



OHIO ETHICS COMMISSION
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Model Ethics Policies

Public entities often ask for help from the Ethics Commission in creating their internal ethics policies. In response, the Commission developed these model ethics policies for state and local governments. These policies are endorsed by the Ohio Ethics Commission, and the Commission encourages state agencies and local jurisdictions to use and share them to explain the basic principles of the Ethics Law.

While the model policies provide an overview of the Ethics Law, they do not replace or substitute the statutory provisions that govern the conduct of all public officials and employees in Ohio. Therefore, if an agency decides to use the model policies, the Ethics Commission recommends including a copy of the Ethics Law.

Additionally, R.C. 102.09(D) requires that each public agency provide a copy of the Ethics Law to each public official or employee within 15 days of their hiring, election, or appointment. Each public official or employee must acknowledge, in writing, that the public official or employee has received a copy of the Ethics Law. You can find a copy of the Ethics Law on the Commission's [website](#).

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Model Ethics Policy for Local Agencies

Policy Statement

It is policy of the [Agency] to carry out its mission in accordance with the strictest ethical guidelines and to ensure that [Agency] members and employees conduct themselves in a manner that fosters public confidence in the integrity of the [Agency], its processes, and its accomplishments.

General Standards of Ethical Conduct

[Agency] officials and employees must, at all times, abide by protections to the public embodied in Ohio's ethics laws, as found in Chapters [102](#). and [2921](#). of the Ohio Revised Code, and as interpreted by the Ohio Ethics Commission and Ohio courts. (A copy of these laws is provided by the [Agency], and receipt acknowledged, as required in [R.C. 102.09\(D\)](#).) Officials and employees must conduct themselves, at all times, in a manner that avoids favoritism, bias, and the appearance of impropriety.

A general summary of the restraints upon the conduct of all officials and employees includes, but is not limited to, those listed below. No official or employee shall:

- Solicit or accept anything of value from anyone doing business with the [Agency];
- Solicit or accept employment from anyone doing business with the [Agency], unless the official or employee completely withdraws from [Agency] activity regarding the party offering employment, and the [Agency] approves the withdrawal;
- Use his or her public position to obtain benefits for the official or employee, a family member, or anyone with whom the official or employee has a business or employment relationship;
- Be paid or accept any form of compensation for personal services rendered on a matter before any board, commission, or other body of the [Agency], unless the official or employee qualifies for the exception, and files the statement, described in R.C. [102.04\(D\)](#);
- Hold or benefit from a contract with, authorized by, or approved by, the [Agency], (the Ethics Law does except some limited stockholdings, and some contracts objectively shown as the lowest cost services, where all criteria under R.C. [2921.42](#) are met);

- Vote, authorize, recommend, or in any other way use his or her position to secure approval of an [Agency] contract (including employment or personal services) in which the official or employee, a family member, or anyone with whom the official or employee has a business or employment relationship, has an interest;
- Solicit or accept honoraria (see R.C. [102.01\(H\)](#) and [102.03\(H\)](#)) ;
- During public service, and for one year after leaving public service, represent any person, in any fashion, before any public agency, with respect to a matter in which the official or employee personally participated while serving with the [Agency];
- Use or disclose confidential information protected by law, unless appropriately authorized; or
- Use, or authorize the use of, his or her title, the name “[Agency],” or “[the Agency’s acronym],” or the [Agency]’s logo in a manner that suggests impropriety, favoritism, or bias by the [Agency] or the official or employee;

For purposes of this policy:

- “Anything of value” includes anything of monetary value, including, but not limited to, money, gifts, food or beverages, social event tickets and expenses, travel expenses, golf outings, consulting fees, compensation, or employment. “Value” means worth greater than de minimis or nominal.
- “Anyone doing business with the [Agency]” includes, but is not limited to, any person, corporation, or other party that is doing or seeking to do business with, regulated by, or has interests before [Agency].

Financial Disclosure

Every [Agency] official or employee required to file a financial disclosure statement must file a complete and accurate statement with the Ethics Commission by May 15 of each year. An official or employee elected, appointed, or employed to a filing position after February 15 must file a statement within ninety days of appointment or employment.

Ethics Education

Providing ethics education and information is an inherent part of good ethics governance. The Ethics Commission is available to provide educational seminars and informational materials. The Commission can be contacted at (614) 466-7090.

Assistance

The Ethics Commission is available to provide advice and assistance regarding the application of the Ethics Law and related statutes. The Commission can be contacted at (614) 466-7090. The Commission's web site address is: www.ethics.ohio.gov. [Agency] counsel is available to answer questions involving this policy.

