



Dealing with the County of Will Ethics Ordinance

ETHICS ORDINANCE



Policy & Rules Committee
Ordinance #06-261

Ordinance
Re: Adopting Ethics Ordinance

PREAMBLE

WHEREAS, the Illinois General Assembly has enacted the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (Public Act 93-615, effective November 19, 2003, as amended by Public Act 93-617, effective December 9, 2003), which is a comprehensive revision of State statutes regulating ethical conduct, political activities and the solicitation and acceptance of gifts by State officials and employees; and

WHEREAS, the Act requires all units of local government and school districts, within six months after the effective date, to adopt ordinances or resolutions regulating the political activities of, and the solicitation and acceptance of gifts by, the officers and employees of such units “in a manner no less restrictive” than the provisions of the Act; and

WHEREAS, it is the clear intention of the Act to require units of local government and school districts to implement regulations that are at least as restrictive as those contained in the Act, and to impose penalties for violations of those regulations that are equivalent to those imposed by the Act, notwithstanding that such penalties may exceed the general authority granted to units of local government to penalize ordinance violations; and

WHEREAS, it is the clear intention of the Act to provide units of local government with all authority necessary to implement its requirements on the local level regardless of any general limitations on the power to define and punish ordinance violations that might otherwise be applicable; and

WHEREAS, because the Act provides for the imposition of significant penalties for violations of said local regulations, it is necessary to adopt the required regulations by Ordinance rather than by Resolution;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNTY BOARD OF THE COUNTY OF WILL, AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1: The Code of Ordinances of the County of Will is hereby amended by the addition of the following provisions:

ARTICLE 1

DEFINITIONS

Section 1-1. For purposes of this ordinance, the following terms shall be given these definitions:

“Campaign for elective office” means any activity in furtherance of an effort to influence the selection, nomination, election, or appointment of any individual to any federal, State, or local public office or office in a political organization, or the selection, nomination, or election of Presidential or Vice-Presidential electors, but does not include activities (i) relating to the support or opposition of any executive, legislative, or administrative action, (ii) relating to collective bargaining, or (iii) that are otherwise in furtherance of the person’s official duties.

“Candidate” means a person who has filed nominating papers or petitions for nomination or election to an elected office, or who has been appointed to fill a vacancy in nomination, and who remains eligible for placement on the ballot at a regular election, as defined in section 1-3 of the Election Code (10 ILCS 5/1-3).

“Collective bargaining” has the same meaning as that term is defined in Section 3 of the Illinois Public Labor Relations Act (5 ILCS 315/3).

“Compensated time” means, with respect to an employee, any time worked by or credited to the employee that counts toward any minimum work time requirement imposed as a condition of his or her employment, but for purposes of this Ordinance, does not include any designated holidays, vacation periods, personal time, compensatory time off or any period when the employee is on a leave of absence. With respect to officers or employees whose hours are not fixed, “compensated time” includes any period of time when the officer is on premises under the control of the employer and any other time when the officer or employee is executing his or her official duties, regardless of location.

“Compensatory time off” means authorized time off earned by or awarded to an employee to compensate in whole or in part for time worked in excess of the minimum work time required of that employee as a condition of his or her employment.

“Contribution” has the same meaning as that term is defined in section 9-14 of the Election Code (10 ILCS 5/9-1.4).

“Elected Official” means a person elected or appointed to an Elective County Office, regardless of whether the officer is compensated for service in his or her official capacity, but does not include the Circuit Court Judges, the Circuit Clerk or the State’s Attorney.

“Employee” means a person employed by the County, whether on a full-time or part-time basis or pursuant to a contract, whose duties are subject to the direction and control of an employer with regard to the material details of how the work is to be performed, but does not include an independent contractor.

“Employer” means the County of Will, as well as its elected and appointed officials who are subject to this Act.

“Gift” means any gratuity, discount, entertainment, hospitality, loan, forbearance, or other tangible or intangible item having monetary value including, but not limited to, cash, food and drink, and honoraria for speaking engagements related to or attributable to government employment or the official position of an officer or employee.

“Leave of absence” means any period during which an employee does not receive (i) compensation for employment, (ii) service credit towards pension benefits, and (iii) health insurance benefits paid for by the employer.

