

Office of the Ethics Board
INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE: November 17, 2010

TO: Chairman Holloway, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Veronica W. Robinson,
Executive Director, Ethics Board &
Executive Secretary, Personnel Review Board

SUBJECT: Electronic Submission of Statement of Economic Interests (SEI) Form

Policy Issue

The Ethics Board is in the process of developing and implementing a means by which Statement of Economic Interest (SEI) forms can be completed online and submitted to the Ethics Board in a secure, electronic format. Completion of this project will:

1. Support the Office of the Ethics Board's goal of organizing, storing, filing, retrieving, and otherwise managing SEI forms efficiently and economically.
2. Improve the ease in which filers are able to file SEI data from one year to the next.
3. Assist the Ethics Board in meeting duties related to SEI forms review and related training.
4. Allow the Ethics Board to create an online database of general public information for easy access from its website.

Background

County Ordinance 9.03(1) requires that "All county elected and appointed officials, candidates for elected county offices, and county employees, whose duties and responsibilities; performed for or on behalf of the county or any board or commission thereof, include the awarding or execution of contracts for the purchase of supplies, services, materials, and/or equipment; the construction of public works; and/or the sale or leasing of real estate or who may be designated by the Ethics Board shall file Statements of Economic Interests." The Ethics Board may exercise its discretion in requiring filing of economic interest statements by members of boards and commissions.

The SEI form and its attachments are currently available on the Ethics Board website in a fillable PDF format. However, an SEI filer must still print the form, complete the sworn affidavit, and submit a hard copy to the Ethics Board. The hard copy forms are reviewed and stored in the Ethics Board office. SEI forms are public records and are subject to open records laws. Any requester that submits a written request by way of completing an approved form may review any SEI form, and the SEI filer is notified of the request.

In the interest of enhancing services available to required SEI filers, the Milwaukee County

Ethics Board is prepared to begin implementation of a means to allow SEI filers to complete and submit their SEI form in a secure, electronic format. The electronic form will include the required certifying statement to fulfill the purpose of the current affidavit. The means and methods used to implement this project can likely be used to facilitate similar projects with or for other departments, such as that in research by the Milwaukee County Election Commission.

Project Description

The SEI project will be two-tiered and the following results are anticipated:

TIER ONE:

- The SEI form, along with the honorariums, fees, and expenses information, will be submitted securely and electronically, in support of Milwaukee County's goal of improving its use of technology.
- By including the certifying statement of understanding, full completion, and intended accuracy on the form, filers will not need to locate a notary before signing, saving time for all filers.
- After signing the form electronically, the SEI filer will receive a confirmation that a form has been filed in their name and successfully submitted to the Ethics Board, providing a transaction record for all parties.
- The Ethics Board will receive the form in a database format, allowing for improved sorting, storing, organizing, reviewing, and updating, and in support of Milwaukee County's goal to implement more efficient business processes.
- Electronic submission will reduce the amount of paper used for SEI filing, in support of Milwaukee County's green initiative.

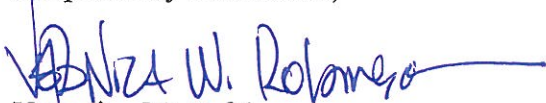
TIER TWO:

- Tier two of the project will allow basic data from the SEI form to be uploaded to the Ethics Board website, in support of Milwaukee County's goals of improving public accountability and accessibility.
- The index will be generally modeled after the State of Wisconsin Government Accountability Board's *Eye on Financial Relationships* website, following an established standard and trending positively toward more open government.
- Existing procedures will not be modified as regards requests to view a full copy of any SEI form, in accordance with open records laws and standards.

Fiscal Impact

The Ethics Board will use a balance of funds appropriated for its related Ethics Training project which is being developed and implemented on an ongoing basis. As a result, there is no fiscal impact on Milwaukee County.

Respectfully Submitted,



Veronica W. Robinson
Executive Director/Secretary, Ethics Board/PRB

- c: Scott Walker, County Executive
- Cindy Archer, Director – Department of Administrative Services
- Milwaukee County Ethics Board
- Lisa Weiner, Manager, Election Commission
- Laurie Panella, Interim CIO – IMSD, Department of Administrative Services
- David Amenta, Budget Analyst, DAS-Fiscal
- Rick Ceschin, Senior Research Analyst, County Board of Supervisors
- Jerome Heer, Director, Department of Audit
- Robert E. Andrews, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Corporation Counsel

BY VERONICA W. ROBINSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MILWAUKEE COUNTY ETHICS BOARD.

A RESOLUTION

A resolution that authorizes the development and implementation of a secure means of completing Statements of Economic Interest (SEI) forms online; submitting them electronically to the Office of the Ethics Board; and subsequently creating a simple online, publicly-accessible index of required SEI filers.

