

## MEETING FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE OBLIGATIONS WITH TECHNOLOGY

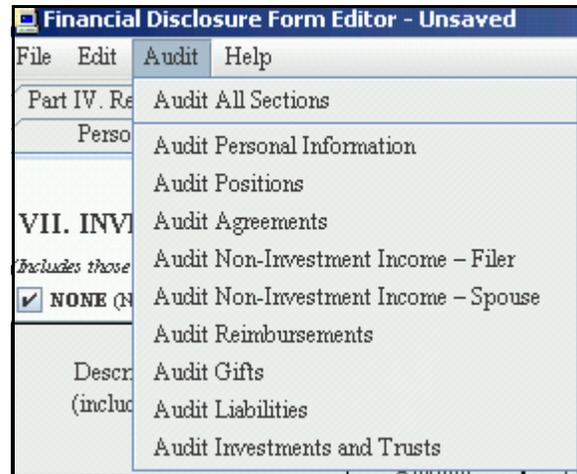
As the May 15 financial disclosure reporting deadline approaches, the Committee on Financial Disclosure is introducing its newly released reporting software, FDR2007. This program contains several technological advances designed to make the financial disclosure reporting process easier for judges and judiciary employees.

### AUDIT FEATURE

The "WOW" factor this year comes from a new self-audit feature that enables filers to check their reports before filing and avoid inadvertent errors such as inconsistent income data and missing or incorrect codes.

From the **Audit** menu, it is possible to run an audit of the entire report or a selected section of the report. Filers should select the type of audit report they wish to run.

The software will generate a PDF document highlighting possible errors and providing line-by-line guidance for making corrections. Once corrections are made using the FDR2007 software, filers should re-run the audit report to assure that appropriate corrections were made and no new errors were introduced.



#### Audit Report - Mulligan, Otis B

The review of your report has been completed. It is designed to catch common errors, such as the omission of required information or the selection of an incorrect income or value code.

At this time, the review feature cannot conduct a comparison between Part VII of your current and prior reports to check for assets which were added or omitted without the required transaction information in Column D or an explanation in Part VIII. In addition, the software cannot determine whether the description in Column A lists the full name of a mutual fund, e.g., Merrill Lynch Europacific mutual fund, or the full name of the financial institution where an account is held, e.g., Smith Barney Money Market Fund. It is also difficult for the software to note omissions or errors in IRAs and Trusts when the aggregate reporting method is used but the dash is not included before each asset in the aggregate account.

Most items flagged by this review require correction or completion. Certain additional items are included as general reminders. After making your corrections, please repeat this review process to ensure that you did not inadvertently introduce additional errors into your report.

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The review of your report noted the following:

#### **Part VII. Investments and Trusts**

Part VII, Investments and Trusts, line 1, if no income was earned and "None" in Column B(2) is correct, then Column B(1) should be left blank. Otherwise, if the income value code in Column B(1) is correct, please enter the correct income type in Column B(2).

While this self-audit feature cannot detect certain types of errors, such as misidentified mutual funds or assets that were added to or deleted from a prior report without appropriate transaction information, it will provide extensive assistance in correcting most common errors such as incorrect dates, incomplete data fields, and missing or incorrect codes, resulting in fewer letters to filers.

## MULTIMEDIA ENHANCEMENTS

In addition, FDR2007 includes four short instructional videos to help with the filing process. The first is an introductory overview of the software and the filing process which plays automatically upon initial installation of the program. Thereafter, it can be accessed at anytime via the **Help** menu. The **Help** menu also features short multimedia programs on changes to the financial disclosure filing instructions, the financial disclosure review process, and the correct reporting of mutual funds, including both the specific fund name and the fund family, *i.e.*, Blackrock Smallcap Mutual Fund.



## FORM REVISIONS

The Committee redesigned Part IV of the form to provide more visual prompts of the reporting requirements for travel reimbursements. Beginning this year, the software provides separate fields for each required piece of information, making inadvertent omissions less likely.

File Edit Audit Help					
Part IV. Reimbursements.		Part V. Gifts.	Part VI. Liabilities.	Part VII. Investments and Trusts.	Part VIII. Additional Information.
Personal Information		Part I. Positions.	Part II. Agreements.	Part III-A. Non-Investment Income.	Part III-B. Non-Investment Income.
<p>IV. REIMBURSEMENTS. -- <i>transportation, lodging, food, entertainment.</i>  <i>(Includes those to spouse and dependent children; see pp. 25-27 of filing instructions.)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NONE (No such reportable reimbursements.)</p>					
	<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>DATES</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>PURPOSE</u>	<u>ITEMS PAID OR PROVIDED</u>
1	George Washington University National Law Center	May 2-4, 2007	Washington, DC	Moot Court Panel	Transportation, hotel, meals
2					
3					

In addition, it is important to ensure that any reimbursed seminars reported in 2007 through the Privately Funded Seminars Disclosure System also are included in Part IV of the financial disclosure report. Both systems are public records and a comparative review of these reports by the public is foreseeable.

## **PROTECTING PRIVACY**

The Committee on Financial Disclosure also made minor changes to the Filing Instructions to help protect filers' privacy. Previously, when assets were added to or deleted from Part VII of a filer's report without corresponding reportable transactions, it often was necessary to provide details of certain life-events that are beyond the scope of the Ethics in Government Act, such as marriage or divorce, to explain the apparent reporting discrepancies. In deference to filer privacy, the Committee expanded the use of "(X)" to account for any newly reported asset for which there is not a corresponding reportable transaction, and adopted the use of "(Y)" to account for any asset being omitted from a report without a corresponding reportable transaction. While the disclosure requirements for reportable transactions, such as purchases and sales, remain unchanged, the application of "(X)" and "(Y)" should prove to be a useful tool in limited and appropriate circumstances. Complete information on the use of "(X)" and "(Y)" is provided on pages 52 and 53 of the 2007 Filing Instructions.

## **QUESTIONS AND ASSISTANCE**

Questions on these and other issues related to financial disclosure reporting should be directed to the staff of the Committee on Financial Disclosure, at 202-502-1850.