



City of Tampa
Ethics Office
2009 Annual Report

The Ethics Office

The duties of the Ethics Office and the Ethics Officer were created as a result of the revised City of Tampa Code of Ethics, effective January 1, 2004. The duties and responsibilities of the office are set forth in Division 7 as well as other sections of the Code of Ethics.

The Ethics Office is a part of the Department of Human Resources with existing staff continuing to absorb the additional work tasks to administer the ordinance. Other departments continue to have substantial responsibility for enforcement of various aspects of the ordinance. This includes the Purchasing, City Clerk, and Legal departments.

Accomplishments

Highlights of the accomplishments of the Ethics Office for the reporting period (June 2008-June 2009) are as follows:

➤ **Department Ethics Liaison Program**

- ✧ Assisted Department Directors in the selection of Departmental Ethics Liaisons by providing instructions and guidance. The Departmental Ethics Liaisons selected during this report period were replacements for liaisons who were no longer employed by the city, with the applicable department, and/or moved to other positions for which serving as the liaison was not practical. Maintenance of the roster of liaisons is important and permanent reference for employees continues on the city INET.
- ✧ Updated the Ethics Notebooks for each Departmental Ethics Liaison as needed. These notebooks contain a copy of the Code of Ethics, the annotated version, copies of referenced state laws, related legal opinions, and other material as needed for their responsibilities.
- ✧ Conducted meetings as needed with the Departmental Ethics Liaisons. During the first year of implementation of the ethics ordinance, these meetings were a critical part of the implementation of various aspects of the Code of Ethics including the distribution and instructions for the first use of various employee disclosure forms as well as clarifications from the Legal Department for the liaisons when answering employee questions. Subsequent years' meetings, if needed, were more informal for the distribution of materials to the departments. The Departmental Ethics Liaisons have been a vital part of the implementation and enforcement of the Ethics Code.

➤ **Financial Disclosure**

- ✧ Designed and distributed the Financial Disclosure forms for the July 15, 2008 reporting for calendar year 2007. These two forms, one for elected officials and one for appointed employees, were sent with instructions directly to the persons required to complete them. Newly appointed employees complete the form as part of their employee orientation in order to comply with the Code. All Financial Disclosure forms have been filed in the employee's or elected official's personnel file.
- ✧ Preparation for the July 15, 2009 disclosure was completed with distribution of the updated forms in mid-May. All current employees and elected officials returned their forms prior to the deadline.

➤ **Real Estate Disclosure**

- ✧ Newly appointed employees complete the Real Estate Disclosure form as part of their employee orientation in order to comply with the Code. All forms have been filed in the employee's personnel file.
- ✧ Based on the prior determination from the Legal Department defining which Boards or Commissions of the city include "appointed officials" required to complete the disclosure requirement, the Ethics Office is notified of new appointments in order to distribute and obtain completed disclosure forms. All forms are maintained by the Ethics Office. A review of any outstanding forms is done on a monthly basis to ensure compliance.

➤ **Approval of Non-City Employment/Private Business Entity**

- ✧ The Request for Approval of Non-City Employment/Private Business Entity form is provided to all new employees as part of their employee orientation and replaces the prior disclosure form.
- ✧ As specified in the ordinance, employees who do not receive approval from their department director for their Request for Approval of Non-City Employment/Private Business Entity form receive an appeal hearing with the Ethics Commission. The Ethics Office continues to be responsible for the scheduling of the hearings and presenting information to the Commission as part of the appeal process. During this reporting period, one employee appeal hearing was conducted by the Ethics Commission. That hearing continued to subsequent dates, however, the Ethics Office was able to prepare a memorandum through which the employee's request was approved by the department director with clarification of the employee's responsibilities and compliance with the Code of Ethics.

➤ **Ethics Commission Support**

- ✧ Commission Meetings - The Ethics Commission held four meetings during this period. The Ethics Office supported the Ethics Commission with the drafting and issuance of all meeting agendas, public notice of the Commission meetings, meeting minutes, and correspondence. The Ethics Office also drafted the Ethics Commission's 2009 Annual Report for their approval.
- ✧ Updated Ethics Notebooks for each Commissioner - These notebooks contain a copy of the Code of Ethics, the annotated version, copies of referenced state laws, related legal opinions, and other material as needed for their responsibilities. The Commissioners each have a notebook at the Ethics Office in addition to their personal copy to avoid the need for them to retrieve and bring the notebook to Commission meetings. Any newly issued legal opinions along with an updated index were provided to each commissioner during the 2008-2009 reporting period.
- ✧ Commission Rules & Regulations - The Ethics Office continues to maintain the Commission's Rules & Regulations, updated immediately upon amendment, on the City's INET and the City's web site.
- ✧ Ethics Complaints – The Ethics Office is responsible for the processing and investigation of ethics complaints. No complaints were received during the 2008-2009 reporting period.
- ✧ Commission Initiatives – The Ethics Office completed a number of research projects and drafting of material for the Commission during this reporting period. This included the further progress towards recommendation of amendments to the Ethics Code as a result of the audit and other goals of the Commission as well as drafting communication to appointed officials, which will be utilized for their ethics training. This material was completed during the 2008-2009 reporting period and is scheduled for further review by the administration for potential submission for amendments to the Code of Ethics.

➤ **Lobbyist Disclosure**

- ✧ The Ethics Office staff reconciled information from the Lobbyist Sign-In Sheets with the Lobbyist Disclosure forms through December 31, 2008. Notification reminders of the requirement for the Lobbyist Annual Expenditure Report form were sent to all persons that had completed information on a sign-in sheet and/or submitted a Lobbyist Disclosure form. Reports regarding compliance/non-compliance have been provided to the Ethics Commission. This is a significant task for the Ethics Office and revisions to recording and maintaining data during this year resulted in improved ability to report information to the Commission. For this reporting period, 100% compliance was received.

➤ **Ethics Training**

- ✧ A continuing focus during this period was the completion of the Ethics Training for all new employees within six months of their employment with the city. This was accomplished with the prior training of the Department Ethics Liaisons who conduct training sessions for all new employees in their department. The video and employee handbook provided for various options for training (multiple sessions vs. one training session). All departments completed the training and provided documentation to the Ethics Office for the individual employees' attendance. Certificates of training completion were provided to each employee via a download of the employee database from the Ethics Office to the Department Ethics Liaisons. Effective May 11, 2009, the Ethics in Government training is provided to all new employees in "Successful Beginnings," the new employee orientation program. Through the new orientation program, employees now receive the ethics training on the first day of employment.

➤ **Ethics Information – City of Tampa Website**

- ✧ During this reporting period, the Ethics Commission's Annual Report (2008) and the Ethics Office Annual Report (2008) were distributed via email to the elected officials. These reports were also posted on the City's website, furthering our communication efforts to the public as well as to employees regarding the Ethics Office and the Ethics Commission.