



## BOARD OF ETHICS

### PLAIN LANGUAGE GUIDE TO GOVERNMENT ETHICS FOR WESTCHESTER COUNTY OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES<sup>1</sup>

#### I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Code of Ethics is to foster integrity in government, promote public confidence, and help County officers and employees to discharge their official duties without fear of unwarranted accusations of unethical conduct.

#### II. WHO MUST COMPLY?

The Code of Ethics applies to all officers and employees of the County of Westchester, whether paid or unpaid, including the members of any County department, agency, board or committee, and to independent contractors of the County.

#### III. GUIDE TO GOVERNMENT ETHICS

1. **Using Your County Position for Private Gain.** You may not use your county position or your official powers to benefit yourself, your relative or a member of your household, or anyone with whom you have a business or financial relationship.
2. **County Contracts.** You may not have an interest or derive any benefit, directly or indirectly, from a county contract that you have the authority to approve, pay or audit, or that your board or committee, or anyone you may hire or fire, has the authority to approve, pay or audit.
3. **Disclosure and Non-Participation.** As soon as you face an actual or potential conflict of interest, you must inform your immediate supervisor of the reason for your conflict of interest in writing or, if you are a member of a board or committee that makes a public record, state the reason for your conflict of interest on the public record. You must also refrain from any participation in the matter.

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<sup>1</sup> This plain language Guide to Government Ethics is intended to assist you in understanding the rules that may affect you. It is not intended to replace the actual text of the County Code of Ethics. You may find the Code of Ethics at:  
<https://www.westchestergov.com/advisory-boards/board-of-ethics>

4. **Owning a Business or Investment.** You may not own a business or investment that would require you to frequently refrain from discharging your official duties, or that would impair your independent judgment.
5. **Moonlighting.** You may not have an outside job that conflicts with your duties as a county officer or employee.
6. **Seeking Outside Employment.** You may not seek or accept private employment with anyone who, during the previous 90 days, has had a matter pending before you, or your board or committee.
7. **Payment for Matters before Your Agency, Department, Board or Committee.** You may not receive payment for services in any matter pending before your county agency, department, board or committee. You also may not receive a payment for services that is dependent on the outcome of a matter pending before any County agency, department, board or committee.
8. **Representing Others.** You may not be paid for representing anyone in business or professional dealings with any County agency, department, board or committee that you serve, unless your county position is uncompensated and there is no conflict between your outside professional activities and your official duties.
9. **Post-Employment One Year Ban.** For one year after you leave County service, you may not be paid for representing a private party before your former County agency, department, board or committee, unless a waiver is granted by the Board of Ethics.
10. **Post-Employment Permanent Ban.** After you leave County service, you may never work on a particular matter you personally and substantially worked on for the County, unless a waiver is granted by the Board of Ethics.
11. **Misuse of County Resources.** You may not use County letterhead, personnel, equipment, supplies, or resources for a non-County purpose, nor may you pursue personal or private activities during times when you are required to work for the County.
12. **Hiring or Supervision of Relatives.** You may not participate in hiring or supervising a relative or a member of your household in a County position that is compensated at a rate of \$7,500 or more.

13. **Political Activities.** You may not ask a subordinate to make a political contribution or to engage in political activities. You may not make any personnel decision based on political contributions or activities.
14. **Confidential Information.** You may not disclose confidential County information or use it for any non-County purpose, even after you leave County service.
15. **Tips.** You may not accept a reward of any kind or amount for performing your duties as a county officer or employee.
16. **Gifts and Favors.** You may not accept gifts or favors worth more than \$75.00 per year from anyone other than your relative or friend, if it would appear that the gift was intended to influence or reward an official act.
17. **Inducement of Others.** You may not cause another County officer or employee to violate the Code of Ethics, nor help anyone to do so.

#### **IV. INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS**

**Undue Influence.** No independent contractor of the County may seek an undue County benefit for a private client.

#### **V. ANNUAL FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE**

Depending on the County position that you hold, you may be required to file an annual financial disclosure statement with the Board of Ethics.

#### **VI. BOARD OF ETHICS**

You may request confidential ethics advice from the Board of Ethics. For further information or to request confidential ethics advice, you may contact the Board of Ethics at:

Board of Ethics  
c/o Office of the County Attorney  
148 Martine Avenue  
White Plains, NY 10601  
[EthicsBoard@westchestercountyny.gov](mailto:EthicsBoard@westchestercountyny.gov)

Group ethics training is available from the Board of Ethics at the request of your department, agency, board or committee.