workforce.

Activity Description:

The FEC's greatest resource is its knowledgeable staff. To continue to improve the organization's performance, the FEC will increase its efforts to identify diverse and highly qualified recruits, and to retain the agency's current high performers.

Strategic Activity 2: Update agency-wide policies and procedures, as necessary, with a particular interest in the areas of personnel, safety, health and security.

Activity Description:

The FEC must ensure the physical protection of its property and people so that it has a safe and secure work environment to support the completion of its mission, and must provide superior personnel services to support the needs of its staff. One significant way that the agency provides for these staff needs is by ensuring that plans and policies are clear, current and available to staff.

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

Activity Description:

The FEC will 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.

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.

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, 2) grants to Presidential nominating conventions and 3) 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 or convention 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 Public Disclosure Division makes financial disclosure reports available to the public in a timely, efficient and useful manner; 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; and helps the public find and understand the campaign finance disclosure information available on the FEC website. The FEC Press Office 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, seminars and webinars, and compliance information available on the FEC website. The FEC's Information Division hosts instructional conferences and seminars in Washington, D.C., and in other cities across the country, where Commissioners and staff explain the Act's requirements to candidates and political committees. These conferences specifically address recent changes in the campaign finance laws and focus on fundraising and reporting regulations. The Information Division also maintains a news site

(<http://www.fec.gov/pages/fecrecord/fecrecord.shtml>) that details developments in the campaign finance law and Commission decisions and publishes a series of Campaign Guides and brochures written in plain language to help political committee representatives comply with the campaign finance laws. The Information Division additionally maintains an E-Learning section on its Educational Outreach web page and launched its own YouTube channel, which can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/FECTube>. The E-Learning page offers video workshops and interactive presentations that allow users to test their knowledge of the information presented. The Division also maintains a toll-free line to respond to inquiries about the law and its requirements.

To further support voluntary compliance, the FEC's Reports Analysis Division (RAD) maintains a dedicated page on the FEC website (<http://www.fec.gov/rad/index.shtml>) that provides filers with an easy way to find the resources most relevant to their committee or filer type, all in one place. RAD also answers phone inquiries about filing requirements, and filers can obtain the name and contact information of their assigned Campaign Finance Analyst through the "Campaign Finance Analyst look up" feature on the web page. RAD's Campaign Finance Analysts present workshops and seminars on filing requirements and offer extended phone hours on filing deadlines to promote timely filing and ensure that reporting questions are answered quickly by FEC staff.

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 (RFAI) 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, have not substantially complied with the law. As required by the public funding statutes, the FEC also audits all Presidential campaigns and nominating conventions that receive public funds. Audit Reports and related documents are located at http://www.fec.gov/audits/audit_reports.shtml.

Instances of noncompliance may lead to an FEC enforcement case, or Matter Under Review (MUR). The Office of Complaints Examination and Legal Administration and 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 and political committees. 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 often 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 Notices of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRMs) for Commission consideration. 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 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.

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 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. It helps support the Commission's responsibility for providing public disclosure by aiding in the 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 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. A workforce analysis conducted in FY 2012 and 2013 provides a baseline for planning purposes.

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.
- 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 2014 – 2019 FEC Performance Goals

OBJECTIVE 1:

Engage and Inform the Public about Campaign Finance Data

Performance Goal: Improve the public’s access to information about how campaign funds are raised and spent.

Indicator: Enhanced availability of campaign finance data as measured by increased capabilities to retrieve and analyze data.

Timeframe: Annually (each fiscal year).

Historical Trend: This is a new area of performance reporting for the FEC.

Target: This key indicator represents a new area of performance reporting for the FEC. The agency will collect baseline performance data during the measure’s first year of implementation, and then establish an appropriate target.

OBJECTIVE 2:

Promote Compliance with the FECA and Related Statutes

Performance Goal: Encourage voluntary compliance with FECA requirements through educational outreach and information.

Indicator: Percent of educational outreach programs (webinars, seminars, publications and E-Learning presentations) and events that achieve targeted satisfaction rating on user surveys.

Timeframe: Annually (each fiscal year).

Historical Trend: This is a new area of performance reporting for the FEC.

Target: 4.0 or higher on a 5.0 scale. The FEC does not have historical data on satisfaction ratings for webinars, publications and E-Learning presentations. The FEC will develop methods for surveying user satisfaction in these areas during FY 2014.

OBJECTIVE 2:

Promote Compliance with the FECA and Related Statutes

Performance Goal: Seek adherence to FECA requirements through fair, effective and timely enforcement and compliance programs.

Indicator: Of the enforcement matters resolved during the fiscal year, the percentage that was resolved within 15 months of the date of receipt.

Timeframe: Collected on a quarterly basis.

Historical Trend: 89% in FY 2011; 70% in FY 2012; and 72% in FY 2013.

Target: 80% by 2015

OBJECTIVE 3:

Interpret the FECA and Related Statutes

Performance Goal: Provide timely legal guidance to the public.

Indicator: Percent of legal guidance provided within statutory and court-ordered deadlines.

Timeframe: Collected on a quarterly basis.

Historical Trend: This is a new area of performance reporting for the FEC.

Target: 100%

OBJECTIVE 4:

Foster a Culture of High-Performance

Performance Goal: Foster a workforce that delivers results.

Indicator: Commission-required quarterly updates meet targeted performance goals.

Timeframe: Annually (each fiscal year).

Historical Trend: This is a new area of performance reporting for the FEC.

Target: This is a new area of performance reporting for the FEC. The agency will set a baseline for this measure in FY 2014 and then set an appropriate target.