“Officer” means a person who holds, by election or appointment, an office created by statute or ordinance, regardless of whether the officer is compensated for service in his or her official capacity.

“Political activity” means any activity in support of or in connection with any campaign for elective office or any political organization, but does not include activities (i) relating to the support or opposition of any executive, legislative, or administrative action, (ii) relating to collective bargaining, or (iii) that are otherwise in furtherance of the person’s official duties.

“Political organization” means a party, committee, association, fund, or other organization (whether or not incorporated) that is required to file a statement of organization with the State Board of Elections or a county clerk under Section 9-3 of the Election Code (10 ILCS 5/9-3), but only with regard to those activities that require filing with the State Board of Elections or a county clerk.

“Prohibited political activity” means:

- (1) Preparing for, organizing, or participating in any political meeting, political rally, political demonstration, or other political event.
- (2) Soliciting contributions, including but not limited to the purchase of, selling, distributing, or receiving payment for tickets for any political fundraiser, political meeting, or other political event.
- (3) Soliciting, planning the solicitation of, or preparing any document or report regarding anything of value intended as a campaign contribution.

(4) Planning, conducting, or participating in a public opinion poll in connection with a campaign for elective office or on behalf of a political organization for political purposes or for or against any referendum question.

(5) Surveying or gathering information from potential or actual voters in an election to determine probable vote outcome in connection with a campaign for elective office or on behalf of a political organization for a political purposes or for or against any referendum question.

(6) Assisting at the polls on election day on behalf of any political organization or candidate for elective office or for or against any referendum question.

(7) Soliciting votes on behalf of a candidate for elective office or a political organization or for or against any referendum question or helping in an effort to get voters to the polls.

(8) Initiating for circulation, preparing, circulating, reviewing, or filing any petition on behalf of a candidate for elective office or for or against any referendum question.

(9) Making contributions on behalf of any candidate for elective office in that capacity or in connection with a campaign for elective office.

(10) Preparing or reviewing responses to candidate questionnaires.

(11) Distributing, preparing for distribution, or mailing campaign literature, campaign signs, or other campaign material on behalf of any candidate for elective office or for or against any referendum question.

(12) Campaigning for any elective office or for or against any referendum question.

(13) Managing or working on a campaign for elective office or for or against any referendum question.

(14) Servicing as a delegate, alternate, or proxy to a political party convention.

(15) Participating in any recount or challenge to the outcome of any election.

“Prohibited source,” means any person or entity who:

(1) is seeking official action (i) by an officer or (ii) by an employee, or by the officer or another employee directing that employee;

(2) does business or seeks to do business (i) with the officer or (ii) with an employee, or with the officer or another employee directing that employee;

(3) conducts activities regulated (i) by the officer or (ii) by an employee, or by the officer or another employee directing that employee; or

(4) has interests that may be substantially affected by the performance or non-performance of the official duties of the officer or employee.

ARTICLE 2

PROHIBITED POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

Section 2-1. Prohibited political activities. (a) No officer or employee shall intentionally perform any prohibited political activity during any compensated time, as defined herein. No officer or employee shall intentionally use any property or resources of the County, including County issued cell phones, vehicles or other County property or resources, in connection with any prohibited political activity.

(b) At no time shall any officer or employee intentionally require any other officer or employee to perform any prohibited political activity (i) as part of that officer or employee's duties, (ii) as a condition of employment, or (iii) during any compensated time off (such as holidays, vacation or personal time off).

(c) No officer or employee shall be required at any time to participate in any prohibited political activity in consideration for that officer or employee being awarded additional compensation or any benefit, whether in the form of a salary adjustment, bonus, compensatory time off, continued employment or otherwise, nor shall any officer or employee be awarded additional compensation or any benefit in consideration for his or her participation in any prohibited political activity.

(d) Nothing in this Section prohibits activities that are permissible for an officer or employee to engage in as part of his or her official duties, or activities that are undertaken by an officer or employee on a voluntary basis which are not prohibited by this Ordinance.

(e) No person either (i) in a position that is subject to recognized merit principles of public employment or (ii) in a position the salary for which is paid in whole or in part by federal funds and that is subject to the Federal Standards for a Merit System of Personnel Administration applicable to grant-in-aid programs, shall be denied or deprived of employment or tenure solely because he or she is a member or an officer of a political committee, of a political party, or of a political organization or club.

