

***CODE OF ETHICS AND STANDARDS OF CONDUCT
FOR MEMBERS OF
PUBLIC SECTOR BOARDS and COUNCILS***

CODE OF ETHICS

Recognizing that persons who hold public office have been given a public trust and that the stewardship of such office demands the highest levels of ethical and moral conduct, any person serving on a public sector board /council should adhere to the following Code of Ethics.

1. Uphold the Constitution, laws and regulations of the United States and of all governments therein and never knowingly be a party to their evasion.
2. Put loyalty to the highest moral principles and to the township as a whole above loyalty to individuals, districts, or particular groups.
3. Give a full measure of effort and service to the position of trust for which stewardship has been granted; giving earnest effort and best thought to the performance of duties.
4. Seek to find and use the most equitable, efficient, effective, and economical means for getting tasks accomplished.
5. Adopt policies and programs that support the rights and recognize the needs of all citizens regardless of race, sex, age, religion, creed, country of origin or handicapping condition. Avoid adopting policies, supporting programs or engaging in activities that discriminate against or offend individuals because of race, sex, age, religion, creed, country of origin or handicapping condition.
6. Ensure the integrity of the actions of the board / council by avoiding discrimination through the dispensing of special favors or unfair privileges to anyone, whether for remuneration or not. A member should never accept for himself or herself or for family members, favors or benefits under circumstances, which might be construed by reasonable persons as influencing the performance of governmental duties.

7. Make no private promises of any kind binding upon the duties of any office, since a public servant has no private word, which can be binding on public duty.
8. Engage in no business with the government either directly or indirectly, which is inconsistent with the conscientious performance of government duties except as may be consistent with the conflict of interest statutes in the Ohio Revised Code. Do not allow any actions to appear to the public that "insider deal making" is occurring or has occurred.
9. Never use any information gained confidentially in the performance of governmental duties as a means of making private profit. Do not use inside information to build political alliances in the community by being the trusted "leak or unidentified source" for information supporting one particular course of action.
10. Expose, through appropriate means and channels, corruption, misconduct, or neglect of duty whenever discovered.
11. Adhere to the principle that the public's business should be conducted in the public view by observing and following the letter and spirit of the Freedom of Information Act using executive sessions to deal only with sensitive personnel, legal or contractual matters as provided by the Ohio Revised Code.
12. Avoid using the position of public trust to gain access to the media for the purposes of criticizing colleagues or citizens, impugning their integrity or vilifying their personal beliefs.
13. Make sure, when responding to the media, that a clear distinction is made between personal opinion or belief and a decision made by the board.
14. Review orally and in public session at the annual organizational meeting each of these principles.
15. Pledge to honor and uphold these principles, ever conscious that public office is a public trust.

Standards of Conduct

Recognizing that persons holding a position of public trust are under constant observation by the media and interested township residents, and recognizing that maintaining the integrity and dignity of the public office is essential for maintaining high levels of public confidence in our institutions of government, every member of board / council should adhere to the following Standards of Conduct.

1. Avoid, during public meetings and during the performance of public duties, the use of abusive, threatening or intimidating language or gestures directed at colleagues, citizens, or personnel.
2. Pay all taxes due to the township, county, state, or national government.
3. Attend all regularly scheduled meetings of the board or committees to which he or she has been assigned, resigning whenever personal circumstances preclude regular attendance.
4. Avoid a private lifestyle that casts public doubt upon the integrity and competence of the township government.
5. Make a conscientious effort to be well prepared for each meeting.
6. Offer criticism of colleagues or township employees only in private meetings with appropriate individuals or in executive session.
7. Work to create a positive environment in public meetings where citizens will feel comfortable in their roles as observers or participants.
8. Maintain an attitude of courtesy and consideration toward all colleagues and staff during all discussions and deliberations.
9. Be tolerant. Allow citizens, employees, or colleagues sufficient opportunity to present their views.

10. Be respectful and attentive. Avoid comments, body language or distracting activity that conveys a message of disrespect for the presentations from citizens, personnel or colleagues.
11. Be concise. Avoid the practice of taking more time to address an issue before the body than is necessary and essential for an adequate consideration of those matters being discussed.
12. Provide appropriate mechanisms to discipline members who violate the code of ethics and standards of conduct by using, as a final measure of discipline, censure or removal from the position.