



# **Code of Ethics Training**

**FOR COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS, EMPLOYEES AND  
ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS**

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# PBC Commission on Ethics

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Five volunteer members appointed by various community “stakeholders” to serve four-year terms:

- ◆ **PBC Association of Chiefs of Police**
- ◆ **PBC League of Cities**
- ◆ **PBC Chapter of the Florida Institute of Certified Public Accountants**
- ◆ **President of Florida Atlantic University**
- ◆ **PBC Bar Association in conjunction with the Hispanic Bar Association and the F. Malcolm Cunningham Bar Association.**

# COE STAFF

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- **Investigate Complaints**
- **Questions about the Code of Ethics**
- **Provide Advisory Opinions**
- **Training and Community Outreach**
- **Understand your Responsibilities**

# OVERVIEW

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## ❖ Ethics Decision Tree

- ◆ Steps to avoid violations and problems

## ❖ The Code of Ethics

- ◆ Conflicts of Interest
- ◆ Gift Law
- ◆ Miscellaneous Provisions

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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**I just took this training, why do I have to take it again?**

- ◆ The Code of Ethics requires “**periodic retraining**”

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## **What is the purpose of the PBC Code of Ethics?**

- ◆ **Honest and ethical conduct**
- ◆ **Protects confidential information**
- ◆ **Increase public trust in local government**

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

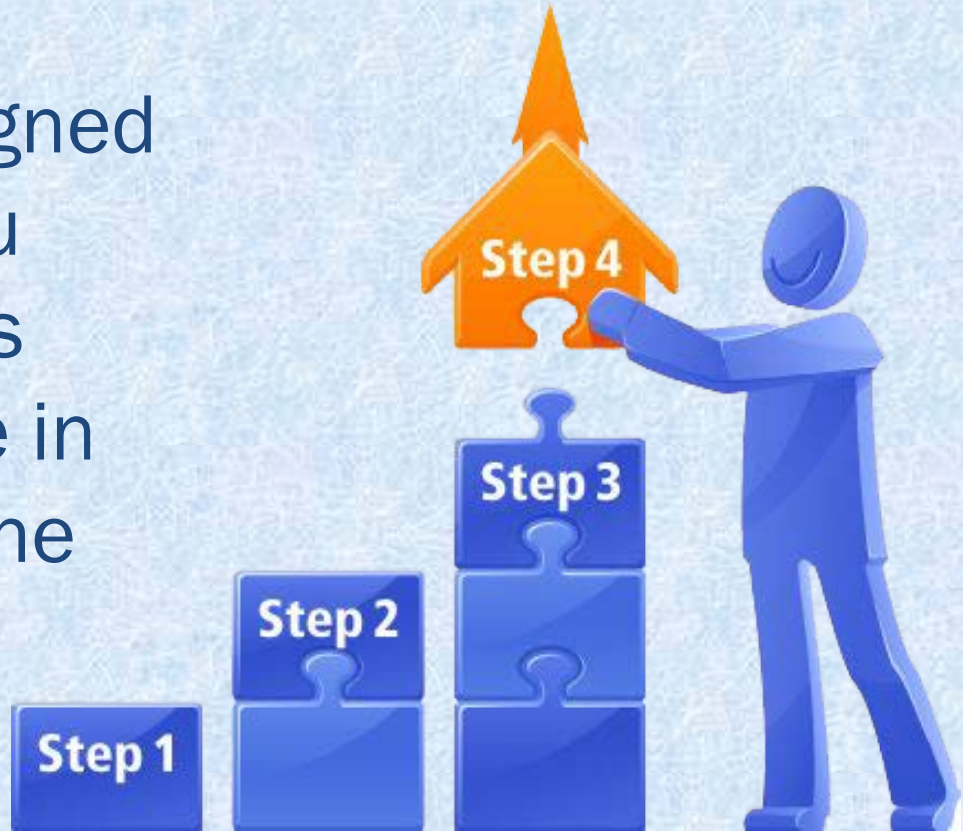
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## Who does the PBC Code of Ethics apply to?

- ◆ All County and Municipal employees and officials
- ◆ No State officers or employees, and No Constitutional Officers

# ETHICS DECISION TREE

Four step process designed by COE staff to help you determine if the actions you are considering are in violation of the law or the Code of Ethics





USE THE “ETHICS DECISION TREE”

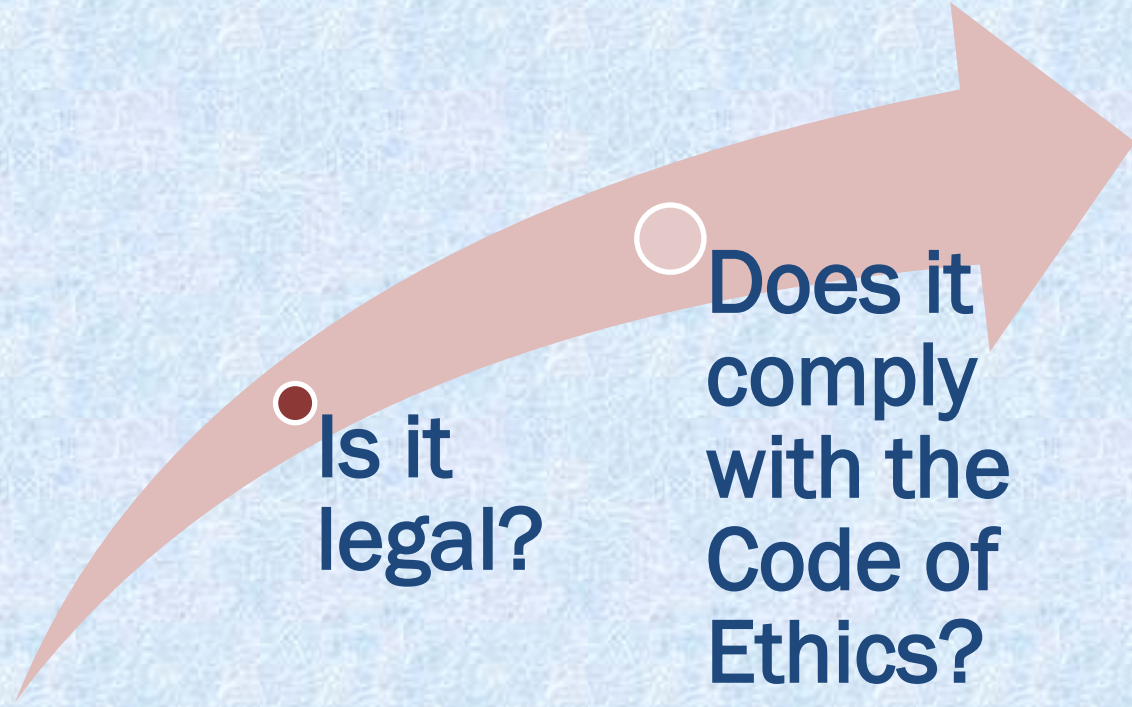
BEFORE YOU ACT... ASK YOURSELF...



