

A Plain Language Guide to The Cuyahoga County Ethics Code



Agency of Inspector General

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Introduction

This Guide has been prepared to assist County employees, elected officials, board members, contractors and lobbyists to better understand and comply with the County Ethics Code. Please note that this Guide is not provided in lieu of the County Ethics Code, but rather as an enhancement for a better understanding of the Code.¹

Throughout the Guide you will find explanations and examples of County Ethics Code, as well as links to previous AIG Advisory Opinions.

- **AIG Authority and Administration**

The AIG was established by the County Executive and County Council to protect taxpayers' interests by promoting honesty and accountability in County government. In furtherance of this mission, the AIG is granted broad authority to conduct investigations, inspections and audits relating to fraud, corruption, waste, abuse, misfeasance, malfeasance and nonfeasance in the operations of County government. In addition, the AIG is designated as the investigative officer for all issues arising under the County's Ethics Ordinance. In this capacity, the AIG is entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that County employees, elected officials, board members, contractors and lobbyists who do business with the County meet the highest ethical standards.

Enabling Legislation

[Cuyahoga County Code Title 5, Chapter 501 \(Contracts and Purchasing Procedures\)](#)

[Cuyahoga County Code Title 2, Chapter 204 \(Independent Entities\)](#)

[Cuyahoga County Code Title 4, Chapter 407 \(Inspector General\)](#)

[Cuyahoga County Code Title 5, Chapter 505 \(Debarment\)](#)

¹ Pursuant to Section 407.01(M) of the Cuyahoga County ("County") Code, the Agency of Inspector General ("AIG") has prepared this comprehensive Plain Language Guide/ Ethics Policy Manual ("Guide"), which includes the requirements of Title 4 of the County Ethics Code, Ohio Revised Code ("ORC") Chapter 102, ORC 2921.43 and other materials deemed appropriate for distribution.

Chapter 1

Financial Disclosures (Section 403.07)

- **Senior County Employees File with the AIG**

On or before **April 15** of each year², County employees listed below **must file an annual disclosure statement with the Inspector General** on the Financial Disclosure Statement form prescribed by the Ohio Ethics Commission.

1. All appointed officers and directors;
2. Chief of staff and/or First Assistant to the County Executive, County Council, and County Prosecutor;
3. Deputies Chiefs or similarly titled employees within Office of the County Executive to which any county officer or director reports;
4. Board of Revision hearing officers;
5. The Clerk of County Council.

- **Elected Officials File With the OEC**

Elected Officials must file financial disclosure statements directly with the Ohio Ethics Commission or the appropriate filing agency by the deadline prescribed by the Ohio Ethics Commission. **Elected Officials are not, however, required to file disclosure statements with the Inspector General.**



New and Former County Employees Appointed to Certain Positions Must File Disclosures Within 30 Days

If you have been **newly appointed or hired** to one of the above positions, you must file the financial disclosure with the Inspector General **within 30 days of appointment** to your new position. This requirement also applies to any former employee or elected official of the county who, within the prior calendar year, held one or more of the positions identified above.

² If the filing deadline, April 15, falls on a non-business day, the filing deadline is extended to the next regular business day.

Chapter 2

Secondary and Future Employment (Sections 403.08 and 403.09)

- **Secondary Employment & Fiduciary Duties**

Any **compensated employment or private business activity** outside of an elected official or employee's primary status at the County that **results in gross income required to be reported to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)**³ must be disclosed to the Human Resources ("HR") and the AIG through the electronic disclosure form found on the [AIG website](#). Once completed the form is transmitted to HR and the AIG.

Also, any **fiduciary interest**, whether compensated or uncompensated, **with an entity that receives funding from the County** must be disclosed to HR and the AIG. A fiduciary interest includes any relationship that requires one to act for the benefit of another.

If the AIG determines that the secondary employment violates an express prohibition or is a conflict of interest (and recusal prevents an employee from performing substantial portions of County job), the County employee must terminate his or her secondary employment or risk being fired from their County job. Elected officials holding secondary employment must recuse themselves in accordance with Section 403.04 of the County Ethics Code.

Employees must disclose to the Inspector General within 30 days of accepting any secondary employment. The Inspector General is required to render an opinion within 14 days of the request.

