


Annual Ethics Training

Study Guide for Elected Officials



Please print out this Study Guide to complete while reviewing the material in the Ethics, Sunshine & Public Records Manual for Elected Officials. We ask that you handwrite your answers and submit a scan or photo when completed to the Ethics Office via e-mail to EthicsTraining@coj.net. If you have any questions while completing this training, please call 255-5507 or email ethicstraining@coj.net.

PLEASE LIST YOUR NAME:

PAGE 7 - CORRUPTION

1. As presented on page 7 of your Ethics Manual, what is the definition of corruption?
2. Give a simple example of government corruption in 1-3 sentences.

PAGES 6-8 & 51-52 – STATE & CITY ETHICS LAWS

1. Provide 3 examples of State ethics laws that are not covered by the City Ethics Code:
2. Provide 3 examples of City ethics laws that are not covered by the State Ethics Code:
3. Which body passes state ethics laws? Which body enforces state ethics laws?

4. What webpage should you visit to review the current version of the State Ethics Code?
Bonus: What is the Chapter Number?
5. Which body passes City ethics laws? Which body enforces City ethics laws?
6. What webpage should you visit to review the current version of the City Ethics Code?
Bonus: What is the Chapter Number?"

PAGES 9-11 - GIFTS

1. Based on the summary found on page 9, explain in your own words why gifts are regulated by State and City ethics laws.
2. As explained on pages 10 & 11, how is the date of a gift determined?
3. If someone other than the Council President or Mayor offers you tickets to a Jaguars game, including access to a private suite, there are many questions you should ask yourself to avoid a gift issue. In your own words, list three questions you should ask yourself and/or the giver BEFORE accepting the gift.
4. You receive 4 concert tickets valued at \$75 each. Please select all those below from whom you can legally accept that gift:
 - ☐ Staff to Council committee
 - ☐ A vendor doing business with the City
 - ☐ A neighbor that is not a lobbyist or vendor of the City
 - ☐ Your adult child who also is a paid lobbyist with business before Council

PAGES 10 & 12 – GIFTS & TRAVEL

You are the Council representative to the Florida League of Cities and are attending their annual meeting in Miami. The Florida League of Cities has offered to pay for your hotel and flight expenses. You parked at JAA for free using your parking pass provided by JAA to all Council Members as a courtesy.

1. Which of the following are gifts to you? Select all that apply. Next to each item that is a gift, identify the form(s) on which would you report that gift?
 - ☐ Hotel
 - ☐ Flight
 - ☐ Parking at JAA
2. If a gift, describe the City's approval process.

A few months later, you are traveling to a work conference for your private employer and use your City Council pass to park for free at JAA.

1. Should you report JAA parking for personal business as a gift? If so, on which form would you report that gift?

PAGES 15-17 – FINANCIAL AND GIFT DISCLOSURES

As you know, Council Members are required by Florida law to file financial and gift disclosures.

1. When are you required to file financial disclosures?
2. What period of time does the financial disclosure cover?
3. When are you required to file gift disclosures?
4. What period of time does the gift disclosure cover?

5. What are the consequences for filing untimely and/or incomplete disclosures? (Hint: review sample Form 6 starting on page 19.)
6. What webpage and section should you visit to find blank financial disclosure and gift disclosure forms?
7. What webpage and section should you visit to confirm whether you have filed your financial disclosure and the date it was filed?

PAGES 29-30 – VOTING CONFLICTS & PROHIBITIVE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

1. Identify the purpose of the laws regarding voting conflicts and prohibitive conflicts.
2. In 2-3 sentences, describe the difference between voting conflicts and prohibitive conflicts of interest.
3. Provide an example of a voting conflict (not included in the manual).
4. Provide an example of a prohibitive conflict of interest (not included in the manual).
5. In your own words, please summarize the conflict of interest provision in City Ethics Code section 602.402 referenced on page 29.

PAGES 35-36 – MISUSE OF POSITION

1. Please describe a real-life example of a misuse of position. It can be from memory or you can search for "Misuses of Position" in the Research section of the State Ethics Commission's website (<http://www.ethics.state.fl.us/>).
2. As a sitting Council Member you chair a non-profit board and the non-profit is hosting a festival to raise money. You frequently work with the Director of the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department in your public capacity. You know the Director well so you want to call him to ask if your non-profit can borrow bleachers and a stage from the City for the festival. Can you do this? Why or why not?

PAGE 39 –POST-OFFICE-HOLDING RESTRICTION

1. What does the post-office-holding restriction that applies to Council Members prohibit?
2. How long do the restrictions apply?
3. What changes were made by Constitutional Amendment 12 to the post-office-holding restriction under state ethics laws?
4. When do the changes go into effect?
5. You have recently finished your City Council term and have been selected to serve as an unpaid member of the board for a local non-profit organization. The non-profit is advocating in favor of legislation pending before Council. Can you appear before Council on the legislation on behalf of the non-profit?

PAGE 41 – LOCAL LOBBYIST REGISTRATION LAW

1. In your own words, what is the purpose of the lobbyist registration requirements in the City Ethics Code?

2. A lobbyist requests a meeting to discuss economic incentives for a company that will be new to town. BEFORE accepting the meeting, there are several items you or your ECA must verify. Please select ONE answer:
 - ☐ Ask if the lobbyist is paid by the company being represented
 - ☐ Verify that the lobbyist is registered in the City's lobbyist registration system
 - ☐ Verify that the lobbyist has registered the specific issues covered in the meeting
 - ☐ All of the above

PAGE 42 – LOCAL ELECTION ETHICS

1. Why do you think there are rules against campaigning for yourself or others during a public meeting? Identify at least 3 reasons.

PAGES 43-49 – SUNSHINE & PUBLIC RECORDS LAWS

1. As described on page 49, what is the purpose of the Sunshine and Public Records laws?

2. Which body passes State Sunshine laws? Which body enforces State Sunshine laws?

Congratulations! You have just been elected to City Council. The Mayor invites the Council members to lunch "to get to know each other better" and discuss the Council Members' individual priorities. Please answer the following questions:

1. Can you go to the lunch with the Mayor and other Council Members?

2. Should this be a publicly noticed meeting under the Sunshine Law?

3. If you go, are there any restrictions on topics you can discuss with the Mayor and other Council Members?

1. How do you preserve the documents you generate and receive related to Council and City business (including emails and text messages)?

PAGE 51 – STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

As a sitting City Council Member, you just learned that the non-profit organization for which you serve as a director of the board wants to apply for a City grant. This is potentially a State conflict of interest issue.

1. What should you do? Select all that may apply:
 - ☐ I only need to declare a voting conflict
 - ☐ I should obtain guidance from the Ethics Office and Office of General Counsel
 - ☐ I should request an official opinion from the State Ethics Commission
2. As outlined on page 51, what process will the State Ethics Commission use to address your opinion request?

Take a moment to visit the State Ethics Commission website and search for prior advisory opinions issued for Jacksonville. Hint: Google, "Florida State Ethics Commission." Then find the "Research" tab at the top of the page.

1. What search terms did you use?
2. How many advisory opinions for Jacksonville have been issued by the State Ethics Commission?
3. Open ONE advisory opinion from recent years and in 1-2 sentences, tell us what it is about.