

The Supreme Court of Ohio

CODE OF ETHICS FOR COURT APPOINTEES

This code of ethics is adopted by the Supreme Court and applies to all Court appointees to boards, commissions, advisory committees, and task forces created and staffed by the Court. It is intended to establish consistent standards and expectations regarding ethical behavior by Court appointees in meeting their duties and responsibilities through their appointment. It is intended to also ensure public trust and confidence that the important matters reviewed by boards, commissions, advisory committees, and task forces are considered in a fair and impartial manner.

This code of ethics has not been adopted as a rule pursuant to Article IV, Section 5 of the Ohio Constitution and should not be construed as requiring adoption.

SECTION 1.0. DEFINITION.

1.1. Definition.

As used in this code of ethics, a “Court appointee” means a person serving on a board, commission, advisory committee, or task force, as appointed by the Court, the Chief Justice of the Court, or a Justice of the Court, or serving on such a body by virtue of holding a position within or upon nomination of another group, association, or organization.

SECTION 2.0. EXPECTATIONS AND PROHIBITIONS.

2.1. Representative of the Court.

A Court appointee shall strive at all times to represent the Court in a professional and ethical manner. A Court appointee shall also avoid speaking or representing to others that the appointee is in a position to speak on behalf of or state the official position of the Court, unless authorized to do so.

2.2. Appearance of Impropriety.

A Court appointee shall avoid engaging in activity that gives the appearance of impropriety.

2.3. Undue Influence.

A Court appointee shall avoid allowing family, social, political, business, financial, or other relationships to influence improperly the judgment or position of the appointee on an issue under review by the board, commission, advisory committee, or task force to which the appointee is assigned.

2.4. Use of Prestige.

A Court appointee shall avoid using or lending the prestige of the Court or the board, commission, advisory committee, or task force to which the appointee is assigned in order to advance the private interests of the appointee or others, provided the appointee may note service to the body in a news release, biographical sketch, or other publication that cites the appointee's professional activities and public service.

2.5. Special Position.

A Court appointee shall avoid implying, conveying, or permitting others to convey the impression the appointee is in a special position to influence the judgment of the Court or the board, commission, advisory committee, or task force to which the appointee is assigned. A Court appointee shall also avoid performing any duty or responsibility in a manner that improperly favors any person or group associated with a subject under review by the Court or the board, commission, advisory committee, or task force to which the appointee is assigned.

2.6. Confidential Information.

A Court appointee shall avoid improperly releasing or using confidential information gained through the appointee's participation with the board, commission, advisory committee, or task force to which the appointee is assigned.

2.7. Gifts, Bequests, Favors, and Loans.

A Court appointee; the appointee's spouse, parent, or child, wherever residing; and any person residing in the appointee's household shall avoid accepting a gift, bequest, favor, or loan from any person associated with an issue under review by the board, commission, advisory committee, or task force to which the appointee is assigned that might reasonably be regarded as influencing or appearing to influence the performance of the appointee's official duties.

2.8. Impartiality.

A Court appointee shall avoid participating in a matter pending before the board, commission, advisory committee, or task force to which the appointee is assigned in which the impartiality of the appointee might reasonably be questioned.

2.9. Bias and Prejudice.

A Court appointee shall avoid participating in a matter pending before the board, commission, advisory committee, or task force to which the appointee is assigned and in which the appointee has a personal bias or prejudice concerning a party to the matter.

2.10. Financial and Other Interests.

A Court appointee shall avoid participating in a matter pending before the board, commission, advisory committee, or task force to which the appointee is assigned and in which the appointee, individually or as a fiduciary; the appointee's spouse, parent, or child, wherever residing; or any other person residing in the appointee's household has any more than a minimal financial interest in the subject matter or has more than a minimal non-financial interest that could be substantially affected by the outcome of the matter.

A Court appointee, individually or as a fiduciary; the appointee's spouse, parent, or child, wherever residing; and any other person residing in the appointee's household shall avoid contracting with or performing services for a fee for the Court on an issue or topic related to the work of the board, commission, advisory committee, or task force to which the appointee is assigned.

2.11. Knowledge of Interests.

A Court appointee shall keep informed of the appointee's personal, fiduciary, and financial interests and make a reasonable effort to keep informed about the financial interests of the appointee's spouse and minor children residing in the appointee's household in order to aid in meeting the duty to recuse from participation in a pending matter.

SECTION 3.0. COMPLIANCE WITH ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES.

3.1. Alcohol and Drug Free Workplace.

A Court appointee shall avoid engaging in an act involving alcohol or drugs prohibited by Administrative Policy 22 (Alcohol and Drug Free Workplace).

3.2. Weapons and Violence Free Workplace.

A Court appointee shall avoid possessing a weapon or dangerous ordinance on Court property or engaging in an act of violence prohibited by Administrative Policy 23 (Weapons and Violence Free Workplace).

3.3. Discrimination and Harassment.

A Court appointee shall avoid engaging in a discriminatory practice or harassment prohibited by Administrative Policy 24 (Discrimination and Harassment).

SECTION 4.0. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS.

4.1. Representative Appointment.

Nothing in this code of ethics shall prevent a Court appointee who is nominated or appointed in a representative capacity on behalf of any group, association, or organization from advocating positions on behalf of the group, association, or organization the appointee is nominated or appointed to represent.

4.2. Notice and Copy.

The appointment letter for a Court appointee shall include a copy of this code of ethics. At the first meeting each year of a board, commission, or advisory committee, the Court employee who staffs that body shall provide each Court appointee with a copy of this code of ethics.

4.3. Appointee Consultation.

If a Court appointee has a question regarding a proposed action, the appointee should consult with the Court employee who staffs the board, commission, advisory committee, or task force to which the appointee is assigned.

Effective Date: July 1, 2006

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