# Sample Code of Ethics

**Adopted \_\_\_\_\_, 2023**

**Purpose**

The public and stakeholders of the City are entitled to responsible, fair and honest government that operates in an atmosphere of respect and civility. Accordingly, the City Council adopts this code to:

* Describe the standards of behavior to which its officials and employees aspire;
* Provide guidance to officials and employees in their day-to-day activities; and
* Promote and maintain a culture of ethics.

This Code of Ethics applies to all City appointed officials and employees, and members of any of its boards, commissions, committees, and task forces (collectively hereafter, “staff”).

**Ethics and Conduct**

To ensure that the City operates in a fair, ethical and accountable manner, staff shall:

* Comply with both the letter and spirit of the laws and policies affecting the operations of the City;
* Are independent, impartial and fair in their judgment and actions;
* Use their public office for the public good, not for personal gain; and
* Conduct public deliberations and processes openly, unless required by law to be confidential, in an atmosphere of respect and civility.

Therefore, staff shall conduct themselves in accordance with the following ethical standards:

1. **Act in the public interest.** Recognizing that stewardship of the public interest must be their primary concern, staff will work for the common good of the public and not for any private or personal interest, and they will assure fair and equal treatment of all persons, claims and transactions coming before them.
2. **Comply with laws and policies.** Staff shall comply with both the spirit and the letter of the laws of the nation and the State of California, and with policies of the City in the performance of their public duties.
3. **Conduct at public meetings**. When participating in public meetings, staff shall prepare themselves for public issues; listen courteously and attentively to all public discussions before the body; and focus on the business at hand.
4. **Conflict of Interest.** The professional and personal conduct of staff while exercising their office must be above reproach and avoid even the appearance of impropriety. Staff shall not use their official positions to influence government decisions in which they have (a) a material financial interest, (b) an organizational responsibility or personal relationship which may give the appearance of a conflict of interest, or (c) a strong personal bias.
5. **Gifts and favors.** Staff shall not take any special advantage of services or opportunities for personal gain, by virtue of their public office that is not available to the public in general. They shall refrain from accepting gifts, favors or promises of future benefits which might compromise their independence of judgment or action or give the appearance of being compromised.
6. **Confidential information.** Staff must maintain the confidentiality of all written materials and verbal information provided to members which is confidential or privileged. Staff shall neither disclose confidential information without proper legal authorization, nor use such information to advance their personal, financial or other private interests.
7. **Use of public resources.** Staff shall not use public resources which are not available to the public in general (e.g., City staff time, equipment, supplies or facilities) for private gain or for personal purposes not otherwise authorized by law.
8. **Positive work environment.** Staff shall support the maintenance of a positive and constructive work place environment for employees and the public. Staff shall refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of other staff or members of the public.
9. **Lobbying.** Staff shall not, for a period of two years following the termination of their office or employment, represent, appear or lobby before any City body, agency, official or employee. "Lobby" shall mean making any oral or written communication directly or indirectly to an official of the City, in an effort to influence or persuade the official to favor or oppose, recommend or not recommend, vote for or against, or take or refrain from taking action on any public policy issue of a discretionary nature.
10. **Future employment.** Staff shall not, for a period of two years following the termination of their office or employment, accept employment or otherwise receive compensation from a person or organization that entered into a contract with the City within one year prior to the termination of the office or employment, where the former official or employee personally and substantially participated in the award of the contract.

Staff shall not, for a period of two years following the termination of their office, participate as a competitor in any competitive selection process for a City contract where the former official or employee recommended or approved the project or the work that is the subject of the contract, nor shall any City contract be awarded to such a former official or employee.

The provisions of this section shall not preclude the hiring of a former City employee as a consultant, provided that such hiring is approved in advance by the Commission.

1. **Whistle blower** **protection.** To the extent not otherwise prohibited by State law, staff shall not use or threaten to use any official authority or influence to discourage, restrain or interfere with or to effect a reprisal against any person, for the purpose or with the intent of preventing such person from acting in good faith to report or otherwise bring to the attention of the City or other appropriate agency, any information that, if true, would constitute a gross waste of City funds, a gross abuse of authority, a specified and substantial danger to public health or safety due to any act or omission of a City official or employee, or the use of a City position or resources for personal gain.

**Acknowledgement**

All current City employees and officials including members of boards, commissions, committees, and task forces, will be given a copy of this Code of Ethics and asked to sign an Acknowledgement of Receipt form (see Attachment).

All new employees of the City will be given a copy of the Code of Ethics and asked to sign an Acknowledgement of Receipt form (attached) as part of their new employee orientation. Each new member of a board, committee, or task force will be given a copy of the Code of Ethics and asked to sign an Acknowledgement of Receipt form at their first meeting.

Acknowledgment of Receipt forms for officials, employees and members of boards, committees and task forces shall be maintained on file by the City.

**ATTACHMENT**

**CODE OF ETHICS**

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT FORM**

Name: (Type or print first and last name)

Title:

Department/Position: Signature: Date: