The City's Governmental Ethics Ordinance establishes standards of conduct for all City employees and officials. These standards cover conflicts of interest, working outside jobs, accepting gifts, employing relatives, engaging in political activity, and other topics. They restrict what you can do in and after you leave City service.

In 2012, Mayor Emanuel introduced significant changes to the Ordinance, and the City Council adopted them. It is important that you understand these restrictions generally, so that you can spot “ethics issues” and you seek advice.

This guide outlines the key restrictions. It is not intended to be all-inclusive, and provides general information only. It is not a substitute for confidential Board advice.

If you have questions about whether something you wish to do complies with the City’s ethics laws, policies and standards, please consult the Board of Ethics for an advisory opinion. Your consultation is confidential.

The Board is an important resource for you. Please use it.
► gifts accepted on the City's behalf;

► reasonable hosting expenses related to official City business, if offered by the sponsor or host;

► materials or travel expenses related to public or governmental educational purposes, if the Board approves it, and you report it to the Board within 10 days of your return; and

► gifts offered to you because of your outside, non-City business or employment.

**HONORARIA**

☞ Honoraria are prohibited: you may not accept any gift or money for participating in speaking engagements, lectures or discussion forums in the course of your City service. Make sure you turn down or immediately return any checks or other things of value offered or sent to you in exchange for your speech.

☞ But, you may accept:

► honoraria for speaking engagements that are not related to your City job; and

► reasonable travel expenses to the location of your speech, even if it’s related to your City job; these can include air, ground transport, lodging and food; but you must receive advance clearance from your Department Head (or alderman) and from the Board of Ethics, and you must report your travel in writing to the Board of Ethics within 10 days of your return.

**REPRESENTING OR “LOBBING” FOR NON-CITY PERSONS**

☞ You may not represent or derive any income or compensation from representing any person (like a non-profit, a company, or a friend) before a City agency in any formal or informal meeting or transaction. This does not preclude you from performing your official City duties.

☞ You may not derive any income or compensation from the representation of any person in any judicial or quasi-judicial proceeding if the City is a party and that person’s interest is adverse to the City’s.

☞ A City elected official may not contact any other City official or employee regarding any matter involving a person or organization with whom the elected official has a business relationship that creates a financial interest, or from whom or which the official has derived or expects to derive compensation or income.

**POST-EMPLOYMENT/REVOLVING DOOR RESTRICTIONS**

☞ For one year after you leave City service, you may not work on a transaction involving the City if, while in City service, you were personally and substantially involved in its subject matter.

☞ For two years after leaving City service, non-clerical Mayoral staff members and department heads may not lobby the City, and other Shakman-exempt employees may not lobby their former department.

☞ If you have exercised management authority over a City contract, you may not assist anyone other than the City (such as a new client or employer) with that contract.

☞ If you participated personally and substantially or were counsel of record in a judicial or quasi-judicial proceeding involving the City, you may not assist anyone other than the City in that proceeding.

☞ You may not negotiate the possibility of future employment with any person (except another government agency) that has a matter pending before you.

**SOLICITING OR RECEIVING GIFTS OR MONEY FROM THIRD PARTIES**

☞ You, your spouse, domestic partner or minor child may not solicit or accept money or anything of value in return for your advice or assistance on matters concerning City business, unless that advice or assistance is wholly unrelated to your City responsibilities.
REVERSE REVOLVING DOOR RESTRICTION

❖ You may not personally participate in a decision-making capacity for two years after your start date of City service in any matters that benefits your immediate pre-City employer or immediate pre-City client whom you represented or to whom you consulted or on whose behalf you lobbied.

LOANS FROM LOBBYISTS AND CITY CONTRACTORS

❖ You, your spouse/domestic partner, or entities in which either of you have ownership interests worth more than $1,000, may not apply for, solicit, accept, or receive loans from a person doing or seeking to do business with the City, or any lobbyist, except for ordinary market rate loans negotiated at arm’s length and made by banks or financial lenders.