Example: You currently work for Cuyahoga County Children and Family Services as a social worker. You are interested in getting a second job as an associate at Home Depot. You must disclose this secondary employment to the AIG.

³ Excluding interest income, dividends, corporate contributions, alimony, income from life insurance or endowment, income in respect of a lost loved one, retirement plans, pensions and annuities, and social security, PERS, or equivalent retirement benefits.

- **Future Employment**

No **present or former** elected official or employee, **either during their employment or 12 months after**, may represent or act in a representative capacity for any person or organization on any matter requiring exercise of discretion, that the employee or elected official personally participated in during his or her County tenure.



Employment Offers and Ongoing Discussions

Elected officials and employees must disclose to the Inspector General any employment offers, or ongoing discussions of future employment, with any entity that is currently dealing with the County concerning matters within the scope of the elected official or employee's current official duties.

Exceptions:

This section does not prohibit elected officials and employees from engaging in the following activities:

1. Representing themselves before the County;
2. Asserting a claim against the County on their own behalf; and/or
3. Representing a person or organization on an uncompensated basis.

Example: You previously held a position as a Medical Examiner morgue technician with authority to order lab products. Within the last three months you resigned from the County and started working for a private company that sells products to laboratories. You may not represent the private company to the Medical Examiner's office regarding the purchase of laboratory products until 12 months after your employment with the County terminated.

Chapter 3

Misuse of County Resources and Official Position (Sections 403.02 & 403.03)

In general, elected officials, employees, and board members are not permitted to use their County positions or County resources⁴ to further their own personal or political agendas.

More specifically elected officials, employees and board members are not permitted to do the following:

1. Print, mail, or send electronic communications of political material;
2. Conduct non-county business using County resources;
3. Permit the use of County resources for personal or private purposes (unless the use is (1) insignificant, (2) authorized by law or County policy, or (3) provided as part of official compensation);
4. Use official position or powers/duties to secure financial or material benefit or the promise of financial or material benefit for themselves, a relative, or a private organization in which they have an interest;
5. Request (without offering just compensation), require, or coerce a subordinate employee to perform tasks outside the scope of their County employment.
6. Directly or indirectly sell or agree to sell goods and services to the County (unless through the County's competitive bidding);
7. Benefit from a public contract pursuant to Ohio Revised Code 2921.42 et. seq.;
8. Misrepresent their opinion to be the official position of the County (this prohibition does not apply to statements made in the course of fulfilling the responsibilities of, or running for, office);
9. Draw a per diem or expense monies from the County to attend a seminar, convention, or conference, then fail to attend the program without acquiring prior approval or refunding unused monies to the County;
10. Knowingly suppress a public record; and

⁴ Pursuant to Section 403.02(A) of the County code, county resources include, but are not limited to, County personnel, money, procurement/credit cards, vehicles, equipment, materials, supplies, or other property.

11. Abuse authority to compel subordinate to participate in sexual conduct or require/coerce a subordinate to accept sexual harassment or unwelcome advances as a condition of employment, equal treatment, approval, or advancement.

Example: You are organizing a bake sale at your child's school. You may not use county resources, such as your email, inter-office mail, printer, etc., to help raise awareness for the event.

Example: You want to post a fundraising flyer for an employee who is raising money for a wheelchair accessible van. Permission to post the flyer is something you should discuss with your Director and/or Human Resources, not the AIG. If your director or human resources permits you to post the flyer, ensure that you do not use county resources to print or distribute it.

Example: You feel strongly about a specific candidate in an upcoming election. You may not send out a fundraising letter on County letterhead or use a County telephone to make calls on behalf of the candidate.

Example: Your brother is the owner of a local gas station. You may not use your official position in Public Works to obtain a favorable and/or quick certification of the gas pumps there.

Chapter 4

Conflicts of Interest (Section 403.04)

Generally, a conflict of interest occurs when an elected official or employee's personal interests may affect a decision of official county business.



If an elected official, employee, or board member, either individually or as a group, becomes aware of a matter that could create a conflict of interest, the individual must disclose the nature of the interest to the public in an open meeting or in writing to the the Inspector General.

The individual must disclose the matter as soon as they acquire knowledge of the matter. If uncertain whether a conflict exists, the individual may disclose to the Department of Law or Inspector General, along with a request for a determination.

