

City of Atlanta



Ethics Matters

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Links

- [Board of Ethics](#)
- [Electronic Filing](#)
- [Search Disclosure Statements](#)

Matters Preview

- [Six Departments Win Transparent Diamond Award](#)
- [Board Reprimands 11 Delinquent Filers](#)
- [Three New Ethics Board Members Appointed](#)
- [City Agencies May Accept Gifts of Travel](#)
- [Ethics Workshop for Board Members Scheduled](#)
- [Ethics Opinions in Brief](#)
- [Ask the Ethics Officer: Can a Vendor Donate Money for a Retirement Party?](#)
- [A Matter of Fact -- New Filing Records Set in 2008](#)

Six Departments Win Transparent Diamond Award

Ninety-nine percent of city officials and employees have filed their 2008 City Financial Disclosure Statement, topping the previous best record set in 2005. At the Financial Disclosure Awards Ceremony on March 20, 2008, the Board of Ethics honored six departments and twelve boards with the best filing records.



Recipients of Transparent Diamond Award with Ethics Board members
(from left) Rob Hunter, Cathy Daniels, John Lewis, Nina Stephen, Greg Pridgeon, Jacquee Minor, Jerry DeLoach, Dianne Harnell Cohen, Frank Sizer, MaryAnne Gaunt

The winners of the Transparent Diamond Award for exemplary performance in complying with the financial disclosure law are:

- Department of Corrections - 100 percent timely filers
- Municipal Court - 100 percent timely filers
- Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs - 100 percent timely filers

- Department of Watershed Management - Best filing record for department with more than 100 filers
- Executive Offices & Department of Law (tie) - Best filing record for department with 26 to 100 filers

The Board also named 12 boards to its [2008 Honor Roll](#). To qualify, a board had to have a minimum of five members, and all of its members had to file their disclosure statement by the February 15th deadline. There were 34 city boards eligible for the honor. The winners are:

- Atlanta Pension Board - General Employees
- Board of Ethics
- Board of Zoning Adjustment
- Citizen Review Board
- Civil Service Board
- Human Relations Commission
- Judicial Commission
- McPherson Planning Local Redevelopment Authority
- Perry-Bolton TAD Neighborhood Advisory Committee
- Tree Conservation Commission
- Urban Design Commission
- Zoning Review Board

For more information, visit the Board's [Financial Disclosure](#) webpage.

[\(top\)](#)

Board Reprimands 11 Delinquent Filers

The Board of Ethics identified 11 individuals as delinquent filers for failing to timely file their 2008 City Financial Disclosure Statement. At its March meeting, the Board voted to reprimand one late filer and ten nonfilers for their violation of the financial disclosure law.

Named to the [2008 Roll of Delinquent Filers](#) for failing to file are current city employees Conchita Dillon and Paul Latham; former city employees Jonas Francois, Alexander Keeney, Mark Mensah, Allen Moore, Glenn Thomas, Millie Walker, and Pat Williams; and board member Edward Watson. Board member Herbert Monford was sanctioned for filing after the grace period ended. The employees owe a fine for their failure to file.

Each delinquent filer has 30 days to appeal the board's decision. Under the board's rules, delinquent filers must file their financial disclosure statement before they are entitled to an administrative hearing.

In 2007, the Ethics Office referred six financial disclosure cases to the solicitor's office for prosecution in Municipal Court.

To review the disclosure statements, go to the [Public Search](#) webpage in the Electronic Filing System.

[\(top\)](#)

Three New Ethics Board Members Appointed

Citizens groups have nominated three new board members to serve on the City of Atlanta Board of Ethics. Charles B. Crawford, Jr., Carol Snype Crawford, and Charmaine Ward are expected to join the Board in May; the Crawfords are not related.

Mr. Crawford is the Chairman, President, and CEO of the Private Bank of Buckhead. He has been in the banking business for more than 20 years, serving as president of The Buckhead Bank, Milton National Bank, and Riverside Bank of Buckhead. The Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce nominated Mr. Crawford to serve in the position that Lawrence S. Levin previously held.



Ethics Board members Cathy Daniels (left), John Lewis, and MaryAnne Gaunt

Ms. Crawford is a community volunteer for health and social service programs and faith-based initiatives. Before retiring in 2003, she served as the Executive Director of the Office of Minority Health and previously held positions as Director of the Community Services Division, Director of the Long Term Care Services Division, and Assistant to the Commissioner for the Department of Medical Assistance. She is NPU-P's delegate to the Atlanta Planning Advisory Board, which selected her to complete the unexpired term of Kenyatta Mitchell.