ARTICLE 3

GIFT BAN

Section 3.1. Gift ban. Except as permitted by this Article, no officer or employee, and no spouse of or immediate family member living with any officer or employee (collectively referred to herein as “recipients”), shall intentionally solicit or accept any gift from any prohibited source, as defined herein, or which is otherwise prohibited by law or ordinance. No prohibited source shall intentionally offer or make a gift that violates this Section.

Section 3.2. Exceptions. Section -3-1 is not applicable to the following:

(1) Opportunities, benefits, and services that are available on the same conditions as for the general public.

(2) Anything for which the officer or employee, or his or her spouse or immediate family member, pays the fair market value.

(3) Any (i) contribution that is lawfully made under the Election Code (ii) activities associated with a fundraising event in support of a political organization or candidate.

(4) Educational materials and missions.

(5) Travel expenses for a meeting to discuss business related to the office or an employee’s official capacity .

(6) A gift from a relative, meaning those people related to the individual as father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, great aunt, great uncle, first cousin, nephew, niece, husband, wife, grandfather, grandmother, grandson, granddaughter, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, stepfather, stepmother, stepson, stepdaughter, stepbrother, stepsister, half brother, half sister, and including the father, mother, grandfather, or grandmother of the individual’s spouse and the individual’s fiancé or fiancée.

(7) Anything provided by an individual on the basis of a personal friendship unless the recipient has reason to believe that, under the circumstances the gift was provided because of the official position or employment of the recipient or his or her spouse or immediate family member and not because of the personal friendship. In determining whether a gift is provided on the basis of personal friendship, the recipient shall consider the circumstances under which the gift was offered, such as: (i) the history of the relationship between the individual giving the gift and the recipient of the gift, including any previous exchange of gifts between those individuals; (ii) whether to the actual knowledge of the recipient the individual who gave the gift personally paid for the gift or sought a tax deduction or business reimbursement for the gift; and (iii) whether to the actual knowledge of the recipient the individual who gave the gift also at the same

time gave the same or similar gifts to other officers or employees, or their spouses or immediate family members.

(8) Food or refreshments not exceeding \$75 per person in value on a single calendar day; provided that the food or refreshments are (i) consumed on the premises from which they were purchased or prepared or (ii) catered. For the purposes of this Section, "catered," means food or refreshments that are purchased ready to consume which are delivered by any means.

(9) Food, refreshments, lodging, transportation, and other benefits resulting from outside business or employment activities (or outside activities that are not connected to the official duties of an officer or employee), if the benefits have not been offered or enhanced because of the official position or employment of the officer or employee, and are customarily provided to others in similar circumstances.

(10) Intra-governmental and inter-governmental gifts. For the purpose of this Act, "intra-governmental gift" means any gift given to an officer or employee from another officer or employee, and "inter-governmental gift" means any gift given to an officer or employee by an officer or employee of another governmental entity.

(11) Bequests, inheritances, and other transfers at death.

(12) Any item or items from any one prohibited source during any calendar year having a cumulative total value of less than \$100.

Each of the exceptions listed in this Section is mutually exclusive and independent of every other.

Section 3.3. Disposition of gifts. An officer or employee, his or her spouse or an immediate family member living with the officer or employee, does not violate this Ordinance if the recipient promptly takes reasonable action to return a gift from a prohibited source to its source or gives the gift or an amount equal to its value to an appropriate charity that is exempt from income taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as now or hereafter amended, renumbered, or succeeded.

ARTICLE 4

ETHICS ADVISOR

Section 4.1. The County Executive, with the advice and consent of the County Board shall designate an Ethics Advisor for the County. Said Ethics Advisor may not be already an "employee" of the County and shall not be related, either by blood or by marriage up to the degree of first cousin, to any elected official of the County. Said Ethics Advisor shall be an independent contractor of the County, and the compensation for said Ethics Advisor shall be as set by the Will County Board.