In addition, individuals must recuse themselves from the matter. This includes recusal not only from deciding or voting on the matter, but also from discussion or deliberation on a matter.

No elected official, employee, or board member may receive compensation from or knowingly obtain a financial interest in any non-County entity in exchange for service rendered or to be rendered by them personally in any case, proceeding, application or other matter before the County.

Example: A County Council member is employed by a private company. After a recent County inspection, the company was cited for violations and a fine was assessed against it. The Council member is prohibited from discussing or deliberating on the fate of the company and should also alert the Inspector General of his involvement in the company.

Elected officials, employees, commissions, boards, or bodies are not permitted to appoint any individual who worked with the County within the preceding 12 months to any board, commission, or governmental entity that is incompatible as described in the Ohio Attorney General's *Index of Compatibility of Public Offices and Positions*.

Example: You recently retired from County Council and you are seeking appointment to the board of directors for the Port Authority. You may not accept this appointment for 12 months after your retirement from County Council. Some of your duties may overlap for each position, creating a conflict of interest.

Reference the Ohio Attorney General's *Index of Compatibility of Public Offices and Positions* for possible conflicts. If the index does not address the conflict, an opinion request can be made to the AIG.

Exceptions:

County officials, employees, and board members are not required to recuse themselves from the matter if it involves:

1. Adoption of the County's biennial budget as a whole; or
2. Any matter that does not involve the exercise of discretion.

Chapter 5

Nepotism (Section 403.05)

County employees, elected officials, and board members are not permitted to hire, appoint, promote, discipline, or discharge any relative.



County employees, elected officials, and board members are also not permitted to supervise a relative's performance of official responsibilities.

Finally, County employees and officials are not permitted to secure a public contract in which the individual, any relative of the individual, or any of the individual's business associates has an interest.

All County employees and elected officials are required to submit a [Nepotism and Conflict of Interest Disclosure](#) to the AIG.

Example: You work as a Lieutenant in the County Sheriff's Department. Your nephew works as a police officer in a nearby suburban area. A position that you would supervise becomes available and you would like to hire your nephew for the job. It would not be acceptable to hire a relative in a role that you directly supervise. Therefore, you should not hire your nephew for the position.

The County Code refers to and includes the following family members as relative⁵ for nepotism purposes:

An individual's spouse, domestic partner, parent, grandparent, step-parent, sibling, step-sibling, sibling's spouse, child, grandchild, step-child, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, first cousin, or household member, and persons having any of these relationships to the spouse or domestic partner of said individual.

⁵ On August 30, 2023, the AIG became aware of an error in this section of the Plain Language Guide and updated it accordingly. Previously, the Plain Language Guide – which was drafted in 2017 – mistakenly used an outdated summary of what relationships are implicated by the County's laws against nepotism. The erroneous definition came from the 2011 version of the County Code. The Code – including the definition of "relative" for the purposes of the nepotism laws – was updated in 2016. The Plain Language Guide now reflects the 2016 version of the nepotism laws.

Chapter 6

Discrimination (Section 403.10)

No elected official, employee, or board member is permitted to discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national origin, age, sex, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, or genetic information is prohibited.



Example: You are a hearing officer for the Board of Revision. You announced to the entire department that you do not like to serve women because they are “too indecisive”. There have been several complaints from women who have been before your BOR panel regarding your attitude toward women during the hearing. The women complainants also believe you are unjustifiably devaluing their properties. These remarks and this behavior are not appropriate. You are not permitted to discriminate against any BOR participants based on sex or gender.

Chapter 7

Gifts (Section 403.06 and 407.01(J))

- The Ohio Revised Code's Improper and Substantial Test

Elected officials, employees, and board members are required to comply with the requirements and prohibitions found in Ohio Revised Code (“RC”) 102.03. Specifically, no elected official, employee, or board member is permitted to solicit or accept anything



of value that may have a substantial and improper influence on the elected official, employee, or board member with respect to that person's duties. The Ohio Ethics Commission (“OEC”) has held that the application of RC 102.03 is dependent on the facts and circumstances of each individual situation.

“Anything of value,” includes but is not limited to **dinners, receptions, retreats, cash, gift cards, tickets to sports or entertainment events,**

and trips. Consider the value of the item to determine how substantial it is, and look to the source of the item to determine whether it is considered improper.