CONTRACTING WITH THE CITY

You may not have a financial interest (meaning an ownership interest that is worth more than $1000) in

❖ your own name, or in the name of any other person (such as a company or firm in which you have an ownership interest) in any City contract, work, sale or business (except for participation in certain designated housing assistance programs)

❖ the purchase of City property unless it is sold through a process of competitive bidding following public notice.

DUAL EMPLOYMENT

❖ City Personnel Rule XX provides that a City employee may not engage in a profession, business, trade, investment, occupation or other activity that results in a conflict of interest with City employment.

❖ It also requires a City employee to obtain written permission from his/her Department head to engage in dual employment/outside business activities.

RELATIVES AND DOMESTIC PARTNERS

❖ You may not hire or advocate for the employment of your relatives/domestic partner in any City agency in which you serve or exercises authority (except for personal staff of an alderman hired as City employees)

❖ You may not exercise supervisory authority over a relative or domestic partner (except for personal staff of an alderman hired as City employees)

❖ You may not use your City position to help your relative or domestic partner acquire a position with anyone whose City work you oversee.

❖ You may not exercise contract management authority over City work being done by any person or organization that employs or contracts with your relative/domestic partner.

POLITICAL ACTIVITY

❖ You cannot perform political activity during any City compensated time (when you’re at your City job, or time for which you’re credited for minimum City work time requirements).

❖ You cannot ever use (or be on) City property or resources while engaging in or performing any political activity, even on your vacation, furlough, or lunch.

❖ You cannot solicit, accept or make a political contribution while on City property or during compensated time.

❖ If you exercise contract management authority in your City job, then you cannot serve on a political fundraising committee" But you can still be politically active as long as you follow the other rules described.

❖ Unless you’re a candidate for elected office, you cannot knowingly solicit or accept a political contribution from any person or firm doing business with the City.

❖ You cannot require other City employees or officials to perform political activity as part of their job duties or during their time off, or compel or coerce them to make, not make or solicit political contributions.
**CONFLICTS OF INTEREST/ IMPROPER INFLUENCE**

You may not make, participate in, or try to use your position to influence any City governmental decision or action on any matter from which you have derived any income or compensation in the previous year, or expect to derive any income or compensation in the next year, or have an ownership interest that is worth $1,000 or more, or have any kind of financial interest distinguishable from that of the general public.

**STRICTER DEPARTMENTAL RULES ALLOWED**

The Ordinance is a floor, not a ceiling. Any department or aldermanic office may adopt stricter rules. This is especially true with respect to gifts–some departments have imposed a gift ban–and outside employment. Always check with your department first.

**MANDATORY ETHICS TRAINING**

Lobbyists, full-time employees, aldermen, City Council “contract employees” and appointed officials must complete an annual ethics training program designed by the Board. Aldermen, City Council employees and all Senior Executive City employees must also attend face-to-face ethics training every four years. Persons who fail to complete required training are subject to a $250 fine, and their names and violations will be made public.

**STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL INTERESTS**

Elected officials, certain appointed officials, and City employees with managerial responsibilities must file, a Statement of Financial Interests annually with the Board of Ethics. Filings can be done on-line. All filed Statements are open for public inspection under the Freedom of Information Act. The Board keeps them on file for seven years after filing. Statements filed in 2009 and after are available on the City’s website. Persons who fail to file their Statements as required training are subject to a $250 fine, and their names and violations will be made public.

**COMPLAINTS AND INVESTIGATIONS**

The Board can accept and refer for investigation complaints alleging violations of the Ordinances by City employees, officials and others subject to their provisions. After a complaint is investigated by the appropriate Inspector General, the Board will hold hearings to determine whether the Ordinance was violated. All complaints, Board investigations, determinations and recommendations thereon are confidential in accordance with the Ordinances.

To file a complaint, please call or email our office.

**PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS**

The Board determines whether violations of the Ordinance have occurred, and can impose or recommend penalties, including employment sanctions, removal from office, censure, fines or invalidation of contracts. Summaries of concluded cases can be made public, according to the law.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Please visit our website: www.cityofchicago.org/Ethics

For confidential advice or guidance, contact:

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