

Ethics, Sunshine & Public Records

Manual for Elected Officials

Jacksonville, Florida



City of Jacksonville
Office of Ethics, Compliance and Oversight
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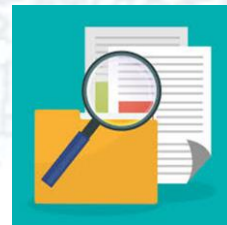
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State Ethics Laws in a Nutshell

Top 10 Danger Areas for Elected Officials

1. **TAKING THINGS (GIFTS).** If you **accept** anything of value for you/your family while a matter is pending before Council or anytime if value is over \$100, it can violate state laws. OK to take gifts from relatives. Can't take anything of any value in exchange for a vote or action.
2. **ASKING FOR THINGS.** Don't ask for favors, gifts, or help for you/your family from City vendors, lobbyists & those employing City lobbyists.
3. **GOING PLACES.** All travel requests should be paid by the City or travel must be approved by Ethics & OGC.
4. **FORGETTING TO FILE DISCLOSURES.** Financial (Form 6) or Gift (Form 9) forms due to the State Ethics Commission.
5. **CONFLICTS BETWEEN YOUR CITY DUTIES AND PERSONAL LIFE.**
Doing business with any part of the City, you/your family having City contracts or business dealings, being employed by or having a contract (ex: being a consultant) with a company doing business with the City.
6. **MISUSING YOUR POSITION/CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.** Throwing "your weight around," avoiding or interfering with City process. Using City resources for personal gain. Disclosing confidential information.
7. **VOTING WHEN YOU HAVE A CONFLICT.** Don't vote on a matter that may cause a special gain or loss to you, relative, employer, client, etc.
8. **TALKING TO YOUR FELLOW COUNCIL MEMBERS** outside of noticed meetings about City business.
9. **DESTROYING PUBLIC RECORDS.** Must retain text messages, emails & records related to City business regardless of where they are stored.
10. **POST-OFFICE RESTRICTIONS:** Representing another or lobbying for compensation before your former agency (ex: Council or other elected office) for six (6) years after leaving office.



Local Ethics Code in Plain English

This is a summary of local ethics laws that are enforced solely by the Jacksonville Ethics Commission. If you have questions, it is best to seek guidance from the Ethics Office or OGC before you take action.

The entire Jacksonville Ethics Code is online at [http://www.coj.net/departments/ethics-office/ethics-code-\(current\).aspx](http://www.coj.net/departments/ethics-office/ethics-code-(current).aspx). (See link on Ethics Office webpage.)

THE BIG PICTURE

Corruption occurs when a public official does something to benefit himself/herself, family, friends, or business instead of the public interest. Sometimes, actions are technically “legal,” but may be perceived to be done for private interests rather than the public’s benefit. City Council enacted the Jacksonville Ethics Code to follow both the law and the spirit of the law.

SUMMARY OF JAX ETHICS CODE

This is an outline. For specific situations, please contact the Ethics Office or OGC.

- **MISUSE OF POSTION, PROPERTY & TIME (Code section 602.401)**
Do not use your COJ position, City property &/or time to:
 1. Get anything special for yourself, your family or anyone else.
 2. Disclose confidential City information.
 3. Lend to or borrow money from those you work with. The limit is \$100 if you are in the chain of command & \$500 for anyone else.
 4. Campaign or for anything other than official City business. This includes City property, computers, Internet and time.
- **CLAIMS AGAINST THE CITY & APPEARANCES BEFORE CITY BODIES (Code section 602.402)**
 1. City officials cannot represent any other person or entity against the City or an independent agency.
 2. City officials cannot appear before any City department, agency, board or commission, except on behalf of the City or on behalf of himself, herself, or their parents, spouse or child.

- **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST/SECONDARY EMPLOYMENT DISCLOSURE (Employee Services Directive 0519 & Code section 602.403):** City Council members must analyze their outside employment or other potential risk areas for conflicts of interest. Full-time elected officials must disclose secondary employment & other conflict risk areas.
- **REQUIRED DISCLOSURES FOR BIDS/CONTRACTS WITH THE CITY (Code sections 602.406 & 602.413)**
 1. If you have a financial interest in a City bid or contract, you must disclose your interest in writing to the department receiving the bid.
 2. If Council Member/spouse/child is employed by a non-profit receiving City funding, Council Member must provide affidavit and supporting documentation to Ethics Office on or before the deadline submission date.
- **OBSTRUCTION OF CITY MEETINGS (Code section 602.407):** This law lists 8 specific ways a City officer is prohibited from intimidating, obstructing or generally disrupting a City hearing or proceeding or public meeting. Also, you cannot do anything to prevent a person from appearing or speaking at City meetings.
- **AFTER YOU LEAVE THE CITY (Code sections 602.411-602.412):** When you leave the City, do not get involved in City matters that you had a part in when you were a City official. If you were involved in making a contract decision for the City in excess of \$250,000, you can't go work for that company without approval. **Note:** Additional restrictions in state laws also apply.
- **GIFTS (Code sections 602.701-602.703)**
 1. Don't take gifts in excess of \$100 at a time, or \$250 in a year, from anyone doing business with the City, a lobbyist or any person/entity employing City lobbyists. It is best to not take any gifts from anyone who is a City vendor, lobbyists or employs City lobbyists.
 2. When a City agency or department receives a gift, like a tray of cookies shared by the entire office or the donation of used office furniture that is used on City property, it is a "gift to the City" and is reported monthly and posted online on the City's Gift Registry
 3. Lobbyists cannot give gifts that are prohibited. See # 1 above.
- **LOBBYISTS MUST REGISTER (Code section 602.801):** Lobbyists must register before they can try to influence any governmental decision making in the City. Please check the online lobbyist system before taking meetings.
- **ETHICS EDUCATION (Code section 602.1001):** All City officers and employees must be trained on ethics laws when they start employment.



Gift Guide for City Officials

HIGHLIGHTS

- ☐ **DO NOT** take a gift of any value if it is given with the expectation of a favor or action by you.
- ☐ **DO NOT** take a gift if the giver has any matters pending before your department.
- ☐ **DO NOT** take gifts valued at over \$100 from someone lobbying or doing business with the City.
- ☐ **DO NOT** take \$250 in cumulative gifts in a year from someone lobbying or doing business with the City.
- ☐ **DO NOT** ask for anything of value from someone for you, family, business associates or friends. There is no minimum dollar amount that applies to this law.
- ☐ **FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE FILERS** must report allowable gifts quarterly on a Form 9.

The City of Jacksonville and the State of Florida place legal restrictions on the giving and acceptance of certain gifts because gifts can be used to gain influence, can lead to unconscious bias, and can harm the public's trust in local government.

Please note, whether you can accept a gift under state and local ethics laws depends on the specific facts. While the following material will help you make decisions regarding accepting gifts, it is not possible to cover every gift situation in this summary. It is always best to check with the Ethics Office when a gift is offered to you. The Ethics Office can be reached on the Ethics Helpline at 904-630-1015 or by email to ethics@coj.net.

SUMMARY OF STATE AND LOCAL GIFT LAWS

- 1. A gift is broadly defined and includes anything given to you, done for you, or given to someone else on your behalf, by anyone outside your family or primary employer.**
- 2. It is critically important to know WHY you are receiving a gift.** If the answer to any of the below questions is yes, you cannot accept the gift regardless of the value. Pay for the gift in its entirety or return the gift. (Fla. Stat. sections 112.313(2) and 112.313(4))
 - ☐ Does the giver have any matters pending before your agency/department or will have matter(s) pending at the same time as the event/gift?
 - ☐ Does the giver expect/want something from you?
 - ☐ Would a reasonable person think the giver is trying to influence you?
- 3. It is critically important to know WHO is really paying for a gift.**
 - ☐ Your family and primary employer can give gifts to you of any amount. You can accept these gifts & they are not reported on a Form 9 gift disclosure.
 - ☐ Those with pending matters before your agency/department cannot give gifts and you cannot accept regardless of the value. You must return the gift immediately.
 - ☐ Political action committees cannot give gifts and you cannot accept them regardless of the value. You must return the gift immediately. (Fla. Stat. section 112.31485)

- ☐ City vendors and lobbyists (including those who pay City lobbyists and partners of City lobbyists) who do not have a matter pending before your agency are limited to giving \$100 gifts at any one time and \$250 in gifts in a calendar year. You do not report these gifts on a Form 9 because they are below the reporting value.
- ☐ If you accidentally accept a prohibited gift over \$100, you have 90 days to pay the giver the required amount to either reduce the value to under \$100.

4. EVERY gift has a VALUE, including gifts that are “free” and “open to the public.”

- ☐ State gift laws provide formulas for calculating the value of every gift, even those events that are “open to the public” or include “free” components.
- ☐ Typically, a gift is valued at cost to the donor, except for certain gifts that have specific valuation formulas, such as tickets/events, transportation and lodging.
- ☐ If a gift has a face value or sticker price, this may determine the value of the gift. The pro rata cost of seating in skyboxes or suites must also be added to the face value of the ticket.
- ☐ If there is no face value or sticker price, or if a gift is labeled FREE, the value might be determined by comparable products/services or the total cost of an event divided by the number of invitations.
- ☐ The total value is based on the value of the gift accepted, not the value of gifts used. For example, if you receive four tickets to an event, but only use three tickets, the value of the gift is the cost of all four tickets accepted.
- ☐ Valuing gifts under Florida law can be quite complicated. Please consult the Ethics Office if a gift is labeled “free” or if the face value or sticker price is not readily available.

5. If an invitation or gift has your name on it, it is a gift to you.

- ☐ If a gift comes to you and you decide to give it to someone else, it is still considered a gift to you and the rules discussed above still apply.
- ☐ If you get an invitation and you decide to take your ECA, spouse or anyone else along, or send someone else entirely, all of the invitations/tickets you accept are a gift to you. They should be processed and valued accordingly.

6. Report Allowable Gifts over \$100. Gifts from a person or entity that is not a relative or primary employer must be reported on a Form 9 gift disclosure.

- ☐ You can disclose as early and often as you wish BEFORE the following deadlines:
 - March 31 for gifts received October to December prior year
 - June 30 for gifts received January to March current year
 - September 30 for gifts received April to June current year
 - December 31 for gifts received July to September current year
- ☐ Keep track of the giver, date received, a description, and the value of gifts.

7. Reporting “Gifts to the City”

- ☐ Gifts to the City come into the City and are generally used by/at the City. Examples: Sandwich tray, lunch and learn, cookies, used chairs that are donated to City offices, grills donated by Home Depot for use at JFRD fire stations.
- ☐ “Gifts to the City” must be accepted by the Department Head and reported by the Department Ethics Director on the City’s online Gift Registry.
- ☐ **Note:** An agency/department should not accept gifts from those with pending matters before the agency/department.

Please be aware that a gift can harm public trust and result in negative publicity even if the gift is legally allowed under state and local ethics laws. Be particularly aware that attending private parties with City vendors, lobbyists, and those employing lobbyists can elicit public scrutiny regardless of the details. When there are pending high profile legislative issues, increased scrutiny may arise regarding all gifts and travel. The higher the profile the gift giver, the more scrutiny may result.

SUMMARY OF TIPS FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS

GIFTS DO

- ☐ **Remember that gift includes almost anything, such as use of real property, personal property, loan, tickets, membership dues, flowers, food & beverages, lodging and transportation.** Fla. Stat. section 112.312(12))
- ☐ **Track gifts and timely report acceptable gifts over \$100 on a Form 9 quarterly.** Run all of your gifts through your Executive Assistant so he/she can log them, confirm their value, check with the Ethics Office if necessary, and help prepare your Form 9 gift disclosure.
- ☐ **Always get the receipts.** If you go out to eat with a lobbyist or vendor of the City, be sure to have your meal billed separately so you can either pay it yourself or show that the amount for your part was under \$100.
- ☐ **Remember gifts are accepted based on the date they are received, not when they are used.**

GIFTS DO NOT

- ☐ **Do NOT accept anything of value with understanding that you will take a certain action or provide a favor.** (Fla. Stat. section 112.313(2))
- ☐ **Do NOT accept anything of value, such as gifts or monetary payments, from any person or entity that has a matter before your agency/department.** (Fla. Stat. section 112.313(4))
- ☐ **Do NOT ask for things.** This includes favors, perks, upgrades, anything! (Fla. Stat. sections 112.313(2), 112.313(4) & 112.3148(3))
- ☐ **Do NOT accept gifts from a political committee** (Fla. Stat. section 112.31485)
- ☐ **Do NOT solicit or accept payment or compensation for a speech or written presentation from a City lobbyist, City vendor or political committee** (Fla. Stat. section 112.3149(2))
- ☐ **Do NOT report any gifts from City vendors, lobbyists, those who hire lobbyists or political action committees on a Form 9.**