According to the OEC, the issue in deciding whether a thing of value has a “substantial and improper influence” is whether the thing of value is provided to the official or employee by a party that is interested in matters before, regulated by, or doing or seeking to do business with the public official’s or employee’s agency. If a thing of value is offered by one of these “improper sources”, the question, for purposes of determining whether a public official or employee is prohibited from accepting the thing of value, becomes whether the offered item is “substantial” in nature.

The term “improper source” includes all of the following:

- A person or entity that is interested in matters before the County department, division, institution, board, commission, authority, bureau or other instrumentality where the official or employee serves;
- A person or entity that is regulated by the County department, division, institution, board, commission, authority, bureau or other instrumentality where the official or employee serves;

- A person or entity that contracts with the County department, division, institution, board, commission, authority, bureau or other instrumentality where the official or employee serves;
- A person or an entity – including but not limited to service providers, vendors and consultants – that provides goods or services to the County under terms specified in a binding, officially approved agreement; and
- An individual wholly or partially compensated for direct, private communication with County policy-making officials or their staffs, with the purpose of influencing the expenditure of funds in the awarding of a contract or other financial arrangement; or for making direct, private contact with same to promote, advocate or oppose the passage, modification, defeat, approval or veto of any legislation or policy.

The OEC described the following as not having a “substantial” influence on public officials or employees:

- A meal of a routine character provided to a public official or employee, and not provided in return for the performance of public duties, and
- A tee-shirt or other kind of nominal promotional item provided by a vendor or potential vendor.

On the other hand, some items are clearly of a substantial value. For instance, the OEC described the following things of value as substantial:

- Golf outings at an exclusive venue;
- Season of tickets for the games of a professional sports team;
- The combination of travel, meals, and lodging;⁶
- Expensive jewelry; and
- Discounts on furniture and major appliances.⁷

*Elected Officials, Employees and Board Members are **Not** Permitted to Solicit and Accept Gifts Intended to Influence or Reward*

No elected official, employee, or board member is permitted to **solicit or accept** any gift⁸ intended to:

1. **Influence** the elected official, employee, or board member in the performance or non-performance of their official powers and duties; or

⁶ See Ohio Ethics Commission Advisory Ops. Nos. 89-014 (travel, meals, and lodging), 95-001 (season tickets), and 2001-03 (golf outings).

⁷ See Ohio Ethics Commission Advisory Ops. Nos. 92-015, 2001-04, and 2001-08.

⁸ Section 402.01(G) of the County Code states a gift is any gratuity, discount, entertainment, hospitality, loan, forbearance, or other tangible or intangible item having greater than *de minimis* monetary value including, but not limited to, cash, food and drink, travel, or lodging.

2. As a **reward** for any official action on the part of the elected official, employee, or board member.

Example: While inspecting a restaurant for your County department, you find numerous violations that would potentially result in the restaurant's closure. You inform the restaurant's manager of the violations and the possible repercussions. The manager offers you a meal and bottle of wine while you discuss possibly reducing the violations and allowing the restaurant to stay open. You would not be able to accept these gifts because the manager is offering you something of value in order to influence your decision.

Example: In your county position, you supervise construction projects, meet with contractors and architects, and approve payments. After a meeting with a contractor's architect you are considering for hire, the architect asks if you would be interested in a complimentary service at your home. You cannot accept this offer because the service could be perceived as something of value that influenced your decision to approve the contractor's payment for the County job.

The following gifts are not permitted unless the elected official, employee or board member provides evidence to rebut the presumption of influence:

1. A gift or multiple gifts from a contractor, within the same calendar year, that have a total face value over \$75.00.
2. A gift from a private person or organization that **seeks** County action that involves decision making by the elected official, employee, or board member.
3. A gift from a private person or organization that **has obtained** County action (**within the last 12 months**) that involves decision making by the elected official, employee, or board member.



Example: A vendor your department previously worked with brings you a pen and a t-shirt with the company's logo on it as a complimentary gift. You may accept this gift as the cumulative value of the two items is likely less than \$75.

