

Board of Ethics and Government Accountability

New Employee Orientation



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Director of Government Ethics

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What We Do



Ethics Training



Advice



What We Do

Investigations



Enforcement

Sanctions & Penalties

- Violations of the Code of Conduct may result in a variety of sanctions and penalties, including:
 - Censure
 - Admonition
 - Remediation
 - A probationary period
 - Fines of up to \$5,000 per violation

\$ Fines \$



Ten Principles of Ethical Conduct

1. **Public office is a public trust**
2. **Avoid financial conflicts of interest**
3. **Avoid representational conflicts of interest**
4. **Avoid gifts and payments from interested parties**
5. **Avoid outside payment for government work**



Ten Principles of Ethical Conduct

6. Act impartially
7. Safeguard government resources
8. Safeguard confidential non-public information
9. Disclose waste or illegal conduct by government officials to the appropriate authorities
10. Abide by revolving door restrictions



1. Public office is a public trust

- Don't use title or position for personal gain of self or others.
 - i.e., When calling Comcast to complain about a cable bill, **do not say**: “Do you know who I am and what I can do to you?”

Also – do not send an email with your auto signature and government title to anyone if it involves a personal matter (i.e., mortgage company).

Also – Fundraising for private non profit entities – NOT ALLOWED

Hatch Act (Political Activities): Mayor is exempt but you are not

Do NOT engage in fundraising activities

Do NOT endorse anyone in your official capacity

Do NOT campaign on government time, property or using government resources.

Do NOT run for Mayor, AG or Council (ANC is okay).



2. Avoid financial conflicts of interest

- Do not take any action that could benefit you or someone close to you financially
 - i.e, business partner or family member.
 - Federal criminal penalties apply as well.
 - Recusal is the proper recourse when something lands on your desk.



3. Avoid representational conflicts of interest

- DO NOT CONTRACT WITH THE DISTRICT GOVERNMENT
 - Also, be mindful, if you own a business that does business with the District government, you will be prohibited from representing that business (signing contracts, signing grant agreements, resolving contract disputes, etc.) before the District government now that you are a District government employee.
- Do not represent anyone against the District.
 - i.e., as a lawyer or in any other capacity like signing a grant application on behalf of a non-profit with which you might be involved.



4. Avoid gifts and payments from interested parties (also called bribery)

- This means don't accept gifts from prohibited sources:
 - i.e., prohibited sources include:
 - Lobbyists
 - Vendors
 - Contractors
 - Developers
 - Those who are regulated by the District like Pepco, Comcast, etc.
 - Anyone who wants to do business with the District.
 - Unsolicited Gifts should be returned, donated to the District or destroyed.
 - Exceptions exist for symbolic or de minimis items so please contact BEGA for advice.



5. Avoid outside payment for government work

- Also called the Salary supplementation rule:
 - No one should pay you for your District work except the District.
 - i.e., Contractor says, “I know you have been working extra hard on this contract and that your agency is having budget issues and can’t pay overtime. Let me help out a bit.” or
 - “You did such a great job for us, now that the project is done and we are no longer city contractors let us take you out to dinner to say thank you for all your hard work.”
 - Also a Federal Criminal law with criminal penalties.



6. Act impartially

- Don't give preferential treatment to friends, neighbors or acquaintances or political donors/allies (of course family and business associates would also fall under the financial conflict of interest provision).
- This does not mean that you can't provide excellent constituent services. Just be sure that it is not for a personal or improper reason.
 - * The Job of the Executive Branch is to keep the government running smoothly, efficiently and in a manner highly responsive to the citizens of the District.



7. Safeguard government resources


- Don't misuse government property.
 - Anything that costs the government money is a violation:
 - i.e., using printer toner for personal matters; improper appropriations expenditures (food and beverage); using the Government Credit Card for personal matters with intent to pay it back.

Email policy: Mayor's Order in place that says you must use official email account for all government business, not private email.



8. Safeguard confidential non-public information

- Don't leak non-public information.
- This includes talking about your job on Social media like twitter.



9. Disclose waste or illegal conduct by government officials to the appropriate authorities

- Affirmative obligation to report to BEGA and/or the IG “credible” violations of the Code of Conduct.
 - Failure to do so is itself a violation.
 - Cooperation is mandatory.
 - Retaliation is a separate ethics violation.



10. Abide by revolving door restrictions

- When coming into District government, you are prohibited for 1 year from working on any District government contract held by your former employer.
- Once you leave government, you must abide by certain restrictions for differing periods of time, i.e., 1 year, 2 years and in some cases permanently.
- Complicated – Call BEGA before and after you leave.
- Be mindful of former government employees calling you.
- Free safe-harbor Post-Employment advice for life.



Contact Us

For advice or to make a complaint

- **Board of Ethics and Government Accountability (“BEGA”)**
 - **BEGA Hotline: (202) 535-1002**
 - **BEGA Email: BEGA@dc.gov**
 - **Main Number: (202) 481-3411**
 - **Address: 441 4th Street, NW, Suite 830 South
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