Section 4.2. The Ethics Advisor shall provide guidance to the officers and employees of the County concerning the interpretation of and compliance with the provisions of this Ordinance and State ethics laws for the future actions of any officer or employee. Should the Ethics Advisor become aware of any past violations of this Ordinance, the Ethics Advisor shall inform the Ethics Commission of said violation. If the Ethics Commission does not exist, the Ethics Advisor shall inform the Will County State's Attorney of said violation. The Ethics Advisor shall perform such other duties as may be delegated by the County Board.

ARTICLE 5

WHISTLE BLOWER PROTECTION

Section 5.1. Definitions. In this Article:

"Public body" means (1) any officer, member, or agency; (2) the federal government; (3) any local law enforcement agency or prosecutorial office; (4) any judiciary, grand or petit jury, law enforcement agency, or prosecutorial office; and (5) any officer, employee, department, agency, or other division of any of the foregoing.

"Supervisor" means an officer, a member, or an employee who has the authority to direct and control the work performance of a employee or who has authority to take corrective action regarding any violation of a law, rule, or regulation of which the employee complains.

"Retaliatory action" means the reprimand, discharge, suspension, demotion, or denial of promotion or transfer of any employee in the terms and conditions of employment, and that is taken in retaliation for an employee's involvement in protected activity, as set forth in Section 5.2.

Section 5.2. Protected activity. An officer, a member, or an agency shall not take any retaliatory action against an employee because the employee does any of the following:

(1) Discloses or threatens to disclose to a supervisor or to a public body an activity, policy, or practice of any officer, member, agency, or other employee that the employee reasonably believes is in violation of a law, rule, or regulation.

(2) Provides information to or testifies before any public body or Ethics Commission conducting an investigation, hearing, or inquiry into any violation of a law, rule, or regulation by any officer, member, agency, or other employee.

(3) Assists or participates in a proceeding to enforce the provisions of this Ordinance.

Section 5.3. Burden of proof. A violation of this Article may be established only upon a finding that (i) the employee engaged in conduct described in Section 5.2 and (ii) that conduct was a contributing factor in the retaliatory action alleged by the employee. It is not a violation, however, if it is demonstrated that the officer, member, other employee, or agency would have taken the same unfavorable personnel action in the absence of that conduct.

Section 5.4. Remedies. The employee may be awarded all remedies necessary to make the employee whole and to prevent future violations of this Article. Remedies imposed may include, but are not limited to, all of the following:

(1) reinstatement of the employee to either the same position held before the retaliatory action or to an equivalent position;

(2) 2 times the amount of back pay;

(3) interest on the back pay; and

(4) the reinstatement of full fringe benefits and seniority rights.

Section 5.5. Preemption. Nothing in this Article shall be deemed to diminish the rights, privileges, or remedies of an employee under any other federal or State law, rule, or regulation or under any collective bargaining agreement or employment contract.

ARTICLE 6

PENALTIES

Section 6.1. Penalties. (a) A person who intentionally violates any provision of Article 5 of this Ordinance may be punished by a term of incarceration in a penal institution other than a penitentiary for a period of not more than 364 days, and may be fined in an amount not to exceed \$2,500.

(b) A person who intentionally violates any provision of Article 3 of this Ordinance is subject to a fine in an amount of not less than \$1,001 and not more than \$5,000.

(c) Any person who intentionally makes a false report alleging a violation of any provision of this Ordinance to the local enforcement authorities, the State's Attorney or any other law enforcement official may be punished by a term of incarceration in a penal institution other than a penitentiary for a period of not more than 364 days, and may be fined in an amount not to exceed \$2,500.

(d) A violation of Article 2 of this Ordinance shall be referred to the Will County State's Attorney or his designee for review. The State's Attorney or his designee may file in the circuit court by way of an information or sworn complaint charging such offense. The prosecution shall be under and conform to the rules of criminal procedure. Conviction shall require the establishment of the guilt of the defendant beyond a reasonable doubt.

A violation of Article 3 of this Ordinance may be prosecuted as a quasi-criminal offense by the Will County State's Attorney, or his designee, or, if an Ethics Commission has been created, by the Commission through the designated administrative procedure.

(e) In addition to any other penalty that may be applicable, whether criminal or civil, an officer or employee who intentionally violates any provision of Article 2 or Article 3 of this Ordinance is subject to discipline or discharge.

