

Merom Brachman, *Chairman*
Mark A. Vander Laan, *Vice Chairman*
Bruce E. Bailey
Megan C. Kelley
Julie A. Rutter
Elizabeth E. Tracy



OHIO ETHICS COMMISSION
William Green Building
30 West Spring Street, L3
Columbus, Ohio 43215-2256
Telephone: (614) 466-7090
Fax: (614) 466-8368

www.ethics.ohio.gov

Paul M. Nick
Executive Director

September 29, 2022

For more information, contact:

Paul M. Nick
Executive Director
(614) 466-7090
paul.nick@ethics.ohio.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

STIMULUS FUNDS AND THE ETHICS LAW

As federal and state government stimulus funds are released to Ohio communities, the Ohio Ethics Commission is alerting public officials that state Ethics Laws apply to those who direct the expenditures of these funds.

Stimulus funds and grants, such as the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, intended to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, and a stimulus bill recently signed by Governor Mike DeWine to make a \$500 million investment into Appalachian communities in 32 Ohio counties, are public funds. In that context, the Ethics Commission is cautioning state and local officials that long-standing conflict of interest laws must be observed.

“The Ohio Ethics Law protects the public by prohibiting those in public service from directing or influencing government processes to benefit their private interests,” stated Executive Director Paul M. Nick.

Because the Commission has advised that stimulus funds are public funds, it is important to note that the same standards of conduct apply any time a state or local governmental agency buys or receives any goods or services. All public officials and employees involved with spending these monies must avoid acting on conflicts of interest.

“The Ethics Law assures Ohioans that government decisions and public expenditures, whether at the state or local level, are objective and serve the public’s interest,” added Commission Chairman Merom Brachman. “The Commission intends to review this topic at its upcoming public meeting on October 7.”

###