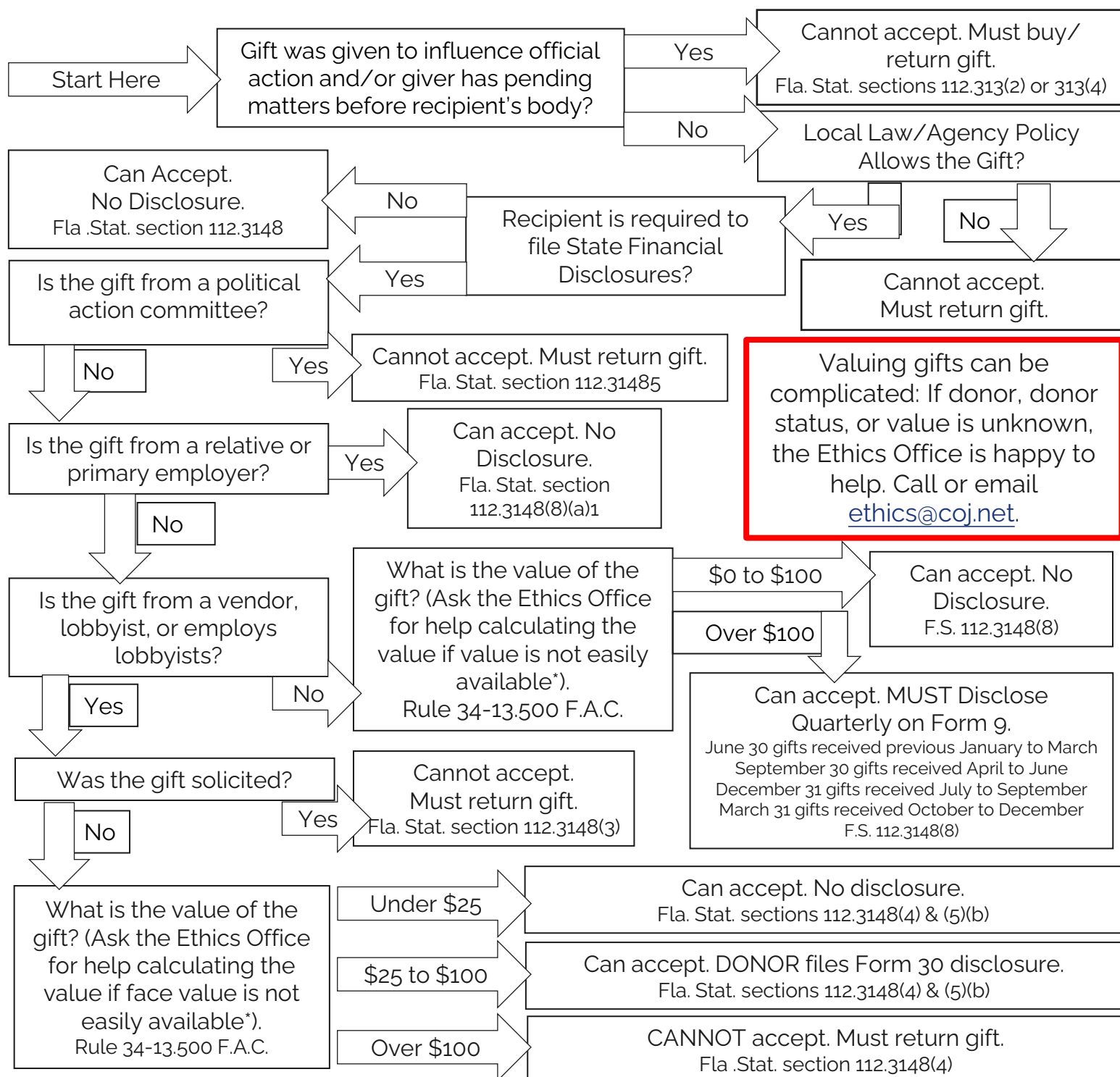
ACCEPTABLE GIFTS

- ☐ **City Tickets**—Tickets included in the City's contracts with vendors may be accepted as gifts from the City to you (regardless of value). These include City tickets to Jaguars, Jumbo Shrimp, & Florida/Ga games, events in the City Suite, and City special events, such as Jazz Fest. These tickets are typically distributed by the Council President, Mayor's Office or Office of Sports and Entertainment. The Office of Sports and Entertainment should provide the value for these tickets. If the value is over \$100, these tickets must be reported on a Form 9.
- ☐ **Reasonable Travel Expenses Related to a Speech or Written Presentation.** These expenses include registration fees, transportation, lodging, and food. (Fla. Stat. section 112.3149. Be sure to contact the Ethics Office if the travel expenses are paid by a City lobbyist, City vendor or political committee.)

Gift Acceptance Flow Chart



Gifts for City Officials and Employees are restricted because the research clearly shows that gifts can be a tool to gain subconscious influence, can lead to unfair practices, and decreased trust in government. The following flowchart outlines how to handle a gift to an individual under State Law based on why a gift is given, who is giving it, and the value of that gift.



Valuing gifts can be complicated: If donor, donor status, or value is unknown, the Ethics Office is happy to help. Call or email ethics@coj.net.

**This material is adapted from the Florida Commission on Ethics and focuses on State law.*

***Gift related definitions can be found [Fla. Stat. section 112.312](#)*



State Disclosures Guide

All elected officials in the State of Florida must file financial and gift disclosure forms per state law. This includes all Council Members and all Constitutional Officers.

IMPORTANT DEADLINES:

To ensure you never miss a deadline, you should receive FOUR recurring calendar appointments from the Ethics Office. Once you hit accept, the appointments will recur on an annual basis to remind you about upcoming deadlines.

JUNE 30	GIFT DISCLOSURE FORM 9 DUE <i>For gifts received the prior quarter, January to March</i>
JULY 1	ANNUAL FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE FORM 6 DUE <i>For previous calendar year. Includes box to certify that four hours of required ethics training was completed the previous calendar year</i>
SEPTEMBER 30	GIFT DISCLOSURE FORM 9 DUE <i>For gifts received the prior quarter, April to June</i> <i>*Check how many hours of ethics training you have completed in the year to make sure you complete 4 hours by the end of the year.</i>
DECEMBER 31	GIFT DISCLOSURE FORM 9 DUE <i>For gifts received the prior quarter, July to September</i> FOUR HOURS OF ETHICS TRAINING MUST BE COMPLETED DURING THE CALENDAR YEAR <i>Reported on annual financial disclosure Form 6 due by July 1st of following year</i>
MARCH 31	GIFT DISCLOSURE FORM 9 DUE <i>For gifts received the prior quarter, October to December prior year</i>

ELECTRONIC FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE INSTRUCTIONS:

- ☐ Financial Disclosures (Form 6) are filed at three separate times:
 - (1) when you qualify to run for office (disclosure is for the previous calendar year),
 - (2) annually by July 1 for the previous calendar year, and
 - (3) a Final Financial Disclosure (Form 6F) within sixty (60) days of leaving office (for the months of the calendar year in which you held the elected office prior to leaving office).
- ☐ Effective January 1, 2024, all filings are now submitted electronically via the Florida Commission on Ethics Electronic Financial Disclosure Management System or "EFDMS."
- ☐ There are automatic penalties for late filing and the State Ethics Commission can file ethics charges against you directly for failure to file or timely file Form 6.
- ☐ If you have any issues with the electronic filing system, please contact the State Ethics Commission with any questions you may have regarding the filing of your Form 6 at (850) 488-7864.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ❑ **Financial Disclosures, called Form 6, are filed electronically with the Florida Commission on Ethics**
- ❑ **Form 6 are due when you qualify for office, within 60 days of leaving office, and every year in between by July 1.**
- ❑ **Gift Disclosures, called Form 9, are filed by paper and mailed to the Florida Commission on Ethics**
- ❑ **Form 9 is due quarterly disclosing allowable gifts.**
- ❑ **Do not report illegal gifts from City vendors or lobbyists.**
- ❑ **There are penalties for filing late and for failing to file. But late is always better than filing a disclosure after a complaint is filed.**

GIFT DISCLOSURE INSTRUCTIONS:

- ❑ While Financial Disclosures are now filed electronically, gift disclosures continue to be filed via paper forms mailed to the State Ethics Commission in Tallahassee:
Florida Commission on Ethics
P.O. Drawer 15709
Tallahassee, Florida 32317
- ❑ If you did not receive any reportable gifts over \$100 during the previous quarter, you do not have to fill out and file a Form 9. Simply make a note for your own records.
- ❑ Gifts should be reported if they are:
 - Over \$100 and
 - Given to you by anyone other than relatives, primary employer, lobbyists and/or vendors of the City (even if gifts are unrelated to City business).
 - Ex: a gift from the City or a friend, such as 2 tickets to an event worth over \$100 such as football or concert tickets)
 - *Gifts over \$100 from lobbyists and vendors are prohibited by state and local gift laws and thus cannot be accepted. Thus, they are not reported on a Form 9.*
- ❑ Due the last day of each quarter and covers gifts received in the previous quarter. However, you can submit early and often (after every individual gift if you like).
- ❑ Please file on time or early. There is no extension. Disclosures filed after due dates are considered late. However, filing late is better than never or after a complaint is filed.
- ❑ Please don't forget to keep a copy of Form 9 (if applicable) for your records.

