

<p style="text-align: center;">COUNTY OF WASHINGTON</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Pennsylvania</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Washington County Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PAGE: 1 of 7</p> <p>Supersedes Policy dated: August 5, 2005</p>
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POLICY

The policy of Washington County is to conduct business in accordance with core values and ethical standards is a matter of significant importance to the County of Washington. Acts involving real or apparent conflicts of interest undermine the ability of Washington County to perform its important public mission. Employees, elected officials, vendors, independent county contractors, and the public must be assured that the County operates in accordance with the highest standards. Conflicts of interest may lead to financial loss and litigation. In addition, these acts damage the reputation of the County, its elected and appointed officials, and employees. The development of policies and procedures to deter potentially conflictual situation, is in the best interest of the County and the public. This policy serves to confirm County policy regarding deterrence, detection, and avoidance of potentially embarrassing, damaging, or illegal activity.

Washington County is committed to the highest standards of conduct by and among County officials, employees, vendors, and independent contractors in the performance of their public duties.

Adherence to high ethical standards is central of the maintenance of public trust and confidence in government.

SCOPE

This Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy should provide valuable guidance in reaching decisions which are governed, ultimately, by the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, including the State Ethics Act, and regulations thereto, and by the dictates of the individual conscience of the public official or employee and his or her commitment to the public good.

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Washington County Board of Commissioners hereby adopts this Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy as follows:

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ELECTED COUNTY OFFICIALS

County officials accept the responsibility that his or her mission is that of servant and steward to the public.

County officials shall:

- Properly administer the affairs of the County
- Promote decisions which only benefit the public interest
- Actively safe all funds and other properties of the County
- Keep safe all funds and other properties of the County
- Conduct and perform the duties of the office diligently
- Maintain a positive image to pass constant public scrutiny
- Evaluate all decisions so that the best service or product is obtained at a minimal cost without sacrificing quality and fiscal responsibility.
- Inject the prestige of the office into everyday dealings with the public employees and associates.
- Maintain a respectful attitude toward employees, other public officials, colleagues, and constituents.
- Effectively and efficiently work with the government agencies, political subdivisions, and other organizations in order to further the interest of the County.
- Faithfully comply with all laws and regulations applicable to the County and impartially apply them to everyone.

County officials shall not:

- Engage in outside interests that are not compatible with the impartial and objective performance of his or her duties.
- Improperly influence or attempt to influence other officials or employees to act in his or her own benefit.
- Accept anything of value from any source which is offered to influence his or her action as a public official.

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COUNTY EMPLOYEES

County employees shall devote their full time and attention to their jobs, shall always maintain a professional demeanor, and shall maintain a respectful and helpful attitude to the public and other employees and associates.

Under no circumstances may an employee engage in private business during regular work hours; nor may non-County business be conducted outside regular hours in or with County offices, equipment, or facilities

An employee shall not solicit or accept gifts, gratuities, loans, or anything of monetary value from a client or vendor except gifts of nominal or incidental value such as pens, calendars, or candy.

Washington County's officers, employees, or agents will neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors, potential contractors, or parties to sub-agreements. Depending upon the circumstances, exceptions to this provision may be granted only in situations where the financial interest is not substantial or the gift is an unsolicited item of nominal intrinsic value.

An employee, officer or agent of Washington County shall be careful to ensure that s/he is involved in no apparent or potential violations of this provision.

An employee shall report to his or her supervisor any attempt by a client, vendor, contractor, employee, or elected official to give the employee a gift, gratuity, loan, or anything of monetary value and shall report to his or her supervisor any attempt to improperly influence the employee's decision or performance of his or her duties.

An employee shall report to his or her supervisor any directive from any supervisor that the employee believes to be improper or unethical; if such an improper or unethical directive came from the employee's immediate supervisor, the employee shall report same to the supervisor above.

COUNTY VENDORS/COUNTY CONTRACTORS

County vendors and/or county contractors shall maintain a professional attitude and demeanor at all times and shall maintain a respectful and helpful attitude to the public and to other employees and associates.

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PROHIBITED CONDUCT REGARDING AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION OF GOVERNMENT CONTACTS

No employee, officer or agent of Washington County shall, participate in selection, or in the award or administration of a contract if a conflict of interest, real or apparent, would be involved. Such a conflict would arise when:

- (i) the employee, officer, or agent,
- (ii) any member of his immediate family
- (iii) his or her partner, or
- (iv) an organization which employs, or is about to employ, any of the above, has a financial or other interest in the firm selected for award. Washington County officers, employees or agents will neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors or anything of monetary value from contractors, potential contractors, or parties to sub agreements.