Is it  
legal?

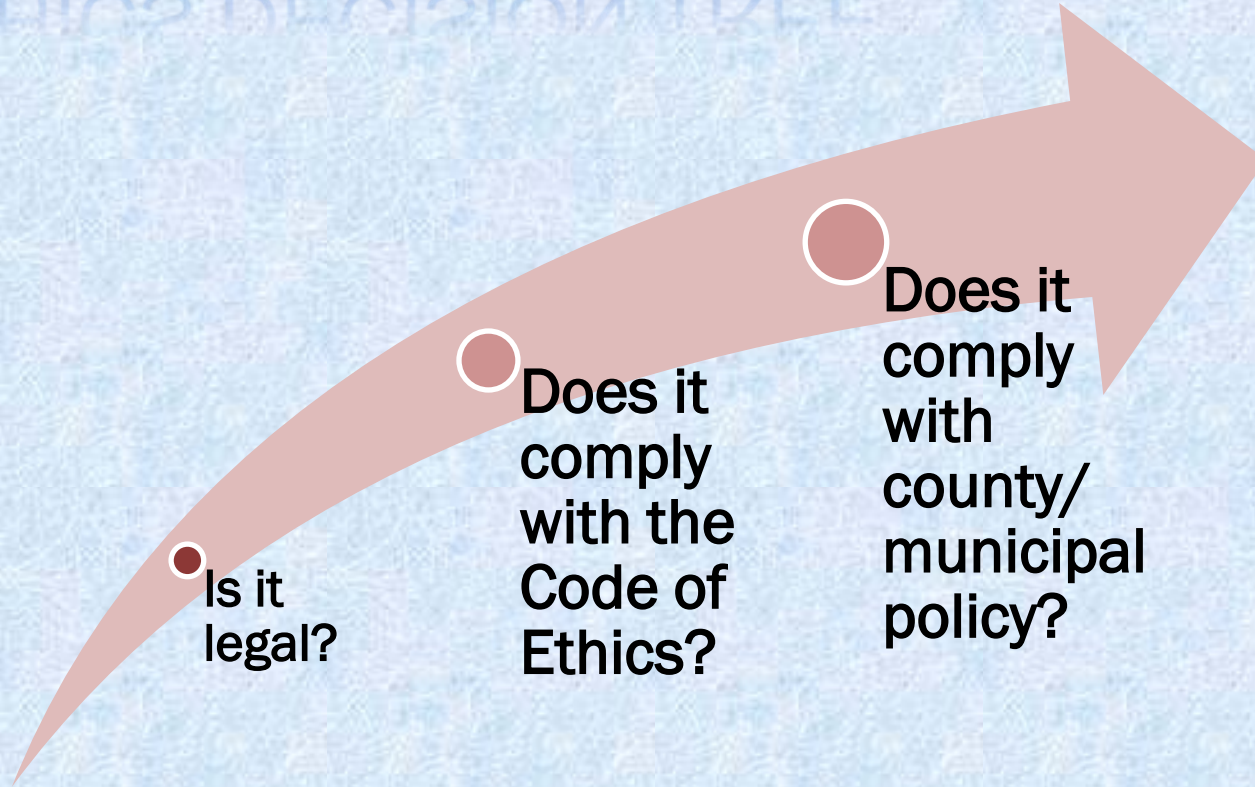
# ETHICS DECISION TREE

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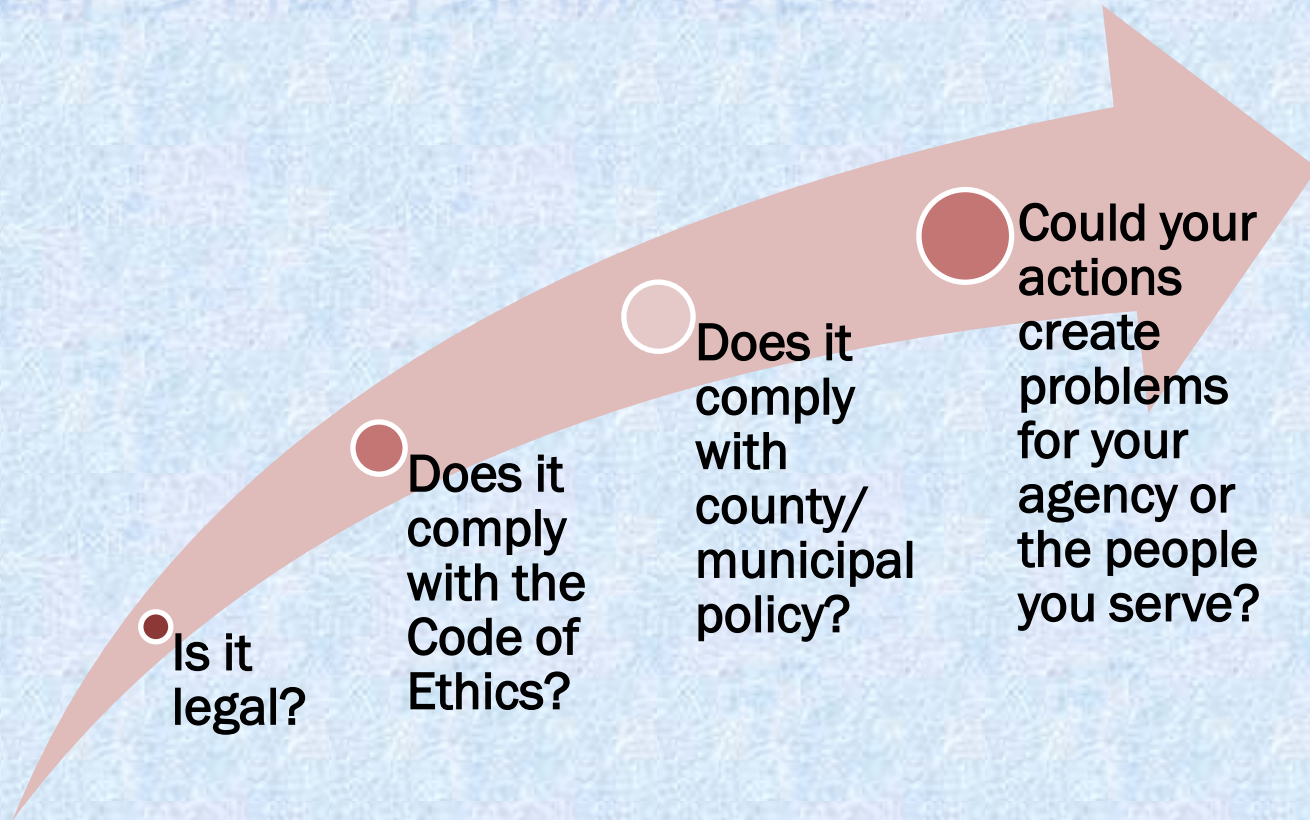
# ETHICS DECISION TREE

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# ETHICS DECISION TREE

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# STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

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All public officials and employees must be transparent in their actions.

- **Minimum Legal Standard**
- **Good Government Standard**

# CONFLICTS OF INTEREST



## What is a conflict of interest?

- ◆ Personal Activities or relationships interfering with work.

A “special benefit”



**PROHIBITED CONDUCT**  
**SECTION 2-443**

# PROHIBITED CONDUCT

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- ◆ **Section 2-443(a)**, *Misuse of public office or employment*
- ◆ **Section 2-443(b)**, *Corrupt misuse of official position*
- ◆ **Section 2-443(c)**, *Disclosure of voting conflicts*
- ◆ **Section 2-443(d)**, *Contractual relationships*



# MISUSE OF OFFICE

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Section 2-443(a)(1-7), Public Employees and Officials are prohibited from using their official position in a manner that results in.....a “special financial benefit” being given to...

# NO FINANCIAL BENEFIT TO:

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- ◆ Yourself
- ◆ A household member, spouse, domestic partner
- ◆ Outside business or employer
- ◆ A close family relative
- ◆ Spouse/domestic partner's employer or business
- ◆ A customer or client of the your outside business
- ◆ A debtor or creditor of the official or employee, who owes or is owed more than \$10,000 (except banking and mortgage institutions)
- ◆ A non-profit organization if the official/employee or their spouse/domestic partner serves as an officer or director of that organization