If you have any questions or concerns, the Ethics Office is here to help. The Ethics Office can be reached on the Ethics Helpline at 904-630-1015 or by email to ethics@coj.net.



Voting Conflicts

HIGHLIGHTS

- ☐ This applies only to non quasi-judicial matters. Quasi-judicial matters do not require an economic gain/loss for voting conflict.
- ☐ **DO NOT** vote on an issue if there is a special benefit or loss to you, your relative, employer, client or business associate.
- ☐ A special private gain must be an economic gain that is not speculative.
- ☐ If there is a voting conflict, **DISCLOSE** on Form 8B.
- ☐ **YOU MUST VOTE** unless there is a conflict or perception of a conflict.
- ☐ This area of law is complicated. Check with OGC or Ethics Office in advance of the vote.

GENERAL PRINCIPLE: You cannot vote on any measure that would result in a special private gain (or loss) to you, your relative, your business/employer, client or business associate.

Under Florida law, a voting conflict arises only when there is a special gain or loss of an ECONOMIC nature to you, your relative, your business/employer, client or business associate. A voting conflict occurs only when you will vote on a matter.

Please note you may also have a different and more consequential type of conflict that is not allowed under Florida law (see Page 13) and must be fixed through limited options.

Keep in mind that the number of people affected by the vote may matter when determining if the gain or loss is special and private. For example, if you and two people benefit from the measure, then it is more likely you will have a special gain and thus a voting conflict. If 5,000 people benefit from the measure, and you do too in the same way the others benefit, it is less likely that there is a voting conflict.

If you have a voting conflict, you must disclose this conflict in writing via "Form 8B" developed by the State Ethics Commission.

However, Florida law requires that you vote on all issues unless there is a declared voting conflict or perception of a conflict under the law. You should not abstain from voting for other reasons.

The voting conflicts law defines relative as father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, brother, sister, and mother/father/son/daughter-in-laws.

A business associate is someone you are in business with. Are you in a common business pursuit with someone? Is this a current, ongoing business relationship? If you answer yes to either of these questions, it is likely a business associate.

And finally, a "special Private Gain or Loss" must be SPECIAL – meaning you, your relatives or business associates are part of a small group that is receiving an economic benefit or loss.

Prohibitive Conflicts of Interest



HIGHLIGHTS

- ❑ Cannot cure prohibitive conflict by abstaining from vote.
- ❑ There is a potential **CONFLICT** if you, your family or business try to do business with any part of the City.
- ❑ There is a potential **CONFLICT** if you work/contract for any company doing business with the City.
- ❑ **Danger areas include: selling to the City, consulting for the City, working with a company that does business with the City, your family or business does business with the City.**
- ❑ **This area of the law is complicated. Check with the Ethics Office.**

GENERAL PRINCIPLE: If you, your spouse/child, or anyone with whom you are closely connected (employer or entity/organization) is benefitting from a City contract or City funding, you could be in conflict territory. Call Ethics Office or OGC for advice!

State laws prohibit elected officials from having a conflict between their public duties and private interests that may result in a personal benefit.

Prohibitive conflicts are different and separate from voting conflicts—they are not connected to a vote. A prohibitive conflict cannot be cured by abstaining from a vote. A prohibitive conflict can be fixed only through three (3) options:

1. Resign elected position in the City
2. End private connection
3. Organization/entity cannot obtain City contract, funding, regulation.

Prohibitive conflicts generally arise when you, your spouse/child, or a non-profit/for-profit/social company/organization you are connected to obtains City contract(s), funding or is regulated by the City (ex: land use & zoning). **Connections** that may result in a prohibitive conflict include employee, owner, officer, director, partner, or contractor of a company/organization (non-profit, for-profit or social).

There may be an exemption that will eliminate a prohibitive conflict, such as submitting sealed competitive bids or being a sole source provider. The Ethics Office will work with the Office of General Counsel to advise you how to comply with state conflicts laws.

You are also generally prohibited from representing any other person or organization, in any capacity, against the City. You may not appear before any City department or agency on behalf of someone else (excluding your constituents, yourself, parents, spouse and child). Jacksonville Code section 602.402.

This particular area of the law is complicated. It is highly recommended when considering conflicts of interest that you consult with the Ethics Office and OGC. 13

Conflicts of Interest

Self-Assessment for Elected Officials



This tool is provided by the City of Jacksonville's Office of Ethics, Compliance and Oversight as a guide for understanding state ethics conflicts laws. Conflicts happen all the time, but the only way to address them is to work with the Ethics Office and OGC by providing the information requested below.

Florida Statutes sections 112.313(3), 112.313(7) and 112.3143 identify potential conflicts for City Officials. that may require additional action by officials if a conflict exists.

For purposes of this assessment, the term "Independent Agencies" includes:

1. Duval County Public Schools,
2. Jacksonville Aviation Authority,
3. Jacksonville Electric Authority,
4. Jacksonville Finance and Housing Authority,
5. Jacksonville Housing Authority,
6. Jacksonville Port Authority,
7. Jacksonville Transportation Authority or
8. Police and Fire Pension Fund.

To determine if you may have a potential conflict, please answer the following questions:

1. Are you (or your spouse or child) employed by, or an officer of, an entity doing business with, or receiving funds from, the City of Jacksonville or any Independent Agencies (see list above)?
2. Do you, your spouse, or your child own all or part of any entity that is doing business with, or receiving funds from, the City of Jacksonville or any Independent Agencies (see list above)?
3. Do you engage in any consulting or contract work with an entity/company that is doing business with, or receiving funds from, the City of Jacksonville or any Independent Agencies (see list above)?
4. Are you (your spouse or child) a member (voting or non-voting) of any nonprofit or corporate boards that are doing business with, or receiving funds from, the City of Jacksonville or any Independent Agencies (see list above)?

If you answered yes to any of the questions above, do not worry! There is a more detailed "self-assessment" form available upon request. Call the Office of Ethics, Compliance and Oversight at 904-255-5510 or send an email to ethics@coj.net for more information.

Additional In-Office Restrictions



GENERAL PRINCIPLE: You cannot leverage your elected position to obtain a benefit for yourself or others while serving as an elected official. This includes obtaining employment with a government agency or lobbying government agencies while in office.

