

## FAQ's

### **Q: What is an ethics violation?**

A: To ensure integrity in county government, county officers and employees are required by law to adhere to a code of conduct. This code of conduct is primarily found in the Westchester County Code of Ethics available on this website. Among other things, the Code of Ethics regulates:

- Doing business with the County,
- Outside employment and investments that conflict with official duties,
- Prohibited gifts and favors,
- Disclosure of confidential county information,
- Personal use of county property, and
- Hiring and supervision of relatives

### **Q: Who must comply with the Code of Ethics?**

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

### **Q: How do I submit an ethics complaint?**

A: You may submit an ethics complaint electronically, using the form available on this website, or you may submit a written complaint to the Board of Ethics at the address shown on this website. Anyone may file an ethics complaint. The person submitting an ethics complaint will be afforded the whistleblower protections provided by law, to the extent that they apply. The Board of Ethics will accept anonymous complaints, but may be better able to investigate if it is able to contact the person who submitted the complaint.

### **Q: Are ethics investigations confidential?**

A: Ethics investigations are confidential unless and until it is determined that an ethics violation has occurred.

### **Q: Who may ask for ethics advice?**

A: The Board of Ethics provides advice to current and former County officers and employees seeking advice about themselves, and to the heads of County agencies, the County Executive, and County Legislators. The Board of Ethics also provides advice upon referral from boards of ethics of municipalities located within the county; and to

the officers and employees of municipalities located within the county that do not have their own ethics boards.

**Q: How to I ask for ethics advice?**

A: Ethics advice may be requested electronically, using the form available on this website, or by submitting a written inquiry to the Board of Ethics at the address shown on this website.

**Q: Is ethics advice confidential?**

A: Advice given by the Board of Ethics will not be disclosed to anyone other than the person who requested the advice, except that a failure to adhere to the advice may result in disclosure to the appropriate department head or law enforcement agency. The Board of Ethics may post its ethics advice on this website, but only after removing any information that might identify the person who sought the advice.

**Q: Can the public inspect and copy financial disclosure statements filed by County officers and employees?**

A: Annual Statements of Financial Disclosure are generally available for public inspection and copying pursuant to the New York Freedom of Information Law. However, before releasing a disclosure statement for public inspection, the Board of Ethics will delete the categories of value, home address, and the names of dependent children. County officers and employees may request that the Board of Ethics also withhold from public disclosure other information that, if disclosed, would result in an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. The Board of Ethics will consider the request, and make its determination based on the requirements of the New York Freedom of Information Law.

**Q: Is ethics training available?**

A: The Board of Ethics provides periodic ethics training to County officers and employees. Group ethics training is available upon the request of a county department, agency, board or commission.