# ***SPECIAL*** FINANCIAL BENEFIT

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❖ ***Financial benefit*** –*anything* of value that is obtained **through** your official position

- ◆ Employment;
- ◆ Advisory Board;
- ◆ Elected Position

# ***SPECIAL* FINANCIAL BENEFIT**

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- ❖ ***Special financial benefit*** – one not shared with “**similarly situated**” members of the general public
  - ◆ ***Similarly Situated*** – means that everyone affected by a decision is affected in the same manner.

# MISUSE OF OFFICE

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## The Family Plan

A municipal employee is designated to accept payments for water bills generated by the City's Utility Department .



# MISUSE OF OFFICE

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## The Family Plan

May the employee personally accept funds directly from his sister to pay for her water service?



# MISUSE OF OFFICE

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## The Family Plan

**Answer:** Yes! Where the public employee simply does his job, and gives no “special financial benefit” to his sister, there is no prohibition.



# MISUSE OF OFFICE

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## The Family Plan

Is it acceptable for him to change the amount of her water usage to a lower amount to reflect a lower payment for her water bill?





# MISUSE OF OFFICE

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## The Family Plan

**Answer: No!** He may not arbitrarily change the water usage to lower her bill.... nor may he do so for anyone else.



# MISUSE OF OFFICE

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## The Family Plan

Is it acceptable for him to give an early payment discount, where the City allows a 1% reduction of any water bill paid in full at least 10 days before it is due?