Exceptions:

- Gifts that are given to the County, rather than an individual, can be enjoyed or used by the County
- Gifts that are commonly given for special occasions such as a marriage, illness, or retirement, are reasonable and customary and therefore do not carry a presumption of influence.
- Meals and refreshments are acceptable when an elected official, employee, or board member is a speaker or participant (in his or her professional capacity) at a job-related conference or program, and the meals and refreshments are provided or made available to everyone in attendance.
- Invitations to charitable functions are also acceptable, so long as they include basic entertainment and food.
- Anything (including tickets) for which an elected official, employee, or board member, pays face value, or at a discount available to all County employees or the public.
- Any campaign contribution that is otherwise lawfully received and reported under the County Ethics Code and general law.

Example: A current County contractor gives your family of four tickets to an upcoming Cleveland Indians game. The face value of the tickets is around \$100/per person. The contractor would be considered an improper source and the value of these tickets would be considered substantial. Accordingly, the only way you could take the tickets would be if you paid the contractor the \$400 face value in exchange for the tickets.



Chapter 8

Political Contributions and Activity (Sections 403.11 and 403.13)

- **Political Contributions**

Elected officials are not permitted to solicit or accept any campaign contribution from a County employee over whom he or she has appointing or confirmation authority over. The elected official also may not knowingly solicit or accept any campaign contributions from an employee whose County confirmation is pending.

Employees are not allowed to make a campaign contribution to, or solicit funds for a campaign for elected office conducted by or for their own elected employer or confirming authority. However, employees are not prohibited from making voluntary contributions to political parties or candidates for any other elected office.



Note: This does not apply to employees or officials who no longer work with the County. Also, an elected official or employee may request an opinion from the Inspector General prior to accepting, soliciting, or making a campaign contribution. The Inspector General will make a decision within 14 days of receiving the request.

Example: You work directly for the County Executive and are interested in soliciting campaign contributions on behalf of the Executive. You are not permitted to do this because he is your elected employer.

Voluntary Individual contributions to a campaign are permissible, if the contribution is made legally and is reported properly.

Example: You want to work for a political campaign and want to ask some of your coworkers to contribute to the campaign. This would **not** be okay. In order to participate in a campaign, you must perform all of your political activities on your own time and you also should not ask any coworkers or elected officials or employees to contribute anything to the campaign. If you have any concerns about the ethics of working for a campaign, contact the Agency of Inspector General.

- **Political Activity**



Different rules apply to the various election-related activities of classified versus unclassified County employees. As explained more fully below, so as to avoid any suggestion that government resources are being improperly used to assist candidates for public office, both classified and unclassified employees must avoid engaging in election-related activity on County time, on County property, or using County equipment (including conference rooms, computers, printers, office supplies, e-mail systems, telephone, copiers, fax machines, or any other County property or equipment). In addition, County employees may not engage in any election-related activities which interfere with, or pose a conflict of interest with respect to, their County duties and responsibilities.

I. **Classified employees** are prohibited by law from engaging in certain election-related activities. Persons in active pay status serving in the classified civil service are significantly limited, by law, in their ability to engage in various partisan political activities at any time, particularly elections involving candidates selected by the various political parties. Examples of both permissible and impermissible activities by classified employees are explained below.

1. **Permissible election-related activities for classified employees.** On their own time, classified employees may, by law, play only a relatively limited role in partisan campaign activities and may be somewhat more involved in non-partisan election related activity. The following are examples of activities employees in the classified service may participate in **on their own time**:⁹

- Registration and voting;
- Making voluntary contributions to political candidates or organizations;
- Attending political rallies;
- Wearing political buttons or badges.
- Signing nominating petitions in support of individuals;
- Expressing, to other individuals, opinions orally or in writing;
- Displaying political materials at home or on their own personal vehicle;
- Circulating non-partisan petitions or petitions relating to issues;
- Running for office for which the candidates are not selected by political parties;

⁹ See O.A.C. § 123 *et seq.*

- Serving as an official election judge (poll worker) in accordance with the applicable poll worker leave policy.