Florida Statutes section 112.3125 prohibits local elected officials from obtaining employment with any government agency in the State of Florida while serving as an elected official if the employment is given without merit and to gain influence in office. This prohibition will not apply if all of the following are met:

- ☐ the government position either already existed or was created by the employer without knowing of the elected officer's interest in the position;
- ☐ the government position was publicly advertised;
- ☐ the elected official was subject to the same application and hiring process as other candidates for the position; and
- ☐ the elected official meets or exceeds the required qualifications for the position.

Additionally, Florida Statutes section 112.313(10) prohibits local government employees from serving in the following roles at the same time:

- (1) holding office on the governing board or a commission that employs the employee; and
- (2) being employee of the board or commission

Finally, Florida Constitution Article II section 8(f)(2) prohibits elected officials while in office from lobbying for compensation any government agency on issues of policy, appropriations or procurement. This prohibition applies to all levels of government (federal, state, local).



Misuse of Position

HIGHLIGHTS

- ☐ **DO NOT use City letterhead or the City seal for private benefit or personal use.**
- ☐ **DO NOT say “Do you know who I am?” or similar words to gain special favor.**
- ☐ **DO NOT say “I work for the City” or similar words to get something the average citizen cannot.**
- ☐ **DO NOT use your relationship with other City employees or officials to get special favors.**
- ☐ **DO NOT use your position to obtain or share confidential information that should remain private.**

General Principle: Do not use your title or office to get a special or disproportionate benefit, economic or otherwise, for you or any others.

It is a violation for any officer or employee of the City to intentionally use his or her official position to obtain a special or disproportionate benefit.

This means that a person should never use his/her position at the City as leverage to obtain benefits the general public cannot obtain. Do not say, “Do you know who I am?” or “I am on the City Council” if it is with the intention to receive (1) any special benefit of any kind, such as a fee reduced, skip a line, etc. or (2) a disproportionate benefit that is not consistent with your public duties, by engaging in coercive, intimidating, abusive or illegal conduct on behalf of yourself or others..

Please note that sexual harassment often falls under misuse of position. If you use your position to harass or coerce someone, you are misusing your position and are in violation of state and local ethics laws.

Examples of misuse of position include using your official position to try to get a favor for a relative or a friend's child, get a table/parking place, get an upgrade on a flight, or attempt to avoid traffic citations. Misuse of position might also include calling a judge about a case, interfering with City personnel and/or City protocol to get faster service, or asking City employees, vendors or lobbyists to do anything personal for you, your family, or business.

Confidentiality:

It is also a violation to disclose or use information not available to members of the public that is obtained through a public position for the gain or benefit of you or others.

Nepotism



HIGHLIGHTS

- ☐ Applies to all City officials and employees with appointment or hiring authority.
- ☐ DO NOT hire a relative.
- ☐ DO NOT advocate for a relative to be hired.
- ☐ DO NOT give a relative a promotion.
- ☐ If a relative is looking for a job at the City, you may give them the number for Employee Services and wish them good luck.
- ☐ If a relative is looking for a job outside the City, you may share their resume from your personal email accounts.
- ☐ DO NOT pressure someone into hiring your relative.

General Principle: A public official may not appoint, employ, promote, advance or advocate for a relative for City employment.

"Public official" means a City elected official or employee who has the power to appoint, employ, promote, or advance others or recommend others for appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement in their agency. This includes City Council voting on the appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement of individuals, even if you abstain from voting. The anti-nepotism law does not apply to independent contractors.

You may not fill positions at your agency with relatives, even if they are the best person for the job – this applies to both paid and unpaid positions. In addition, even if you delegate your authority to hire to another person, this could still violate anti-nepotism laws if your relative is ultimately hired.

Florida law is quite broad in defining the term "relative" as it applies to anti-nepotism. Relative under this law includes parents, children, siblings, spouses, uncle, aunt, first cousin, nephew, niece, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, step-parents, step-children, stepbrother, stepsister, half-brother, or half-sister.

This area of the law is complicated. Please contact the Ethics Office for advice.

After Leaving Office



HIGHLIGHTS

- ❑ There are 2 different prohibitions against lobbying or representing another before your former agency for a specified time after leaving office
- ❑ Florida Statutes prohibit a former elected official from representing others before the official's former agency for two (2) years after leaving office
- ❑ The prohibition includes even mere attendance at City Council meetings
- ❑ Additionally, the Florida Constitution contains a six-year ban on lobbying for compensation before your former body on matters of policy, appropriations or procurement.
- ❑ The restriction includes lobbying on behalf of your own company.

General Principle: For a period of SIX years after leaving office, a former elected official may not lobby or represent another person or entity before their prior agency for compensation.

STATUTORY PROHIBITION (2-YEAR BAN)

Florida Statutes section 112.313(14) prohibits former elected officials from representing another person or entity for compensation before their former government body or agency for two (2) years after leaving office.

For Council Members, this prohibition applies to representations before:

- ❑ the former governing body as a whole (City Council)
- ❑ individual members of City Council and their aides
- ❑ the Chief Administrative Officer and his/her aides
- ❑ Boards upon which other Council Members serve (like the Tourism Development Council and Waterways Commission).

NOTE: This prohibition does not apply to representations before other agencies or parts of the City that are not the "governing body" or "part of the governing body."

Representation includes physical attendance at a meeting of the City Council, even if the former Council Member does not directly address the Council. It also applies to the representation of one's own company, but it does not extend to other members of one's company or post-office employer.

******For other countywide former elected officials, this prohibition applies to the office headed by the former official and all subordinate employees.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROHIBITION (6-YEAR BAN)

Effective 12-31-2022, Florida Constitution Article II, Section 8(f)(3) prohibits former elected officials from lobbying for compensation before their former agency/body for six (6) years after leaving office on issues of policy, appropriations or procurement.



Lobbyist Registration

HIGHLIGHTS

- ☐ **Anyone receiving compensation to lobby a City elected official or employee must register through the City's online lobbyist registration system.**
- ☐ **Lobbyists should include in their registration a detailed list of issues and clients for which they are lobbying.**
- ☐ **Lobbyists must register the issue on which they are lobbying BEFORE they meet with you to discuss that issue.**
- ☐ **In general, public officials and those who are not compensated for lobbying are not required to register in the City's online lobbyist registration system.**

General Principle: Each person who lobbies, for compensation, any officer or employee of the City must register with the City as a lobbyist on that issue. Please check the lobbyist registry before you meet with lobbyists.

Anyone who is being paid to attempt to influence your decision making as an elected official, or the decision making of any City employee, must register with the City's online lobbyist registration system BEFORE they meet with you to lobby. This registration should also include a specific description of issues and clients for which the individual is lobbying.

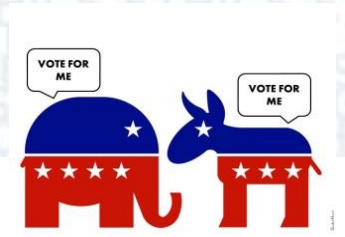
As an City elected official, it is wise to check the City's lobbyist registration system BEFORE meeting with those identified as paid lobbyists.

The following persons are not required to register as lobbyists:

- ☐ A public official, City or independent agency employee or salaried employee of a public agency acting in connection with his or her job responsibilities;
- ☐ A person who only addresses the Council or independent agency board during the "public comment" portion of its meeting agenda;
- ☐ A person who appears at the specific request or under compulsion of the Council or a Council committee; expert witnesses and other persons who give factual testimony about a particular matter or measure;
- ☐ A lobbyist who received no compensation as a lobbyist;
- ☐ A principal, an officer, or employee of a principal who performs lobbying activities as part of his or her assigned duties.