No employee, officer, or agent of Washington County shall participate in selection, or in the award or administration of a contract supported by U.S. Federal funds if a conflict of interest would be involved. Such a conflict would arise when (i) the employee, officer, or agent, (ii) any member of his/her immediate family, (iii) his/her partner, or (iv) an organization which employs, or is about to employ, any of the above, has a financial or other interest in the first selected for award.

An employee, officer, or agent of Washington County shall be careful to ensure that s/he is involved in no apparent or potential violations of this provision.

PENALTIES FOR MISCONDUCT

Any employee's commission of an act in violation of the Code or retaliation against an individual reporting suspected violation, will result in appropriate disciplinary sanction up to and including dismissal, against the offending employee. A written record of each action taken pursuant to this policy will be placed in the offending employee's personnel file. The record will reflect the conduct and the conduct, and the action taken by the County.

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PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING, INVESTIGATING AND RESOLVING SUSPECTED CODE VIOLATION AND/OR COMPLAINTS OF RETALIATION

Any employee, officer, or agent of Washington County should report violations of this Code of Conduct to his/her supervisor, or to the Board of Commissioners.

There will be no retaliation against any party who makes a good faith complaint concerning violations of this Code of Conduct, regardless of whether it is ultimately determined that such violation has in fact occurred. Not will there be any retaliation against any party who provides information in the course of an investigation into alleged violations of this Code of Conduct.

All county supervisors have a responsibility to be sensitive to and deal with violations of this Code of Conduct. This responsibility includes monitoring all relevant work activities and contacting a higher-level supervisor or the Board of Commissioners, if it is reasonable believed that a violation of the Code of Conduct has occurred. Any such report shall be investigated regardless of whether a formal complaint has been made.

Reporting. Elected officials, managers, supervisors, and employees are required to report suspected violations to either an immediate supervisor or to the Director of Human Resources. Supervisors, when in receipt of a report of potential violations of this policy, must immediately notify the Director of Human Resources of the report. Retaliation against an individual reporting suspected violations or providing information during an investigation conducted under this policy is strictly forbidden.

Investigation of Reports. The Department of Human Resources has primary responsibility for all investigations involving complaints under this policy. The Washington County Commissioners may designate another individual for the purposes of conducting an investigation in accordance with applicable law and County policy and procedure.

Cooperation. Employees are required to cooperate with any investigation of suspected violation. Employees who engage in misconduct under this policy, or retaliation, or who fail to cooperate with investigations into suspected misconduct under this policy may be sanctioned up to and including dismissal. Employees, who refuse to implement remedial measures, obstruct remedial efforts and/or retaliate against individuals making a report under this policy, or witnesses, may be sanctioned up to and including dismissal.

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Supervisory Responsibility. An effective policy requires the support and example of personnel in positions of authority. Managers and supervisors are expected to be aware of the policies and procedures in effect, in their areas of responsibility, to establish and maintain monitoring, review and control procedures that deter misconduct and are also expected to develop policies and procedures to detect, and report acts of wrongdoing promptly should prevention efforts fail. The authority to carry out these responsibilities is not to be delegated to subordinates and accountability for effectiveness remains with managers and supervisors. Assistance in effectively carrying out these responsibilities is available from the Department of Human Resources.

Discipline

Any employee, officer, or agent of Washington County, determined to have committed a violation of this Code of Conduct shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Dissemination

Any employee, officer, or agent of Washington County shall be informed of this Code of Conduct when this Code is adopted, and/or when s/he is initially retained by Washington County and on an annual basis thereafter.

CONTROLLING LAW

The officials and employees of Washington County are, of course, first subject to all existing laws, including the State Ethics Act and any regulations promulgated thereto. If this policy conflicts with any law or any Court or administrative ruling, said law or ruling shall be controlling.

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INTERPRETATION AND ADMINISTRATION

The Human Resources Department is responsible for the overall implementation and administration of this policy under the guidance of the County Solicitor.

The Board of Commissioners is responsible for the ultimate authorization and control of this policy and will implement this policy following adoption.

ADOPTED this 21st day of November, 2024, per minute.

Ratified: _____

COUNTY OF WASHINGTON



Nick Sherman, Chairman



Electra S. Janis, Vice-Chair



Larry Maggi, Commissioner

ATTEST:



Cynthia B. Griffin, Chief Clerk

Approved as to Form and Legality:



Gary Sweat, Solicitor



Andrea M. Johnston,
Director of Human Resources

per minute # 1196
dated 11-21-24