2. **Prohibited election-related activities for classified employees.** The following are examples of activities in which employees in the classified service may not, by law, participate, **even on their own time:**¹⁰

- Candidacy for public office in a partisan election (i.e. – an election in which candidates are selected by political parties);
- Candidacy for public office in a nonpartisan general election if the nomination to candidacy was obtained in a partisan primary or through the circulation of nominating petitions identified with a political party;
- Filing of petitions meeting statutory requirements for partisan candidacy to elective office;
- Circulation of official nominating petitions for any candidate participating in a partisan election;
- Service in an elected or appointed office in any partisan political organization;
- Acceptance of a political party-sponsored appointment to any office normally filled by partisan election;
- Campaigning by writing for publications, by distributing political material, or by writing or making speeches on behalf of a candidate for partisan elective office, when such activities are directed toward partisan political success;
- Solicitation, either directly or indirectly, of any assessment, contribution or subscription, either monetary or in-kind, for any political party or partisan candidate;
- Solicitation of the sale, or actual sale, of political party tickets;
- Partisan activities at the election polls, such as solicitation of votes for other than nonpartisan candidates and nonpartisan issues;
- Providing assistance to any political candidate, political party or other partisan political organization with organizational and recruitment activities, when such activities are directed toward party success;
- Service as witness or challenger for any party or partisan committee;
- Participation in political caucuses of a partisan nature;
- Participation in a political action committee which supports partisan activity.

II. **Unclassified employees** may, **on their own time**, engage in election-related and partisan activities. More specifically, employees in the unclassified service, who serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority and are not subject to competitive examination, may, on their own time, engage in partisan and election-related activities, unless otherwise specifically precluded by federal or state law. Unclassified employees may not solicit classified County employees for the financial benefit of a political party or a candidate for public office.

¹⁰ See O.A.C. § 123 *et seq.*

Chapter 9

Whistleblower Protection (Sections 403.12, 406.01 and 406.02)

A whistleblower is a person who reports possible crimes or violations of the ethics code. Elected officials, employees and board members must file a **written report** regarding known violations to the Inspector General **within five days of discovering the violation**.

Any person with a “reasonable belief” that a violation occurred or will occur may also report. It is not proper, however, to knowingly make a false report or submit a report in bad faith with reckless disregard for the truth.



The County Code protects whistleblowers from acts of retaliation. If an individual reports a violation or expected violation **in writing**, no disciplinary action can be taken against them because of their report. The following disciplinary actions are prohibited: removing or suspending the employee from employment, withholding salary increases or employee benefits to which the employee is entitled, transferring or reassigning the employee, denying the employee a promotion that he or she would otherwise receive, and reducing the employee in pay or position.

If final disciplinary action is taken by the appointing authority or HR, the official or employee may file a **written** appeal within the Personnel Review Commission (“PRC”). The PRC decision is appealable to the Court of Common Pleas.

Example: You witness your boss using her County email and the inter office mail system to sell Avon products. She tells you that you will be fired if you report her. If you report your boss to the appropriate agency or department, you would be protected against disciplinary action, such as being fired, transferred or otherwise reprimanded.



Chapter 10

Contractors (Sections 404.01 and 501.19)

Every contractor whose annual aggregate amount of contracting with the County exceeds \$10,000 must register with the Inspector General prior to doing business with the County. Registration must take place prior to entering any contract that would bring a Contractor's annual aggregate amount above \$10,000. Contractors must re-register every 4 calendar years. Each contractor must provide to the Inspector General the contractor's corporate name, federal tax identification number, address, names of the contractor's principals, and any other information as may be required by the Inspector General.

Note: All contractors must comply with the above Registration requirements in addition to completion of Ethics Training and Disclosure Requirements. The fees collected for registration support the Inspector General's cost of administering the contractor and lobbyist registries.

Example: You are a contractor working with the County. Currently, your contracting amount is at \$8,000 and you are poised to accept an additional contract for \$3000. Before you finalize the \$3000 contract, you must register with the Inspector General because your aggregate contracting amount will be above \$10,000. You will not have to register for another 4 years.

Chapter 11

Lobbyists (Section 405.01)

A lobbyist must register with the Inspector General within 30 days after the start of lobbying activity on behalf of his or her client. Lobbyists should re-register every 4 years. The effective date of registration is set upon the completion and filing of the registration form, payment of one registration fee, and completion of the ethics training.



Registrants should make all required disclosures listed below. Each registered lobbyist must disclose the following information on or before January 1 of each year.