# MISUSE OF OFFICE

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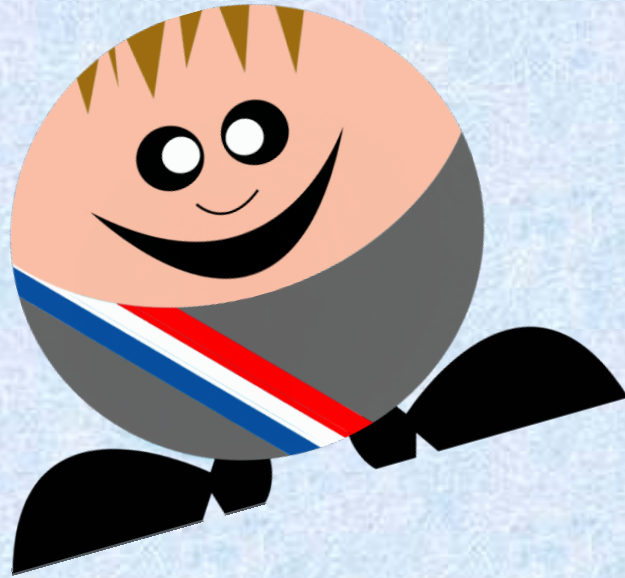
## The Family Plan

**Answer: Yes!** Where such a “discount” is available to all customers who pay in advance if she meets the requirements.



# MISUSE OF OFFICE

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## The Charitable Official

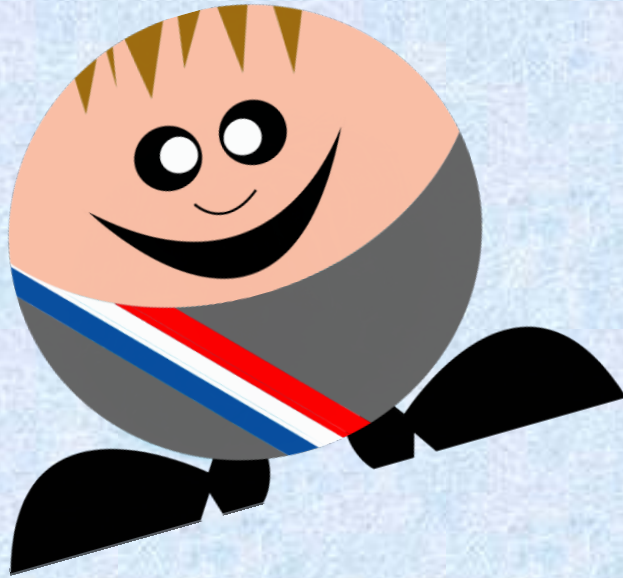
An elected official serves on the board of directors of a non-profit organization, his local church.

# MISUSE OF OFFICE

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## The Charitable Official

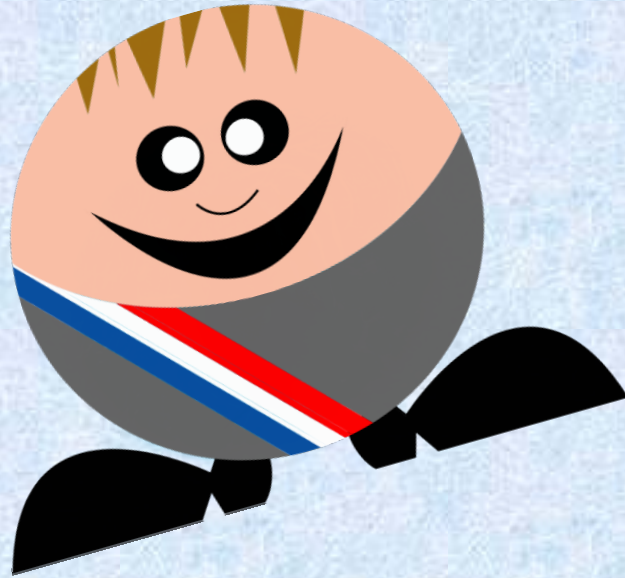
May the elected official vote to give government funding to that particular church for a new afterschool program?



# MISUSE OF OFFICE

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## The Charitable Official



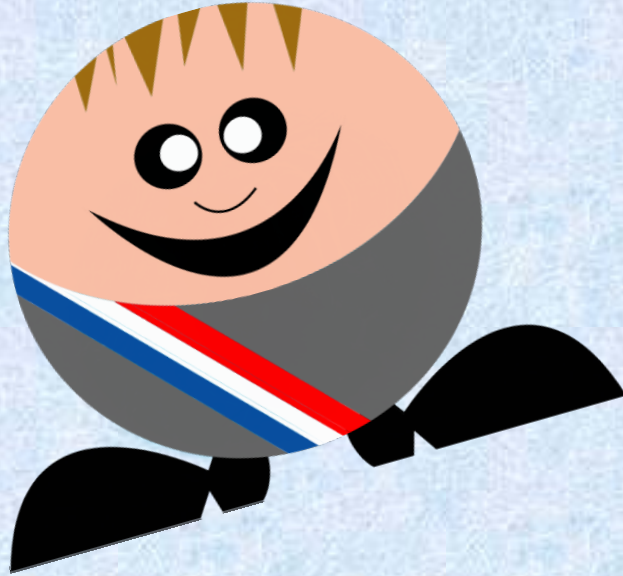
**Answer:** No! In doing so, the official would violate Section 2-443(a)(7), by giving a “special financial benefit” to a . . . *charitable or religious organization, which he or she is an officer or director.*

# MISUSE OF OFFICE

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## The Charitable Official

May he do so if he and his wife or domestic partner are not officers, directors or board members of the church, but both are members of the congregation?