WHEREAS, all county elected and appointed officials, candidates for elected county offices, and county employees, whose duties and responsibilities, performed for or on behalf of the county or any board or commission thereof, include the awarding or execution of contracts for the purchase of supplies, services, materials, and/or equipment; the construction of public works; and/or the sale or leasing of real estate, or who may be designated by the Ethics Board, shall file Statements of Economic Interests; and,

WHEREAS, the duties of the Ethics Board also include preservation of the Statements of Economic Interests for a period of six (6) years from the date of receipt in a form that will facilitate document retention; and

WHEREAS, the duties of the Ethics Board also include accepting, filing, and having available for public inspection any information related to the purposes of the Ethics Code, including Statements of Economic Interest forms; and,

WHEREAS, since the Milwaukee County Ethics Board does not currently accommodate electronic submission of Statements of Economic Interest forms, filers must locate a notary public and must then submit a paper form to the Office of the Ethics Board, while individuals seeking information about filers must visit the Office of the Ethics Board at the Milwaukee County Courthouse; and

WHEREAS, Milwaukee County has taken steps to encourage sustainable work practices such as reduced paper usage and electrical consumption; to promote open government and enhanced public access by placing more public information on its websites; and to be more fiscally responsible by utilizing more modern technologies such as Legistar, a legislative workflow database; and

WHEREAS, the Ethics Board can efficiently and effectively meet the said duties by means of, among other things, a workflow database, and can partner with other County agencies with the same or similar goals; and

WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin's Government Accountability Board has set the standard for online access to basic financial disclosure data through its *Eye on Financial Relationships* website; and

WHEREAS, the Executive Director has managed the funds allocated toward development and implementation of an ethics training program in a fiscally responsible manner and has funds available to expend on this related development and implementation of an online means to file, submit, store, organize, and manage SEI forms; to upload basic

financial data into a public-access database; to improve the ease in which filers are able to file SEI data from one year to another; and to assist the Ethics Board in meeting its duties as related to Statements of Economic Interest forms and related training; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Executive Director, Milwaukee County Ethics Board, is hereby authorized to work in partnership with the Department of Administrative Services Information Management Systems Division to develop and implement a means of online financial disclosure filing via the Statement of Economic Interests form.

MILWAUKEE COUNTY FISCAL NOTE FORM

DATE: November 16, 2010

Original Fiscal Note

Substitute Fiscal Note

SUBJECT: Electronic Submission of SEI Form

FISCAL EFFECT:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Direct County Fiscal Impact
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Existing Staff Time Required
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Increase Operating Expenditures
(If checked, check one of two boxes below)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Absorbed Within Agency's Budget
<input type="checkbox"/> Not Absorbed Within Agency's Budget

<input type="checkbox"/> Decrease Operating Expenditures

<input type="checkbox"/> Increase Operating Revenues

<input type="checkbox"/> Decrease Operating Revenues | <input type="checkbox"/> Increase Capital Expenditures

<input type="checkbox"/> Decrease Capital Expenditures

<input type="checkbox"/> Increase Capital Revenues

<input type="checkbox"/> Decrease Capital Revenues

<input type="checkbox"/> Use of contingent funds |
|--|--|

Indicate below the dollar change from budget for any submission that is projected to result in increased/decreased expenditures or revenues in the current year.

	Expenditure or Revenue Category	Current Year	Subsequent Year
Operating Budget	Expenditure	0	0
	Revenue	0	0
	Net Cost	0	0
Capital Improvement Budget	Expenditure		
	Revenue		
	Net Cost		

DESCRIPTION OF FISCAL EFFECT

In the space below, you must provide the following information. Attach additional pages if necessary.

- A. Briefly describe the nature of the action that is being requested or proposed, and the new or changed conditions that would occur if the request or proposal were adopted.
- B. State the direct costs, savings or anticipated revenues associated with the requested or proposed action in the current budget year and how those were calculated.¹ If annualized or subsequent year fiscal impacts are substantially different from current year impacts, then those shall be stated as well. In addition, cite any one-time costs associated with the action, the source of any new or additional revenues (e.g. State, Federal, user fee or private donation), the use of contingent funds, and/or the use of budgeted appropriations due to surpluses or change in purpose required to fund the requested action.
- C. Discuss the budgetary impacts associated with the proposed action in the current year. A statement that sufficient funds are budgeted should be justified with information regarding the amount of budgeted appropriations in the relevant account and whether that amount is sufficient to offset the cost of the requested action. If relevant, discussion of budgetary impacts in subsequent years also shall be discussed. Subsequent year fiscal impacts shall be noted for the entire period in which the requested or proposed action would be implemented when it is reasonable to do so (i.e. a five-year lease agreement shall specify the costs/savings for each of the five years in question). Otherwise, impacts associated with the existing and subsequent budget years should be cited.
- D. Describe any assumptions or interpretations that were utilized to provide the information on this form.

A. The action would approve the use of 2010 budgeted funds in the Ethics Board budget for payment of expenses related to developing and implementing a means of receiving Statement of Economic Interest forms in a secure, electronic format and for uploading basic data into a publically accessible online index.

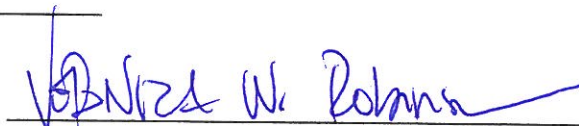
B. Because the funds used are already approved for related use in implementing the Ethics Boards training and development program, no additional direct costs, savings, or anticipated revenues are associated with the request or proposed action within the current budget year.

C. The available funds would be expended toward completion of the project. Expenditures are projected around \$30,000 but the Ethics Board continues to promote fiscal responsibility in the form of using in-house resources wherever possible, which is expected to facilitate reduced expenses. The project has no effect on revenue. There is a no net tax levy impact by approving this project.

D. It is assumed there is no fiscal impact because the project uses 2010 budgeted funds.

Department/Prepared By Veronica W. Robinson

Authorized Signature



Did DAS-Fiscal Staff Review? Yes No

¹ If it is assumed that there is no fiscal impact associated with the requested action, then an explanatory statement that justifies that conclusion shall be provided. If precise impacts cannot be calculated, then an estimate or range should be provided.