1. The name, phone number, and address of the registered lobbyist and all of its employees or agents who engage in lobbying activities;
2. A list of all clients, including names, phone numbers, addresses, and nature of business, from whom the registered lobbyist receives compensation for engaging in lobbying activities;
3. A statement of all matter on which the registered lobbyist has lobbied for each client in the past year, or on which the registered lobbyist is contracted to lobby in the future;
4. A list of any past positions held by the registered lobbyist or any of its employees or agents as an elected official, employee, or board member of a city, county or state, and the period of time during which each individual held such position; and
5. Any other information as may be required by the Inspector General.

Note: All lobbyists must comply with the above registration requirements in addition to completion of Ethics Training and Disclosure Requirements. The fees collected for registration support the Inspector General's cost of administering the contractor and lobbyist registries.

Chapter 12

Training Requirements (Section 403.01)

Every elected official, employee, and board member must complete the annual ethics training program approved by the Inspector General within 30 days of their first day on the job.



Elected officials and employees must complete ethics training program each year they are employed with the County.

Upon completion of the training, elected officials, employees, and board members must

acknowledge, electronically or in writing, that they have read, understood, and agree to abide by the County ethics policy.

Note: This training is currently provided by the Department of Human Resources and is required for elected officials, employees, contractors, and lobbyists.

Appendix A

Definitions (Chapter 402.01)

1. **“Appointing Authority”** means the County officer, director, commission, board, or body having the power of appointment to, or removal from, positions in any office, department, commission, board, or other authority of the County.
2. **“Board Member”** includes members of any board, agency, commission, or authority as is or may hereafter be established by or pursuant to the Charter or County Code who are appointed or confirmed by elected officials or county officers or directors.
3. **“Business Associate”** means any individual, company, or organization with which an individual is acting together to pursue a common business purpose, including but not limited to, partners in a partnership, co-owners of a business, an outside employer, or co-members of a Limited Liability Corporation.
4. **“Contractor”** means any person or entity that is a party to an Agreement with the County, providing goods and/or services to the County, as defined in Section 102.01(A) of the Code.
5. **“Elected Official”** includes any person holding elective office specified in, or established pursuant to, the Charter. Such Elected Officials include, without limitation, the County Executive, the Prosecuting Attorney, and members of County Council.
6. **“Employee”** means any employee of Cuyahoga County including, but not limited to, any person employed, full or part time in a temporary or permanent capacity, by the County Executive, the Prosecuting Attorney, the County Council, the Personnel Review Commission, the Board of Revision, the Inspector General, and any other county agency hereafter established by or pursuant to the charter.
7. **“Gift”** includes any gratuity, discount, entertainment, hospitality, loan, forbearance, or other tangible or intangible item having any monetary value including, but not limited to, cash, food and drink, travel, or lodging.
8. **“Inspector General”** means the Cuyahoga County Inspector General as established in Section 204.01 of this Code.
9. **“Interest”** means a direct financial or material benefit, other than those available to all tax payers of the County. An individual is deemed to have an interest in any private organization when he or she, his or her spouse, or a member of his or her household, is an owner, partner, member, director, officer, employee, or owns or controls more than 5% of an organization’s outstanding stock; provided however, that an individual appointed or otherwise authorized to serve on a private organization, and who solely acts on behalf of the county in his or her capacity for the private organization, will not be deemed to have an interest in such private organization.

10. **“Lobbyist”** means any individual employed or retained by a client to contact via private written or oral communication any County elected official, employee, or board member to influence the award of County contracts, the appointment or confirmation of any individual, or the formulation, modification, or adoption of any County legislation, regulation, or policy. A Lobbyist does not include any individual who spends less than five percent (5%) of his or her compensated time lobbying governmental entities on behalf a specific client. “Lobbyist” does not include anyone who performs any of the actions described in this paragraph without compensation, whose performance of such action consists solely of testimony provided at public meetings, or whose performance of such actions are an incidental and insignificant portion of one’s duties.
11. **“Presumption of Influence”** refers to a gift made to an elected official, employee, or board member that constitutes a resulting substantial and improper influence. Evidence may be provided to show that there was no improper influence.

Additional References and More Information

For more information on the Cuyahoga County Ethics Code or to report a concern please visit the Cuyahoga County Agency of Inspector General website:

<http://inspectorgeneral.cuyahogacounty.us/>

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