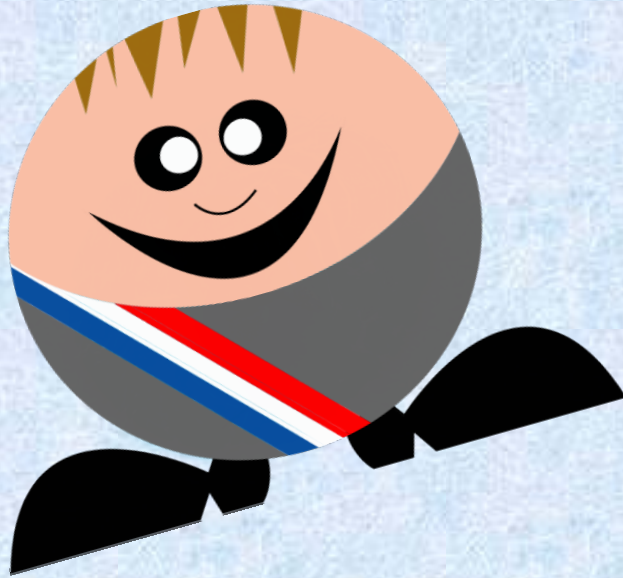


# MISUSE OF OFFICE

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## The Charitable Official

Answer: Yes! So long as there is no unlawful compensation given to the official for such a vote.





# CORRUPT MISUSE OF OFFICIAL POSITION

## Section 2-443(b)

You cannot use your official position... (your job, board membership, elected title or official office)

- ✓ ...to *corruptly* secure...
- ✓ ...a “special benefit” ...
- ✓ ...for any Person

# CORRUPT MISUSE OF OFFICIAL POSITION

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## ❖ ...a “special benefit” ...

- ◆ Any benefit you or another person are not entitled to, or
- ◆ Any benefit that you are not allowed to give.

*(not necessarily financial)*

# CORRUPT MISUSE OF OFFICIAL POSITION

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## ❖ ...corruptly...

- ◆ Taken with wrongful intent, and which is...
- ◆ Inconsistent with the “proper performance” of your public duties

# CORRUPT MISUSE OF OFFICIAL POSITION

## The Corruptible Driver

A town Mayor is involved in a vehicle crash. The police are called to the scene, at which time the Mayor identifies himself and directs the officer to issue a ticket to the other driver prior to the investigation of the crash.



# CORRUPT MISUSE OF OFFICIAL POSITION

## The Corruptible Driver

Is that a “corrupt” misuse of the Mayor’s official position?



# CORRUPT MISUSE OF OFFICIAL POSITION

## The Corruptible Driver

**Answer:** Yes! The Mayor would be acting with “**wrongful intent,**” and in a manner “**inconsistent with the proper performance of his public duties**” as Mayor.



# DISCLOSURE OF VOTING CONFLICTS

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Section 2-443(c) – An official may not vote on or participate in any matter to provide or obtain a special financial benefit.

# DISCLOSURE OF VOTING CONFLICTS

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In other words, they may not vote on or participate in a matter that will result in a special financial benefit being given to:

1. **Themselves**
2. **Their spouse, domestic partner or household member**
3. **A close family relative as listed in this section**
4. **An outside employer or business of theirs or their spouse/domestic partner**
5. **A customer of their outside employer or business**
6. **A substantial debtor or creditor**
7. **A civic, religious or charitable organization – serves on board**



# DISCLOSURE OF VOTING CONFLICTS

## The Vested Voter

A landscape designer who serves as a Town Commissioner files a plan for a new development she intends to build in Town.



# DISCLOSURE OF VOTING CONFLICTS

## The Vested Voter

Is it permissible for her to vote on this project as a Town Commissioner?



# VOTING CONFLICTS

## The Vested Voter

Answer: No! Both the PBC Code of Ethics and the Florida Code of Ethics prohibits the official from voting on any matter in which she has a financial interest.



# VOTING CONFLICTS

## The Vested Voter

Is it permissible for her to appear as her company's representative before the Town Commission to present the proposal for approval?



# VOTING CONFLICTS

## The Vested Voter

**Answer:** No! While the Florida Code only prohibits voting on this issue, PBC Code prohibits both voting and participation that attempts to influence the vote.



# VOTING CONFLICTS

## The Vested Voter

May she meet with building staff to review her proposed design and obtain their input as to whether it meets building code standards?



# VOTING CONFLICTS

## The Vested Voter

**Answer:** Yes! As with anyone, she has a right to make sure her proposal is within building code standards. However, she must take care not to try to influence, based on her position as Commissioner.



# CONTRACTUAL RELATIONSHIPS

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## Section 2-443(d)

**General Rule:** You may not enter into contracts or provide goods or services to the public entity you work for or represent.



# CONTRACTUAL RELATIONSHIPS

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The Code regulates some contracts you enter into in your private capacity because of your public employment or position.

This includes contracts between the public entity you serve, and...

- ◆ ...You
- ◆ ...Your outside employer
- ◆ ...Any business in which you, your spouse, a household member, or a close family relative, alone or in combination, have at least a 5% ownership share.



**EXCEPTIONS**  
to the  
**Rule!**

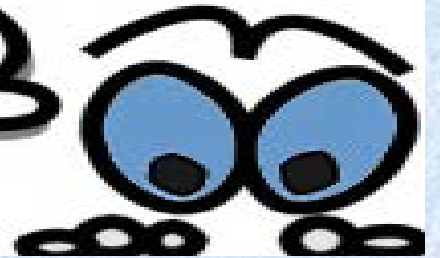
# EXCEPTIONS

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1. Your outside employer is another governmental entity
2. It is a sealed bid/low-bid contract (and you meet additional requirements)
3. Emergency purchases
4. Sole source of supply
5. Contract is for less than \$500 per year
6. You are an employee, and meet the part-time employment exception
7. For extra-duty details (Police and Fire exception)

# OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT WAIVER

IS THE POTENTIAL  
EMPLOYER A VENDOR?



# OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT WAIVER

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## ONLY NEEDED IF POTENTIAL EMPLOYER IS A VENDOR OF YOUR AGENCY

- ❖ Potential employer **does not** have contracts that you or your department or section will oversee, administer or enforce.
- ❖ You **did not** participate in awarding the contract.
- ❖ Part-time employment **will not** impair or interfere.
- ❖ **Comply** with internal policy.

# OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT WAIVER

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## Complete a Conflict of Interest Waiver

- ❖ Complete and sign under Oath.
- ❖ Review by Supervisor.
- ❖ Chief Administrative Officer

SEND COMPLETED FORM TO THE COE

# CONTRACTUAL RELATIONSHIPS

## ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Prohibition from entering into a contract with the public entity they serve....

...**but**, this prohibition is limited to the department(s) your board oversees

The same exceptions apply as with elected officials and employees



# OTHER ISSUES

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Travel Expenses

Disclosure of Inside Information

Nepotism



# TRAVEL EXPENSES

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There is a prohibition against accepting travel expenses directly from:

- Contractor
- Vendor
- Service Provider
- Bidder
- Proposer

# TRAVEL EXPENSES - EXCEPTIONS

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1. Waived by the Board of County Commissioners or Municipal governing body...
2. The expenses are reimbursed or paid by...
  - a. Another governmental entity, or
  - b. An organization that your employer is a member, and the travel is related (*i.e. League of Cities*)

# TRAVEL EXPENSES

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## The Weary Traveler

An employee wishes to attend training in Orlando. Vendor pays for hotel.



# TRAVEL EXPENSES

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## The Weary Traveler

**Has the employee violated  
the Code of Ethics?**



# TRAVEL EXPENSES

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## The Weary Traveler

**Answer:** Yes! The employee did not have the prohibition waived prior to the trip; and they cannot allow travel expenses to be paid directly by a vendor without the waiver.



# DISCLOSURE OF INSIDE INFORMATION

## Prohibition from using information...

Gained through your job

Not available to the general public

For your personal benefit or the benefit of any other person or entity



# DISCLOSURE OF INSIDE INFORMATION

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## The Pernicious Planner

A staff member has drafted several options for the extension of a major road. She realizes that the commission has informally selected an option. The information is not yet available to the general public.



# DISCLOSURE OF INSIDE INFORMATION

## The Pernicious Planner

1. Is she allowed to purchase land surrounding the planned extension hoping to sell it for a premium?





# DISCLOSURE OF INSIDE INFORMATION

## The Pernicious Planner

Answer: No! She would be in violation of the section prohibiting the use of inside information for personal gain.



# DISCLOSURE OF INSIDE INFORMATION

## The Pernicious Planner

2. Is she allowed to tell someone else to purchase land surrounding the planned extension to sell it for a premium?



# DISCLOSURE OF INSIDE INFORMATION

## The Pernicious Planner

Answer: No! She would still be in violation of the section prohibiting the use of inside information for personal gain.



# NEPOTISM

Employees, Officials or Advisory Board Members are prohibited from

Appointing

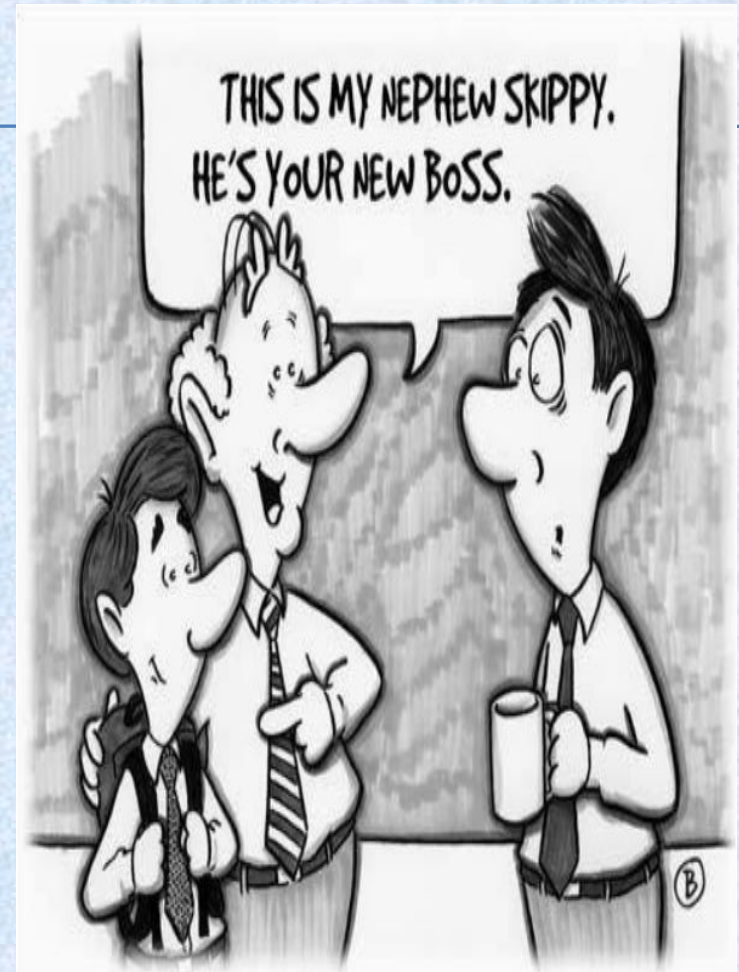
Employing

Promoting

Advancing, or....

Advocating

.....to benefit any **close family relative**  
or a spouse or domestic partner



# NEPOTISM - EXCEPTION

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## Advisory Boards

Cities with a population under 35,000 can appoint to boards that don't have land-planning or zoning responsibilities

# GIFT LAW - SECTION 2-444

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## Absolute Prohibitions: \$0

- ⊙ Kickbacks
- ⊙ Bribes
- ⊙ Tips (1 exception)



# GIFT LAW - SECTION 2-444

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## \$100 Gift Limit (annually)

👉 Vendors

👉 Bidders/proposers

👉 Lobbyists

👉 Principals or employers of lobbyists



# GIFT LAW - SECTION 2-444

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## Reporting Requirements (non-state reporters)

✍ Gifts in excess of \$100 per Year (Aggregate)





# ABSOLUTE PROHIBITIONS – SECTION 2-444(E)

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No person or entity shall offer or give or receive a gift of any value, when that gift is based on an action, omission, or even a promise of...