The lobbyist registration system is in place to promote public trust in government by documenting who is wielding or attempting to wield influence over issues affecting the City.

Election Ethics



HIGHLIGHTS

- ☐ **DO NOT campaign inside City buildings.**
- ☐ **DO NOT display campaign related materials in City meetings, your office or in hallways.**
- ☐ **DO NOT use your City email address or equipment to promote a campaign or campaign event.**
- ☐ **Do NOT direct your ECA to engage in campaign activities.**
- ☐ **DO NOT wear City ID or uniform to campaign events.**
- ☐ **Please see Employee Services Directive – 0527 for more information.**

General Principle: Do not participate in political campaigning inside a City building or use City resources for campaigning.

City Council Members and all City employees are encouraged to express their opinions and participate in political campaigns in accordance with Chapter 350 of the Ordinance Code and Employee Services Directive - 0527. However, certain restrictions apply regarding political activities.

In simple terms, City elected officials and employees may not campaign in City buildings or use City resources for campaigning. Officials and employees should be aware that perception matters, so they should not give the appearance that they are using City resources, such as email addresses or phones, to campaign or that they are campaigning on City property. Do not use your ECA to conduct campaign activities while on City time or use City Council District newsletters to announce or promote campaigns or campaign events. In addition, campaign contributions cannot be accepted or solicited in City buildings.

All employees have a right to vote and may take time to vote on election day in accordance with the applicable collective bargaining agreement or employment plan.

Employees who have accrued leave may engage in political activities while on approved leave. Leave should be requested through the normal process.

Penalties for noncompliance can include civil penalties and/or disciplinary action in accordance with established disciplinary procedures.

Sunshine Law



HIGHLIGHTS

- ☐ **Members of a decision-making body DO NOT discuss City business with each other outside of a noticed meeting.**
- ☐ **Minimum notice of meetings allowed is 24 hours, but one week is best per Attorney General.**
- ☐ **Public meetings MUST be in buildings that are accessible to all members of the public, including persons with disabilities.**
- ☐ **DO NOT prevent the public from attending public meetings.**
- ☐ **DO NOT ask anyone to leave a public meeting.**
- ☐ **Allow the public to COMMENT before final action is taken.**

General Principle: A meeting must be public and noticed when two or more members of a decision-making body discuss an issue that could come before their decision-making body.

The Sunshine Law applies when two or more individuals on the same council, board, or commission discuss an issue that could foreseeably come before their body. The Sunshine Law applies to boards and commissions with elected and/or appointed members, including members-elect who have not yet taken office.

This includes telephone conversations, text messages and social media posts between two or more members, casual or chance gatherings of two or more members, Council meetings, ad hoc and standing committee meetings, written correspondence used to communicate a position or engage in debate, third party liaisons used to communicate between Council Members, and any single Council Member when that member acts as a decision maker for the Council as a whole.

There are three basic requirements under the Sunshine Law for public meetings:

- ☐ Meetings must be open to the public;
- ☐ Reasonable notice of such meetings must be given; and
- ☐ Minutes must be taken and promptly recorded.

Consequences for a knowing violation of the Sunshine Law could include up to 60 days in jail. All other violations are considered non-criminal with fines up to \$500. In addition, civil actions could result in a court order finding a violation and invalidating actions taken, and also awarding attorneys' fees and costs if a violation is found.

There are some exemptions including certain collective bargaining strategy sessions, limited attorney-client litigation strategy sessions, and possibly others. Please consult with OGC regarding the application of exemptions.

SUNSHINE DO

- ❑ Discuss important decisions at publicly noticed meetings.
- ❑ Avoid the appearance that things have been decided outside of a public meeting. Ask thoughtful questions during public hearings before making decisions. Let the people see your thought process.
- ❑ City employees may discuss issues with other employees and with individual members of decision-making bodies (i.e. boards and commissions).
- ❑ Give advanced notice of meetings. Emergency meetings still require notice of at least 24 hours ahead of the scheduled meeting time.
- ❑ Hold public meetings in government-owned buildings that are widely accessible.
- ❑ Ask the Ethics Office if you are not sure.

SUNSHINE DO NOT

- ❑ Do NOT have meetings between staff and members of decision-making bodies for the purpose of circumventing the Sunshine Law.
- ❑ Do NOT use City staff to share information between multiple voting members of a board or commission.
- ❑ Do NOT start your public meeting before the noticed time, not even one minute.
- ❑ Do NOT ask anyone to leave a public meeting.
- ❑ Do NOT hold your public meeting in a private location (ex: homes, clubs, restaurants).
- ❑ Do NOT engage in discussion with fellow Council Members at a private function about issues likely to come before your board. This includes dialogue by Council Members directed to someone else, such as asking questions to a meeting speaker that is not a Council Member (see State v. Foster example below).

REAL-LIFE EXAMPLES OF SUNSHINE LAW

- *Blackford v. School Board of Orange County*, 375 So. 2d 578 (Fla. 5th DCA 1979), the court held that a series of scheduled successive meetings between the school superintendent and individual members of the school board were subject to the Sunshine Law. While normally meetings between the school superintendent and an individual school board member would not be subject to the Sunshine Law, these meetings were held in "rapid-fire succession" in order to avoid a public airing of a controversial redistricting problem. Thus, even though the superintendent was "adamant that he did not act as a go-between during these discussions and [denied] that he told any one board member the opinions of the others," the one-to-one meetings amounted to a de facto meeting of the school board in violation of the Sunshine Law.
- *State v. Foster*, 12 F.L.W. Supp. 1194a, the court rejected the argument that the Sunshine Law permitted city commissioners to attend a private breakfast meeting at which the sheriff spoke and the commissioners individually questioned the sheriff, but did not direct comments or questions to each other. The court ruled that the discussion should have been held in the Sunshine because the sheriff was a "common facilitator" who received comments from each commissioner in front of the other commissioners.

Notice Requirements



NOTICE, LOCATION OF THE MEETING, AND PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Reasonable notice is required even if there is a general knowledge of the meeting. Jacksonville Ordinance Code Chapter 15 requires approval by the Council President if notice is given less than 24 hours before the meeting.
2. Reasonable notice is required even if a quorum will not be present.
3. Meeting sponsors frequently contact the local media to provide notice of a meeting or media contacts can be added to email distribution lists.
4. Silent and non-disruptive recording devices may not be prohibited – people can tape your meeting!
5. While one cannot generally ask another to leave a public meeting, the chairperson in a meeting may utilize reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions to ensure the orderly conduct of the meeting.
6. Florida law affords the public a reasonable opportunity to be heard by a board or commission before it takes official action. Public hearing and public comment periods provide an opportunity for the public to be heard prior to final action.