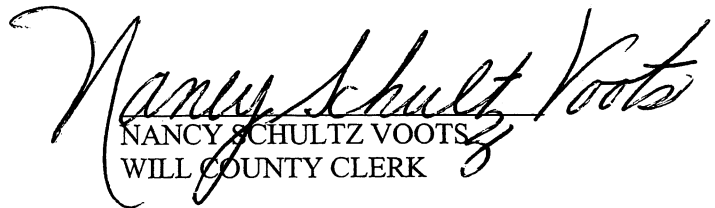
SECTION 2: This Ordinance shall be in effect upon its passage, approval and publication as provided by law.

SECTION 3: If any term and/or provision of this Ordinance shall to any extent be held invalid or unenforceable, the remaining terms or provisions of this Ordinance shall not be affected thereby, but each term and/or provision of this Ordinance shall be valid and enforced to the fullest extent permitted by law.

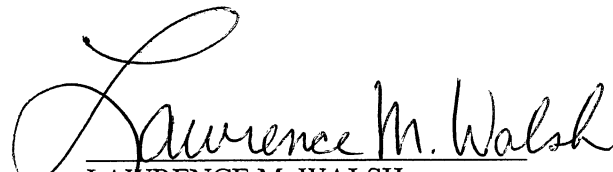
BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that the Preamble is incorporated in full as though set forth herein.

Adopted by the Will County Board this 15th day of June, 2006.

VOTE: YES: 27 NO: 0 PASS: 0 (SEAL)


NANCY SCHULTZ VOOTS
WILL COUNTY CLERK

Approved this 7 day of July, 2006.


LAWRENCE M. WALSH
WILL COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DEALING WITH THE WILL COUNTY ETHICS ORDINANCE

A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYEES

DEALING WITH THE WILL COUNTY ETHICS ORDINANCE

A Guide for Employees

You have just received a copy of the Will County Ethics Ordinance along with this pamphlet. Reasonably enough, you suspect that buried in a “*Whereas*” is information you need. What does this mean? How does it apply to you? What is this document about?

The County of Will is an employer, in many ways just like any other employer, but in a few very significant ways, unlike any employer in the private sector. It is a government. It is funded by taxpayer dollars and its top officials are chosen by election. Its jobs all relate in one way or another to protecting the health and safety of the people who live in the County. The real purpose of this Ordinance is to help insure that people who work for the County are doing just that, working for the health, safety and interests of the people who live here.

The Ordinance goes in two directions. First the Ordinance is directed at making sure that County time, employees, equipment and other resources are used for the business of the County. Second, the Ordinance is aimed at avoiding improper considerations being part of decision making or how County business is performed. That’s why there are two main parts to the Ordinance, prohibited political activity and a gift ban. This pamphlet is going to take a closer look at both parts of the Ordinance.

Political Activity

One thing needs to be made clear from the start. By going to work for the County you have not given up your rights as a citizen to vote, to run for office, to have and express political opinions, to support the candidates of your choice or to be a member of a political organization. What is required is that you do any and all of those things, if you choose, ON YOUR OWN TIME and off the County premises. The Ordinance is directed to what you cannot do at work. That is where the political activity is prohibited.

When are you “At Work”?

If you have a specific place that you go to every day it is fairly simple. You are at work when you are “on the clock” at your desk or job site, doing what it is that the County pays you to do. You are not at work on holidays, vacations, days off, personal days, compensatory time off or leave of absence. You are at work if you are working overtime.

You are at work when you are at any place under the control of the County or at any location, County controlled or not, when you are performing your duties. Example: A health department employee in a restaurant kitchen or a deputy testifying in Court or a zoning inspector at a junk yard. All are at work and governed by the ethics ordinance.

What is prohibited “At Work”?