- ❖ An official action taken or to be taken or could be taken;
- ❖ A legal duty performed or to be performed or could be performed;
- ❖ A legal duty violated or to be violated or could be violated

**Bribes /kickbacks are ALWAYS UNLAWFUL under the Code and FL criminal law.**

# EXCEPTION TO ACCEPTANCE OF TIPS

## The Surly Server

There is a waiter at a municipal golf course restaurant. Customers usually leave him money over the amount of the bill in the form of a “tip.”



# EXCEPTION TO ACCEPTANCE OF TIPS

## The Surly Server

May he accept the tip?



# EXCEPTION TO ACCEPTANCE OF TIPS

## The Surly Server

Answer: Yes!



# LIMITED EXCEPTION FOR TIPS

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## ADVISORY OPINION - RQO 11-028

**YOU ASKED** if employees of the Village Country Club may accept tips without violating the Code of Ethics.

**IN SUM, *city employees specifically hired for service related jobs may continue to accept service tips.***

# CHARITABLE SOLICITATIONS

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It is generally prohibited to solicit or accept any gift from a vendor or lobbyist greater than \$100, in the aggregate, for any year.

Even if you are not the final recipient of the gift, a gift to be passed on to someone else is a “pass through” gift.

# CHARITABLE SOLICITATIONS

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**How does this rule apply to solicitations from a vendor or lobbyist that are meant for a charitable purpose?**

# CHARITABLE SOLICITATIONS

## The Philanthropic Runner

A county employee is running a race on behalf of St. Jude Children's hospital and needs to raise \$2,000. She receives a \$300 donation from Office Depot, a county vendor.



***St. Jude Heroes*** *Run For a Reason.*



# CHARITABLE SOLICITATIONS

## The Philanthropic Runner

Can she accept  
the donation?



***St. Jude Heroes*** *Run For a Reason.*

# CHARITABLE SOLICITATIONS

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An employee or official may solicit donations of more than \$100 from a vendor or lobbyist of their government on behalf of any non-profit charitable organization, providing the person or entity soliciting ...

- ✓ Files a **Charitable Solicitation Log** with the COE
- ✓ Does not use county or municipal resources to solicit the funds.
- ✓ And, does not solicit any person or entity with a “current” bid or proposal still outstanding (even if they are a current vendor).

# CHARITABLE SOLICITATIONS

## The Philanthropic Runner

Can she accept  
the donation?



***St. Jude Heroes*** *Run For a Reason.*

# CHARITABLE SOLICITATIONS

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## The Philanthropic Runner

- Answer:** Yes! She can accept the donation, so long as she
- ✓ “logs” the donation,
  - ✓ doesn’t use county resources,
  - ✓ doesn’t solicit any person or entity with a bid proposal or application outstanding, and
  - ✓ there is no “quid pro quo” or other special consideration.

# GIFT LAW DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS

## State Reporting Individuals

- “Local Officers” and department managers
- Quarterly Reporting Required
- Send your state form to the Florida COE **and** a copy to the County Commission on Ethics at the same time.

FLORIDA COE: (850) 488-7864

Form 9		QUARTERLY GIFT DISCLOSURE (GIFTS OVER \$100)	
LAST NAME – FIRST NAME – MIDDLE NAME		NAME OF AGENCY	
MAILING ADDRESS		OFFICE OR POSITION HELD	
CITY	ZIP	COUNTY	FOR QUARTER ENDING (CHECK ONE): <input type="checkbox"/> MARCH <input type="checkbox"/> JUNE <input type="checkbox"/> SEPTEMBER <input type="checkbox"/> DECEMBER 20__

### PART A — STATEMENT OF GIFTS

Please list below each gift, the value of which you believe to exceed \$100, accepted by you during the calendar quarter for which this statement is being filed. You are required to describe the gift and state the monetary value of the gift, the name and address of the person making the gift, and the date the gift was received. If any of these items, other than the gift description, are unknown or not applicable, you should so state on the form. As explained more fully in the instructions on the reverse side of the form, you are not required to disclose gifts from relatives or certain other gifts. You are not required to file this statement for any calendar quarter during which you did not receive a reportable gift.

DATE RECEIVED	DESCRIPTION OF GIFT	MONETARY VALUE	NAME OF PERSON MAKING THE GIFT	ADDRESS OF PERSON MAKING THE GIFT

CHECK HERE IF CONTINUED ON SEPARATE SHEET

### PART B — RECEIPT PROVIDED BY PERSON MAKING THE GIFT

If any receipt for a gift listed above was provided to you by the person making the gift, you are required to attach a copy of that receipt to this form. You may attach an explanation of any differences between the information disclosed on this form and the information on the receipt.

CHECK HERE IF A RECEIPT IS ATTACHED TO THIS FORM

### PART C — OATH

I, the person whose name appears at the beginning of this form, do depose on oath or affirmation and say that the information disclosed herein and on any attachments made by me constitutes a true accurate, and full listing of all gifts required to be reported by Section 112.3146, Florida Statutes.	STATE OF FLORIDA COUNTY OF _____ Sworn to (or affirmed) and subscribed before me this _____ day of _____, 20____ by _____ _____ (Signature of Notary Public-State of Florida)  (Print, Type, or Stamp Commission Name of Notary Public) Personally Known _____ OR Produced Identification _____ Type of Identification Produced _____
SIGNATURE OF REPORTING OFFICIAL _____	

### PART D — FILING INSTRUCTIONS

This form, when duly signed and notarized, must be filed with the Commission on Ethics, P.O. Drawer 15709, Tallahassee, Florida 32317-5709, physical address, 325 John Knox Road, Building E, Suite 200, Tallahassee, Florida 32303. The form must be filed no later than the last day of the calendar quarter that follows the calendar quarter for which this form is filed (for example, if a gift is received in March, it should be disclosed by June 30).