Penalties

Failure of any [Agency] official or employee to abide by this Ethics policy, or to comply with the Ethics Law and related statutes, will result in discipline, which may include dismissal, as well as any potential civil or criminal sanctions under the law.

Changes

This policy may be changed only by [stipulated official or majority vote of the legislative authority of the Agency].

Model Ethics Policy for State Agencies

Policy Statement

It is policy of the [BOARD, COMMISSION, or AGENCY (Board)] to carry out its mission in accordance with the strictest ethical guidelines and to ensure that [BOARD] members and employees conduct themselves in a manner that fosters public confidence in the integrity of the [BOARD], its processes, and its accomplishments.

General Standards of Ethical Conduct

[BOARD] officials and employees must, at all times, abide by protections to the public embodied in Ohio's ethics laws, as found in Chapters [102.](#) and [2921.](#) of the Ohio Revised Code, and as interpreted by the Ohio Ethics Commission and Ohio courts. (A copy of these laws is provided by the [BOARD], and receipt acknowledged, as required in R.C. [102.09\(D\).](#)) Members and employees must conduct themselves, at all times, in a manner that avoids favoritism, bias, and the appearance of impropriety.

A general summary of the restraints upon the conduct of all members and employees includes, but is not limited to, those listed below. No member or employee shall:

- Solicit or accept anything of value from anyone doing business with the [BOARD];
- Solicit or accept employment from anyone doing business with the [BOARD], unless the official or employee completely withdraws from any [BOARD] discretionary or decision-making activity regarding the party offering employment, and the [BOARD] approves the withdrawal;
- Use his or her public position to obtain benefits for the official or employee, a family member, or anyone with whom the official or employee has a business or employment relationship;
- Be paid or accept any form of compensation for personal services rendered on a matter before, or sells goods or services to, the [BOARD];
- Be paid or accept any form of compensation for personal services rendered on a matter before, or sell (except by competitive bid) goods or services to, any state agency other than the [BOARD], unless the member or employee first discloses the services or sales and withdraws from matters before the [BOARD] that directly affect officials and employees of the other state agency, as directed in R.C. [102.04](#);

- Hold or benefit from a contract with, authorized by, or approved by, the [BOARD], (the Ethics Law does except some limited stockholdings, and some contracts objectively shown as the lowest cost services, where all criteria under R.C. [2921.42](#) are met);
- Vote, authorize, recommend, or in any other way use his or her position to secure approval of a [BOARD] contract (including employment or personal services) in which the official or employee, a family member, or anyone with whom the official or employee has a business or employment relationship, has an interest;
- Solicit or accept honoraria (see R.C. [102.01\(H\)](#) and [102.03\(H\)](#));
- During public service, and for one year after leaving public service, represent any person, in any fashion, before any public agency, with respect to a matter in which the official or employee personally participated while serving with the [BOARD];
- Use or disclose confidential information protected by law, unless appropriately authorized;
- Solicit or accept any compensation, except as allowed by law, to perform his or her official duties or any act or service in his or her official capacity; and
- Use, or authorize the use of, his or her title, the name “[BOARD],” or “[the BOARD’s acronym],” or the [BOARD]’s logo in a manner that suggests impropriety, favoritism, or bias by the [BOARD] or the official or employee;

For purposes of this policy:

- “Anything of value” includes anything of monetary value, including, but not limited to, money, loans, gifts, food or beverages, social event tickets and expenses, travel expenses, golf outings, consulting fees, compensation, or employment. “Value” means worth greater than de minimis or nominal.
- “Anyone doing business with the [BOARD]” includes, but is not limited to, any person, corporation, or other party that is doing or seeking to do business with, regulated by, or has interests before [BOARD], their agents or anyone acting on their behalf.

Financial Disclosure

Every [BOARD] member or employee required to file a financial disclosure statement must file a complete and accurate statement with the Ethics Commission by May 15 of each year. Any member or employee appointed, or employed to a filing position after February 15 and required to file a financial disclosure statement must file a statement within ninety days of appointment or employment.

Assistance

The Ethics Commission is available to provide advice and assistance regarding the application of the Ethics Law and related statutes. The Commission can be contacted at (614) 466-7090. The Commission's web site address is: www.ethics.ohio.gov. [BOARD] counsel and counsel for the Governor's office are available to answer questions involving this policy.

Penalties

Failure of any [BOARD] official or employee to abide by this Ethics policy, or to comply with the Ethics Law and related statutes, will result in discipline, which may include dismissal, as well as any potential civil or criminal sanctions under the law.

Evaluation and Changes

This policy shall be evaluated for effectiveness by the [BOARD] no less than biennially. The policy may be changed only by a majority vote of the [BOARD].