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S SUNSHINE LAW RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The meeting notice should contain the time and place of the meeting and an agenda if one is available. If no agenda is available, a statement of the general subject matter to be considered should be included in the notice.
2. The notice should be prominently displayed in the area set aside for notices, e.g., for cities, in City Hall, and on the agency's website if there is one.
3. Except in the case of emergency or special meetings, notice should be provided at least 7 days prior to the meeting. Emergency sessions should give the most appropriate and effective notice under the circumstances.
4. Special meetings, or any meeting that occurs outside the regularly scheduled time and place and is often related to one specific topic, should have no less than 24 and preferably at least 72 hours reasonable notice to the public.*
5. The use of press releases, faxes, e-mails, and/or phone calls to the local news media is highly effective in providing notice of upcoming meetings.

For more information, see the Attorney General's Sunshine Manual.

*See Yarbrough v. Young, 462 So. 2d 515 (Fla. 1st DCA 1985) (three days notice of special meeting deemed adequate) and Lozman v. City of Riviera Beach, (Fla. 15th Cir. Ct. Dec. 8, 2010) (no violation of Sunshine Law where notice of special meeting held on Monday, September 15 was posted at city hall and faxed to the media on Friday, September 12, and members of the public [including the media] attended the meeting).



Choosing a Location for your Community Meeting

General Principle: When choosing a location for a community meeting, there is one key question to ask, WILL ANOTHER COUNCIL MEMBER ATTEND AND SPEAK AT YOUR COMMUNITY MEETING? If yes, this meeting is covered by Sunshine Law and should take place in a City building or at a location that is approved by the Ethics Office or Office of General Counsel.

Chapter 15 of the Jacksonville Ordinance Code, designated as the Jacksonville Sunshine Law Compliance Act, requires approval (by Ethics Office or OGC) if a Council Member wants to have a "Council Public Meeting" in a place other than a government owned building.

A "Council Public Meeting" is a meeting that is covered by the Sunshine Law. If a Council Member is scheduling a meeting and knows or anticipates that another Council Member(s) will attend the meeting, the meeting location must be approved if the meeting is in a place that is not a government building.

However, if a Council Member wants to meet only with constituents and no other Council Member will attend, the meeting can be set up at locations other than City Hall without approval from Ethics Office or OGC. You don't have to notice those meetings or take minutes—they are not covered by the Sunshine Law.

SCENARIOS:

1. CM wants to hold a town hall meeting for constituents and other CMs say they will attend and want to participate. This is a Sunshine meeting and requires advance approval if it will be held in a non-government building.
2. CM wants to meet with only their constituents at a location around town. This is NOT a public meeting requiring approval of the location.
3. Two or more CMs want to meet at a hotel in town (just the CMs or participate in a forum). This needs approval. Generally, CMs should not be meeting together outside of City Hall. Participation in a forum is covered by the Sunshine Law and must be handled correctly.
4. CM advertises a meeting with constituents on a matter. Another CM shows up unexpectedly to the meeting. The other CM can attend this meeting as a citizen, but cannot participate in a discussion with the CM hosting the meeting about any issues that could come in front of the Council.
5. CM wants to meet in the Ed Ball building or a public library with another CM about an issue. The meeting must be noticed and minutes must be taken. No approval of the meeting location is required because the meeting is being held at a government owned building.
6. Two CMs want to do a joint forum out in the community. The Sunshine Law applies and the forum must be handled correctly. The location needs approval.
7. CMs are prohibited under the Sunshine Law from taking bus or inspection trips together to view projects.



Attending Meetings that are Publicly Noticed by Others

HIGHLIGHTS

- ❑ Council Members may attend meetings publicly noticed by other bodies.
- ❑ If it is known ahead of time that two or more Council Members will attend another public meeting, this should be included in the public notice.
- ❑ If two or more Council Members attend a publicly noticed meeting held by another board, they may speak, even on Council business, but they cannot engage with other Council Members.

General Principle: A Council Member may attend CPAC meetings and other publicly noticed meetings, and speak, but may not engage other Council Members at that meeting about Council business.

Per several Attorney General opinions (“AGO”), one or more members of City Council may attend and participate in a meeting of another public board, but the Council Members cannot engage with or address each other at the meeting.

- ❑ Council Members may attend meetings of a second public board (i.e. JEA Board or School Board)
- ❑ Council Members may comment on agenda items considered at a meeting of another public board that may subsequently come before the Council for final action.
- ❑ If more than one Council member attends a meeting of another public board, no discussion or debate may take place among the Council Members. See AGO 00-68.

Examples

AGO 99-55: The Attorney General’s Office opined that a school board member could attend and participate in the meeting of an advisory committee appointed by the school board without prior notice of his or her attendance. However, the opinion cautioned that “if it is known that two or more members of the school board are planning to attend and participate, it would be advisable to note their attendance in the advisory committee meeting notice.”

AGO 98-79: The Attorney General’s Office opined a city commissioner may attend a public community development board meeting held to consider a proposed city ordinance and express his or her views on the proposed ordinance, even though other city commissioners may be in attendance. However, the city commissioners in attendance may not engage in a discussion or debate among themselves because “the city commission’s discussions and deliberations on the proposed ordinance must occur at a duly noticed city commission meeting.”

Council Leadership Elections



GENERAL GUIDANCE:

Elections for Council President and Vice-President are not a procedural matter—they are a Sunshine Law matter. The City Council votes on who will be President and Vice-President and thus all discussions about this between Council Members must be in the Sunshine (meetings in City Council chambers; notices and minutes taken). **Council Members CANNOT have back and forth communications (discussions, texts, emails, letters, pledges, thumbs up in passing, etc.) with other Council Members about elections for Council leadership outside of a noticed meeting.**

The Sunshine Law ALSO prohibits Council Members from using another person (ECAs, City staff, lobbyists, etc.) to “test the waters,” take a poll or to get information about who is supporting who in elections. This violates the Sunshine Law because it is using an indirect form of communication to obtain information outside of a noticed meeting.

EXAMPLES OF SUNSHINE LAW DANGER AREAS:

1. A Council Member invites you to lunch and mentions that he/she wants to run for President.
2. A Council Member stops by your office and mentions how he/she would do things differently than the current leadership and that is why he/she is running for election.
3. A lobbyist/member of Mayor’s staff/ECA mentions to another Council Member that you are running and looking for support.

You CAN send a letter saying you are running. That is one directional-- “I am running and will set up a noticed meeting with you later.” **You cannot collect pledges back from anyone or sign pledges in support of anyone outside of a noticed meeting.**

CORRECT PROCEDURE:

1. Send out an email/letter (if you want) that says you are running.
2. At the end, put “please do not respond in any way to this email/letter. I will be setting up a noticed meeting with you to discuss.”
3. Set up a noticed meeting. If you want someone to sign a pledge at that noticed meeting, you can do so.
4. Do not send out or say anything announcing “I have 10 pledges.” Someone can look at all of the minutes of the noticed meetings and figure it out, but do not count up votes/pledges and announce it.



Public Records Law

HIGHLIGHTS

- ❑ **DO NOT destroy or delete records related to City business.**
- ❑ **ANY RECORDS related to City business that are located in personal e-mail accounts, social media apps or on personal devices (including cell phones) are public records, including text messages and emails.**
- ❑ **CREATE A SYSTEM to store your public records so they can be easily retrieved, such as scanning documents and saving texts.**
- ❑ **BE PREPARED to respond to requests for public records.**

General Principle: All documents and records related to City business must be retained and made available to the public upon request.

