

I N D E P E N D E N T
ETHICS
— B  A R D —

**Three-Year Strategic Plan
2022/2023 through 2024/2025**

Updated October 18, 2022

Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board



Our Mission

To promote the actual and perceived integrity of our City government and to prevent unethical conduct before it occurs.

Our Core Values

Integrity – Adhere to strong moral and ethical principles and values.

Honesty – Be transparent and truthful when communicating with others.

Commitment – Be dependable, fair, thorough, and objective.

Excellence – Hold oneself accountable.

Respect – Be courteous to others and treat each person with equal value.

Executive Summary

Through a referendum in 2014, an Ethics Ordinance was established, creating the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board, a seven-member body appointed by the City Commission, Florida A&M University, Florida State University, State Prosecutor's Office, Public Defender's Office, and two selected at large by the Board members. Staff for the Ethics Office includes an executive director/ethics officer and administrative specialist. The Board contracts with a legal advisor.

The Board oversees ethics training for City officials, appointees, employees, and advisory board members. The Board has subpoena power and investigates alleged violations of the Ethics Code. The Board relies on citizens, vendors, City employees, and City officials to report violations of the Ethics Code.

The Board reviews its strategic plan at the end of the fiscal year and updates its priorities and strategies. Accordingly, the Board has established the following priorities.

Priorities

1. Investigate alleged violations of the Ethics Code and administer a formal process for resolving complaints.
2. Encourage Tallahassee residents, City officials, City employees, advisory board members, and those conducting business with the City, to maintain the highest ethical standards and report any perceived violations.
3. Ensure every City official, City employee, and advisory board or committee member attends ethics training annually and can apply what they learn.
 - a) Provide ethics training to newly elected and current City officials, their aides, and City appointees.
 - b) Administer a refresher course online for City employees
 - c) Conduct ethics training for new and existing employees.
 - d) Provide Advisory opinions concerning the Ethics Code.
4. Make recommendations to the City Commission that strengthens local ordinances governing the conduct of elected and appointed City officials, City employees, vendors, contractors, and lessees.
5. Create an environment where citizens in the community actively participate in election campaigns, and candidates and City officials prioritize their interests and concerns.

Strategic Priority 1

Key Indicators

- Through the Board's bylaws and administrative procedures, there is a transparent and efficient process for handling complaints.
- Conduct investigations objectively, thoroughly, and on time.

Major Initiatives

Investigate alleged violations of the Ethics Code and administer a formal process for resolving complaints.

- Identify gaps and weaknesses in the Board's bylaws and administrative procedures.
- Conduct thorough and objective investigations.
- Acquire assistance as needed.
- Network with other ethics officers through conferences and personal contact.
- In 2022/2023 through 2024/2025, continue progress with the major initiatives.
- The ethics officer will attend a course that enhances his job skills annually.

Strategic Priority 2

Key Indicators

- All current and new employees, City officials, and Board members have access to the Tallahassee Ethics Guide.
- Citizens and City employees demonstrate an interest in ethics through social media.

Major Initiatives

Encourage Tallahassee residents, City officials, City employees, advisory board members, and those conducting business with the City, to maintain the highest ethical standards and report any perceived violations.

- Ensure the Tallahassee Ethics Guide remains relevant to the user..
- Distribute the Ethics Guide to all City officials, employees, vendors, contractors, lessees, City Commission advisory groups, and committees..
- Ensure the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board web page is up-to-date and relevant.
- Engage the Tallahassee community, City officials, and City employees through social media.
- In 2022/2023 through 2024/2025, continue progress with the major initiatives.

Strategic Priority 3

Key Indicators

- Annually ensure every City official and employee receives ethics training that is relevant to our mission.
- By 2025/2026, establish core online training courses accessible to every City official, advisory board member, and employee.

Major Initiatives

Ensure every City official, City employee, and advisory board or committee member attends ethics training annually and can apply

Provide ethics training to elected City officials and their aides:-

- Use guest instructors to deliver training topics.
 - Deliver scenario-based instruction on state and local ethics standards.
 - In 2022/2023, update training modules as needed. In addition, create a means of evaluating the effectiveness of the training.
 - In 2023/2024, enhance training programs in response to course evaluations.
 - In 2023/2024 and 2024/2025, develop online training for public records laws, public meeting laws, Article II of the Florida Constitution, statutory requirements for voting conflicts, campaign contribution limits, and restrictions on campaigning within government buildings.
- b. Administer an online refresher course for City employees
- c. Conduct ethics training for new employees.in collaboration with the Human Resource and Workforce Development Department.
- d. Provide advisory opinions.
- Use social media to inform others of the Board’s authority to provide advisory opinions on the application of the Ethics Code.

2022/2023

- Add a review of applicable advisory opinions to the training curriculum for new employees, advisory boards, and committees.
- With the assistance of the HRWD, include a reference to the advisory opinions in the annual critical policy review.

Strategic Priority 4

Key Indicators

- The City Commission adopts the Board's recommendations that align with our mission.

Major Initiatives

Make recommendations to the City Commission that strengthens local ordinances governing the conduct of elected and appointed City officials, City employees, vendors, contractors, and lessees.

Strategic Priority 5

Key Indicators

- The Campaign Contribution Refund Program performs more actively in local campaign financing.
- By 2025/2026, .5% (approximately 1,015) of the registered voters in Tallahassee will contribute to City Commission campaigns through the Campaign Contribution Refund Program.

Major Initiatives

Create an environment where citizens in the community actively participate in election campaigns, and candidates and City officials prioritize their interests and concerns.

2021/2022

Upon Board recommendation, implement a plan to increase citizen participation in election campaigns. In addition, implement a plan to increase the awareness of local campaign finance laws.

2022/2023

- Evaluate the success of the program and formulate a new strategy.
- Implement a new strategy for continuous improvement.

2023/2024

- Continue implementation of a new strategy for continuous improvement.

2024/2025

- Re-evaluate the success of the program and enhance the strategy.