The Ordinance lists the political activity that is forbidden. Let’s take a look at the list:

1. Preparing for, organizing, or participating in any political meeting, political rally, political demonstration, or other political event. (Example: The President is making a whistle stop in town during working hours and I really want to be there. Solution: Take a vacation or personal day !)
2. Soliciting contributions, including but not limited to the purchase of, selling, distributing, or receiving payment for tickets for any political fundraiser, political meeting, or other political event. (Example: I don’t try to sell tickets at work but I keep getting mail at work from the “Committee to Elect . . .” with tickets for me to buy or sell. Now what? You have a couple of choices. You could simply toss them. That doesn’t work if you are also feeling pressured in some way to buy or sell the tickets. Then what? If you are comfortable talking to your supervisor, do

that. If not, or you really don't want to talk to the people you work with about it, call the ethics advisor, or e-mail, or send a letter. All the contact information you need is in this pamphlet. Those contacts are private; you are not going to get in trouble for making that contact)

3. Soliciting, planning for the solicitation of, or preparing any document or report regarding anything of value intended as a campaign contribution. (**By the way**, it is not just you and your time that is regulated by this Ordinance; it is also County resources and equipment. That means not using a County-issued cell phone, computer, copy machine or other County equipment for political activity whether you are on or off the clock. So don't use your computer at work to send a bunch of e-mails about the fundraiser or to prepare a political brochure. Don't use the county vehicle you drive to drop off yard signs even if you have punched out and are on the way home.)
4. Planning, conducting, or participating in a public opinion poll in connection with a campaign for elective office or on behalf of a political organization for political purposes or for or against any referendum question. (You, as a citizen, are free to do any of these things but not on County time or with County equipment.)
5. Surveying or gathering information from potential or actual voters in an election to determine the probable vote outcome in connection with a campaign for elective office or on behalf of a political organization for a political purpose or for or against any referendum question.
6. Assisting at the polls on Election Day on behalf of any political organization or candidate for elective office or for or against any referendum question. (If you feel the need to do this you better **save those vacation days**.)
7. Soliciting votes on behalf of a candidate for elective office or a political organization or for or against any referendum question or helping in an effort to get voters to the polls. (**Please take the campaign button off your uniform**.)
8. Initiating for circulation, preparing, circulating, reviewing or filing any petition on behalf of a candidate for elective office or for or against any referendum question. (This really isn't hard. **Don't** pass around a nominating petition at work, even in the break room.)
9. Making contributions on behalf of any candidate for elective office in that capacity or in connection with a campaign for elective office. (If you want to make a campaign contribution, **write the check at home, send it to the campaign headquarters and use your own stamp**.)
10. Preparing or reviewing responses to a candidate questionnaire. (Do this at home using your own computer.)
11. Distributing, preparing for distribution, or mailing campaign literature, campaign signs, or other campaign material on behalf of a candidate for elective office or for or against any referendum question. (Again, if you are going to do this it has to be **on your own time and with your own equipment**.)
12. Campaign for any elective office or for or against any referendum question. (Again, lose the campaign button at work.)
13. Managing or working on a campaign for elective office or for or against any referendum question.
14. Serving as a delegate, alternate, or proxy to a political party convention. (This requires taking time off vacation, personal or leave of absence,)
15. Participating in any recount or challenge to the outcome of any election.

Just to make it clear, the list is **prohibited political activity**. You simply cannot do these things on **County time or with County equipment or resources**.

IMPORTANT: Obviously, if you as an employee can't do these things, your employer or supervisor can't ask you to do these things; or in any way suggest or imply directly or indirectly that your job depends on or is more secure if you do something on this list. If you are feeling pressure on this subject, contact the Ethics Advisor. **It is private and the ordinance has protections for you.**

Gift Ban

Except as permitted by this Article, no officer or employee, and no spouse of or immediate family member living with any officer or employee shall intentionally solicit or accept any gift from any prohibited source, or which is otherwise prohibited by law or ordinance. No prohibited source shall intentionally make or offer a gift that violates this Section.

What is an **Officer**?

"Officer" means a person who holds, by election or appointment, an office created by statute or ordinance, regardless of whether the officer is compensated for service in his or her official capacity.

Employee?

"Employee" means a person employed by the County, whether on a full or part time basis or by contract, whose duties are subject to the direction and control of an employer with regard to the material details of how the work is to be performed, but does not include independent contractors.

Employer?

"Employer" means the County of Will, as well as its elected and appointed officials who are subject to this Act.

Prohibited Source?

"Prohibited Source" means any person or entity who:

1. is seeking official action by an office or by an employee, or by the officer or another employee directing that employee;
2. does business or seeks to do business with the officer or with an employee, or with the officer or another employee directing that employee;
3. conducts activities regulated by the officer or by an employee, or by the officer or another employee directing that employee;
4. has an interest that may be substantially affected by the performance or non-performance of the official duties of the officer or employee.

