

POLICY REVIEW AND COMPLIANCE MEMORANDUM

To: Christie E. Kelley, Executive Director
From: Gina A. Levesque, Intake and Compliance Manager
A22-016 – Palm Beach County (Employees and Elected Officials)
Re: Ethics Policy Review and Training Compliance



- **Background**

The Code of Ethics (Code) states in part under Section 2-446(a) that the county or municipal administrator shall establish by policy a mandatory training schedule for all employees and elected or appointed officials, which shall include mandatory periodic follow-up sessions. Section 2-446(b) states in part that the COE shall develop and deliver training programs and ensure that the training is delivered in a timely manner.

- **Objectives and Scope**

The objectives are:

- To provide assurance that the county has a training policy.
- To provide assurance that the training policy includes enough specific information for officials and employees to determine clear parameters, including initial training and retraining deadlines and grace period definitions.
- To provide reasonable assurance the county is requiring its officials and employees to comply with the training policy.

The scope of this review focused on the policy and proof of training for Palm Beach County (County) officials and full-time employees. The delivery method of the ethics training and internal tracking method of compliance was not part of the scope.

- **Approach and Methodology**

The Palm Beach County Information Technology (IT) Department created a database to track training compliance for several different areas, including ethics training. I submitted a request to the IT department listing all employees who were employed during the 2020 retraining cycle including their name, date of hire, termination date (for those no longer employed), document entry date, effective date, and expiration date.

- **Findings**

The training policy for the County was issued and became effective on August 5, 2014. The policy requires that employees undergo initial training and read the Code within ninety (90) days of employment. Thereafter, all employees must re-read the Code and complete retraining every three years between July 1 and December 31 of the training cycle year¹. All County elected officials must read the Code and attend initial training within sixty (60) days of taking office for each term elected. All employees and elected officials must complete a training acknowledgement form and submit it to HR for inclusion in the employee's personnel file.

¹ CW-P-079 states in relevant part: "Thereafter, all employees must complete required training every three years on October 1, beginning October 1, 2014. Each additional training requirement must be satisfied within ninety days before or after each October 1 deadline."

Although ethics training for appointed officials and fire rescue employees are included in the training policy for elected officials and employees, they were not included in this review and will be reviewed for compliance in compliance review file numbers A22-018 and A22-017, respectively.

At the time of the review, the County consisted of 7 elected officials and 3,820 full-time employees. Four elected officials completed training within the time allotted by policy, one commissioner completed the training after the deadline period ended, and two commissioners did not take training. Additionally, there were 29 employees who did not take training; 171 employees who took training after the December 31 deadline; 22 employees who took training before the July 1 start period; 23 employees who took training a year or more outside the grace period; and 13 employees who were hired in 2020 and took training within their 90-day grace period.

It should be noted that County employees must submit their training acknowledgement form to HR by electronic submission. Some of the employees not in compliance may have taken the training but did not submit the form to HR.

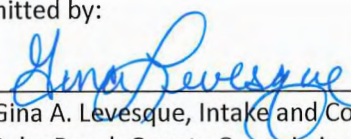
- **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the query for employees who have not taken ethics training indicate long-term dates of leave so that those employees are not included in the out-of-compliance group.

- **Conclusions**

The results of the review found that Palm Beach County was not in full compliance with the Code of Ethics training policy requirement for all of its employees and elected officials during the 2020 training cycle period. Further, there is one recommendation that may increase compliance if utilized.

Submitted by:

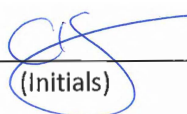


Gina A. Levesque, Intake and Compliance Manager
Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics

12/15/2022

Date

Reviewed by:



(Initials)

12-15-22

Date