# GIFT LAW DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS

## Local Reporting Individuals

- Everyone else
- Yearly Reporting (FISCAL)
- Due November 1
- Send to COE by Fax, Email or U.S. Mail.
- If you have no gifts, please do not file a blank form.

PBC Gift Form		YEARLY GIFT DISCLOSURE (GIFTS OVER \$100)	
LAST NAME -- FIRST NAME -- MIDDLE NAME		NAME OF MUNICIPALITY	
MAILING ADDRESS	DEPARTMENT	OFFICE OR POSITION HELD	
CITY	ZIP	FOR YEAR	

### PART A — STATEMENT OF GIFTS

Please list below each gift, the value of which you believe to exceed \$100, accepted by you during the fiscal year (October 1-September 30) for which this statement is being filed. You are required to describe the gift and state the monetary value of the gift, the name and address of the person making the gift, and the date(s) the gift was received. If any of these facts, other than the gift description, are unknown or not applicable, you should state so on the form. As explained more fully in the instructions on page 2 of the form, you are not required to disclose gifts from relatives or certain other gifts. **You are not required to file this statement for any fiscal year during which you did not receive a reportable gift.**

DATE RECEIVED	DESCRIPTION OF GIFT	MONETARY VALUE	NAME OF PERSON MAKING THE GIFT	ADDRESS OF PERSON MAKING THE GIFT

CHECK HERE IF CONTINUED ON SEPARATE SHEET

### PART B — RECEIPT PROVIDED BY PERSON MAKING THE GIFT

If any receipt for a gift listed above was provided to you by the person making the gift, you are required to attach a copy of that receipt to this form. You may attach an explanation of any differences between the information disclosed on this form and the information on the receipt.

CHECK HERE IF A RECEIPT IS ATTACHED TO THIS FORM

### PART C — OATH

I, the person whose name appears at the beginning of this form, do depose on oath or affirmation and say that the information disclosed herein and on any attachments made by me constitutes a true accurate and total listing of all gifts required to be reported by Article XII, Sec. 2-644 of the Palm Beach County Code of Ethics.

SIGNATURE OF REPORTING OFFICIAL \_\_\_\_\_

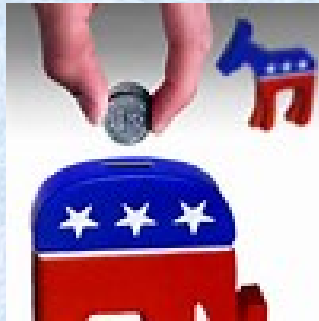
### PART D — FILING INSTRUCTIONS

This form, when duly signed, must be filed with: the Commission on Ethics, 300 North Dixie Highway, Suite 450, West Palm Beach, Florida 33401. The form must be filed no later than the first day of November for the previous reporting year.

# EXCEPTIONS TO THE DEFINITION OF GIFTS (ONLY FOR NON-STATE REPORTING INDIVIDUALS)



- ❖ Political contributions
- ❖ Gifts from relatives or members of your household
- ❖ Personal gifts over \$100, if given by a personal friend or co-worker and **motivation** of is friendship/social relationship
- ❖ Awards for civic/professional achievement
- ❖ Advertising materials (from vendors)
- ❖ Gift solicited for a public purpose
- ❖ Inheritance




# MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Honesty in  
Applications



## Contingent Fee Prohibition (Attorneys, Lobbyists)


### CONTINGENCY FEES DEMYSTIFIED



Once you have discussed your accident with the lawyer at the initial consultation, he should explain his fees.


Many lawyers are paid by the hour, but personal injury lawyers are paid on a contingency fee.

**STANDARD LAWYER**



**PAID BY THE HOUR**

**PERSONAL INJURY LAWYER**



**PAID ON CONTINGENCY FEE**

**WHAT IS A CONTINGENCY FEE?**

Contingency fees are a percentage of the award money that is reached in a settlement or court case.



# ENFORCEMENT

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- Commission on Ethics: **Civil Code Enforcement Board**
  - ◆ Letter of Reprimand or Instruction.
  - ◆ Fine up to \$500 per violation.
  - ◆ Restitution where indicated.

# ENFORCEMENT

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- **Criminal**: Knowing and willful violations are referred to the State Attorney's Office and may be punishable as first degree misdemeanors
  - ◆ Up to 1 year in jail and
  - ◆ Fine up to \$1000
- \* Government employer can discipline or terminate employees as allowed under their policies and/or rules.



# **PALM BEACH COUNTY COMMISSION ON ETHICS**

*"Honesty, Integrity, Character"*

## **ETHICS**

*"Ask First, Act Later"*

**Call Us:** **HOTLINE: 877-766-5920**

**Email Us:** **[Ethics@palmbeachcountyyethics.com](mailto:Ethics@palmbeachcountyyethics.com)**

**Visit Us:** **[www.PalmBeachCountyEthics.com](http://www.PalmBeachCountyEthics.com)**

**Like Us:**  
[facebook.com/pbccoe](https://www.facebook.com/pbccoe)



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[@pbccoe](https://twitter.com/pbccoe)



**The Historic 1916 Palm Beach County Courthouse**  
**300 North Dixie Highway, Suite 450, West Palm Beach, FL 33401**