Gift?

"Gift" means any gratuity, discount, entertainment, hospitality, loan, forbearance or other tangible or intangible item having monetary value including, but not limited to, food drink, honoraria for speaking engagements related to or attributable to government employment or the official position of the officer or employee.

The easy translation is, don't take anything of value except your paycheck for doing your job, or to influence how you do your job.

There are exceptions. We are not talking about a cup of coffee. The Ordinance lists the exceptions.

1. Opportunities, benefits, and services that are **available on the same conditions as for the general public.**
2. It is not a gift if you, or your family, **pay full fair market value for it.**

3. Campaign contributions are covered by other statutes and **receiving such contributions is not covered by the ordinance.**
4. Educational materials and missions.
5. Travel expenses for a meeting to discuss business related to the office or the employee's official capacity.
6. The Ordinance **does not apply to gifts between close family members.** It also lists family members. So your wife can still give you a birthday present. So can your **mom, uncle and sister.**
7. Gift between personal friends. **This exception requires a look at the history of the relationship.** You and your best friend have exchanged Christmas gifts for the last 20 years. You don't have to quit because now you work for the County. This is not the same situation as a person you knew in school and haven't seen since graduation suddenly feeling the need to take you and your wife to a fancy Chicago restaurant for "old times sake" when he is also seeking permits or a variance from your office, or his company is bidding on a contract with the County. The facts of the situation, the nature and history of the relationship, whether the donor looks upon it as a business expense are the kind of things you need to look at to decide whether the gift is banned.
8. Food or drink worth not more than **\$75 per person on a single day** as long as it is **consumed on the premises** where it was prepared or catered. Sandwich at lunch → **ok!** A frozen turkey → **no!**
9. Food refreshments, lodging, transportation or other benefits not related to your employment, as long as they really are **not related to your employment** and are **customarily provided to others in similar circumstances.** **So go to the wedding.**
10. Intra-governmental and inter-governmental gifts.
11. Bequests and inheritances.
12. Items from any **one prohibited source** during any calendar year having a cumulative total value **less than \$100.** A prohibited source who picks up the lunch check once is probably not a problem if you didn't have a \$76 lunch but you can't permit him to do it every Friday when you get together for lunch.

So what do you do if a gift that doesn't fit the exceptions arrives? **Best choice** - refuse the gift or give it back if you can. If you can't, the Ordinance permits giving the gift itself or cash in the full amount of the value of the gift to a charity.

Whistle Blower Protection.

Under the County Ethics Ordinance, as well as State law, there is significant protection for an employee who reports actions that violate this Ordinance. **Retaliatory actions against an employee who reports such violations are forbidden under the Ordinance.**

Retaliatory actions can include such things as **reprimands, suspensions, denial of promotions, transfers, or even discharge.** Any employee who receives any retaliation is entitled to any remedy necessary to correct the retaliatory action, including, reinstatement, back pay, double back pay, interest on back pay and recovery of all fringe benefits and seniority.

Penalties.

Violation of the Ethics Ordinance can result in **suspension, termination of employment and possibly criminal penalties, including fines and incarceration.**

Where can I get help?

For most County employees the Ethics Ordinance will have the primary effect of making people a little more sensitive to the fact that they work for the government. People who work for the government have power to affect the lives of the people who live in the County. It is important to do your job while

avoiding favoritism or undue influence. It is equally important to do your job and not use your job to help some political plan.

What do you do if something comes up at work? You have a question about something. Who do you ask? There is no reason not to discuss a question or situation with your **supervisor** or the **Human Resources Department**, if you feel comfortable doing so. **You do, however, have another option.**

The Ordinance provides for a **County Ethics Advisor**. This person is not an employee of the County and not connected to any County official, The Ethics Advisor is available to you for questions or to discuss situations concerning either political activity or the gift ban which you do not want to discuss with your supervisor.

Will County Executive, Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant, has appointed Lisa L. Kinser as Ethics Advisor.

You can call her at: (815) 521-8447

E-mail at: kinserlawfirm@gmail.com

Or write to her: c/o Human Resources Department
302 N. Chicago Street
Joliet, IL 60432



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