Florida leads the nation in government transparency via the Government in the Sunshine laws. To build public trust, the Government in the Sunshine laws establish the right of citizens to observe decision making at both the state and local government levels.

Thus, all records related to the transaction of government business are public records and must be made available to the public upon request. This includes all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, photographs, films, sound recordings, emails, text messages, and handwritten notes related to City business, regardless of whether in their final form and where they are kept.

A document is a public record if it relates to City business. It is the content of the document and not its location that determines if it is a public record.

Personal notes and draft documents intended for personal use become public records if they are communicated to anyone else.

Penalties for noncompliance or intentionally destroying public records can include civil penalties, criminal charges, and/or disciplinary actions in accordance with established disciplinary procedures.



State Ethics Commission

HIGHLIGHTS

- ❑ State ethics laws are under the jurisdiction of the State Ethics Commission.
- ❑ State Ethics Commission also administers the financial and gift disclosures for government officials. Copies of disclosure forms are available on the State Ethics Commission website.
- ❑ See State Ethics Commission website, <http://www.ethics.state.fl.us/>, for information regarding financial and gift disclosures, as well as advisory opinions and complaints related to state ethics issues.

General Principle: The State Ethics Commission assists elected officials by issuing advisory opinions about the application of state ethics laws. The Commission also addresses complaints alleging violations of state ethics laws.

The State Ethics Commission is a nine-member, independent body established by the Florida Constitution to ensure compliance with the standards of conduct for state and local governmental officials in Florida. The Commission does this by issuing binding advisory opinions. The Commission is also empowered to address alleged breaches of public trust by public officials and employees through investigating complaints.

Advisory opinions are only issued when a written request is received on behalf of a public official or employee. Commission staff prepare an initial draft opinion that is provided to the person requesting the advisory opinion. The draft opinion will also be listed on the agenda for a subsequent meeting of the Commission for consideration. These meetings typically occur at least eight times per year. Requestors have the right to respond to draft opinions and attend the meeting at which the opinion will be considered by the Commission.

If a state ethics issue is identified, the Ethics Office or Office of General Counsel can work with you to determine if an advisory opinion is needed and, if necessary, submit an opinion request on your behalf.

Complaints are confidential up to the point where the Commission dismisses the complaint or finds probable cause to substantiate the alleged violation. The Commission has established a complaint process that is available on the website.

If the Commission determines a violation has occurred, it recommends penalties, including, but not limited to, fines and removal from office.



Jacksonville Ethics Program

HIGHLIGHTS

- ❑ **The local Ethics Program is comprised of the Ethics Office, the Ethics Coordination Council and the Ethics Commission.**
- ❑ **The Ethics Office provides training and advises City officials and employees on state and local ethics issues.**
- ❑ **The Ethics Coordination Council addresses various issues across City departments and divisions and Independent Authorities.**
- ❑ **The Ethics Commission promotes citizen trust in local government and addresses cases relating to the local Ethics Code.**

GENERAL PRINCIPLE: THE JACKSONVILLE ETHICS PROGRAM ACTS LIKE A “WATCHDOG” WITH A NETWORK OF EMPLOYEES WORKING TO ANTICIPATE PROBLEM AREAS AND PREVENT ISSUES BEFORE THEY ARISE.

The City of Jacksonville's Ethics Program is comprised of three distinct groups that work together to anticipate and address potential ethics issues. These groups include the Office of Ethics, Compliance and Oversight, the Ethics Coordination Council, and the Ethics Commission.

The Office of Ethics, Compliance and Oversight (“OECO”) is headed by Executive Director, Kirby Oberdorfer. The OECO coordinates and supports the Ethics Coordination Council and the Ethics Commission. The OECO also manages the Ethics hotline, presents ethics training to City officials and employees, and regularly provides advice to elected officials and employees regarding ethics questions.

The Ethics Coordination Council is established in the City's Ethics Code. All major City departments and divisions, Constitutional Officers and Independent Authorities have a department, division or agency Ethics Officer (DEO). This “DEO” works on ethics issues in addition to their regular job duties. The DEOs typically handle ethics issues relating to gifts and secondary employment. They also meet to discuss best practices in training and to help identify risk areas within the City's varied divisions and departments.

The Ethics Commission is a quasi-judicial board comprised of nine volunteer community members appointed by various public officials and selected by the Commission for the purpose of providing a local forum for consideration and investigation of local ethics issues. In addition to reviewing complaints, the Ethics Commission proposes changes to the local Ethics Code, reviews training efforts, and works to promote citizen trust in local government.



Jacksonville Ethics Commission



**Kirby Oberdorfer,
Ethics Director**



**Robyn Blank,
State Attorney
Appointee**



**J.J. Dixon, Chair
Sheriff Appointee**



**Leah Palestrant,
Ethics Commission
Appointee**



**Dr. Erich Freiburger,
Vice-Chair, City Council
Appointee**



**LaTonya Lipscomb
Smith, Esq.
Ethics Commission
Appointee**



**Sunny Gettinger,
Mayoral Appointee**



**Scott Simpson, Ethics
Commission Appointee**



**Judge Linda McCallum,
Chief Judge Appointee**



**Cherry Pollock, Esq.
Office of General
Counsel
Liaison to Ethics
Commission
NEED DYLAN**



**William Maule,
Public Defender
Appointee**

INSPECTOR GENERAL

MISSION: "ENHANCING PUBLIC TRUST IN GOVERNMENT THROUGH INDEPENDENT AND RESPONSIBLE OVERSIGHT"

The City of Jacksonville's Office of Inspector General (OIG) is authorized in Article 1, Chapter 2, of the City Charter and Chapter 602, Part 3, of the *Ordinance Code*.

The OIG is established to:

- ✓ Provide independent oversight of publically funded activities, transactions, and other local government operations.
- ✓ Investigate, audit, and provide contract oversight to promote economies and efficiencies, improve agency operations, and prevent and deter fraud, waste, and abuse.
- ✓ Receive, review, and investigate any complaints regarding projects, programs, contacts, or transactions of any office, agency, department, or part of the entire consolidated government.

The OIG's jurisdiction includes the offices and employees of the Consolidated Government of the City of Jacksonville, its Constitutional Officers, and Independent Agencies.

The OIG's Investigations Unit, Contract Oversight Unit, and Audit Unit release reports and make recommendations to address shortcomings, irregularities and/or to improve the efficiency in government.

The OIG is independent to assure no interference or influence adversely affects investigations and other inquiries.



Did You Know?

- ☐ In accordance with Part 5, Section 602, Ordinance Code, the Office of Inspector General is the "Whistleblower Official," with the responsibility of granting or denying whistleblower status.
- ☐ Audit, Contract Oversight, and Investigative Reports are available for review on the OIG website: www.coj.net/OIG
- ☐ Matters concerning fraud, waste, or abuse may be reported anonymously and confidentially. The OIG has an open door policy for all employees, vendors, citizens, etc.

HOTLINE

Report Fraud, Waste, & Abuse

904.255.5800 | www.coj.net/OIG

Email: InspectorGeneral@coj.net

231 E. Forsyth St, Suite 470, 32202