Ms. Ward is Director of Community Affairs for Georgia Pacific, where she is responsible for the development of community relations programs and the distribution of grants and charitable donations. Ms. Ward previously worked in sales, marketing, community affairs, and diversity for IBM, Showtime Networks, Bank of America, and John H. Harland. She serves on the board of the Atlanta Business League, which nominated her to fill the position now held by Jacquee Minor.

The Board of Ethics is an independent, citizen-appointed board whose members undergo a background check in lieu of a confirmation process. The other four members of the Board are Chairman John Lewis, Jr., Cathy Daniels, MaryAnne Gaunt, and Susan Housen. Members are appointed to three-year terms of office, and are prohibited from making campaign contributions to candidates in city elections and from engaging in other city election political activities while serving on the Board.

To learn more about the Board of Ethics, go to the [About the Board](#) webpage.

[\(top\)](#)

City Agencies May Accept Gifts of Travel

The Board of Ethics recently interpreted the Code of Ethics as permitting the City and its agencies to accept donations of reasonable expenses from prohibited sources for travel related to official city business.

Under advisory opinion 2008-3, the City may accept gifts of travel from prohibited sources that meet the following conditions:

- the gift is donated to the City or one of its agencies
- the travel is done in an official capacity on official city business
- the travel is approved in advance
- the travel expenses are reasonable
- the agency receiving the gift discloses it on an online Gift to the City Report, and
- officials or employees disclose any travel financed under the travel gift program on an online Expense Reimbursement Report

Citing similar policies in other jurisdictions, the opinion notes that this approach gives the City more control over gifts of travel by requiring one of its agencies to receive the funds, approve the trip, and designate the city's representatives for the trip. In addition, the dual disclosure requirement provides for full documentation of city-related travel that is financed by city contractors, vendors, or lobbyists.

The practical effect of the opinion is to permit prohibited sources to pay for city-related travel by officials and employees in situations where the benefit to the City outweighs the personal benefit to the individual, such as travel to examine model programs in other cities or an economic development trip to encourage companies to relocate to Atlanta. The Board has recommended that the City establish written policies to operate the travel gift program.

To read the full text of the opinion, go to [FAO 2008-3](#).

[\(top\)](#)

Ethics Workshop for Board Members Scheduled

The first-ever ethics workshop for city board members is scheduled for Thursday, May 1, 2008, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. in the Old City Council Chambers.

The workshop will cover the ethical responsibilities of board members, including the ban on gratuities, financial disclosure, conflicts of interest, how to recuse, doing business with the City, appearing before city agencies, fundraising and solicitations, and the one-year cooling off period. The session is open to all city board members, hearing officers, and neighborhood planning unit officers. Advance registration is required.

Using case studies, Ethics Officer Ginny Looney will present a short vignette that raises an ethical question, lead a discussion in which participants examine the issue, and then explain how the question was resolved. Participants should come away with an understanding of the ethical standards that apply to their service as volunteer city officials.

To sign up for the workshop, call 404.330.6286 or write ethicsofficer@atlantaga.gov.

[\(top\)](#)

Ethics Opinions in Brief

- *Disclosing Conflicts of Interest (FAO 2008-2)*. City elected officials, board members, and employees who file the annual financial disclosure statement are also required to file an online Conflicts of Interest Disclosure form when they have a financial or personal interest in a matter pending before them or their agency.
- *Using City Property during Elections (FAO 2008-4)*. The City may use city property and labor to inform city employees about candidates for the city pension boards and to conduct the elections. Board candidates may participate in any public forum or mailing sponsored by the City for the benefit of city employees who are eligible to vote. A candidate, however, may not use city email addresses to solicit votes or post campaign flyers in city facilities without permission because these campaign activities are not official city business.
- *Prohibited Sources (FAO 2008-1)*. A prohibited source is a person or company that is under contract with the City to provide goods and services, currently seeking the city's business, actively promoting or opposing city legislation, has a matter pending before a city agency, or is registered as a lobbyist with the State Ethics Commission. The opinion gives several examples of each type of prohibited source.

To read the full text of the opinions, go to the [Advisory Opinions](#) webpage and click the link to the opinion number.

[\(top\)](#)

Ask the Ethics Officer: Can a Vendor Donate Money for a Retirement Party?

Our department is hosting a retirement party for an employee. A city vendor wants to give money to support the event. Can we accept donations from city contractors, vendors, and other prohibited sources to help pay for the event?

Yes. You may accept donations on behalf of your department from prohibited sources for a retirement party. You will need to file an online Gift to the City Report disclosing all gifts that your department receives from non-city sources.

City employees should not solicit donations from city contractors, vendors, and other prohibited sources for retirement parties, employee appreciation lunches, or similar events honoring individuals. In addition, city contractors and vendors may not give cash, a watch, and other things of value as personal gifts to the employee being honored.

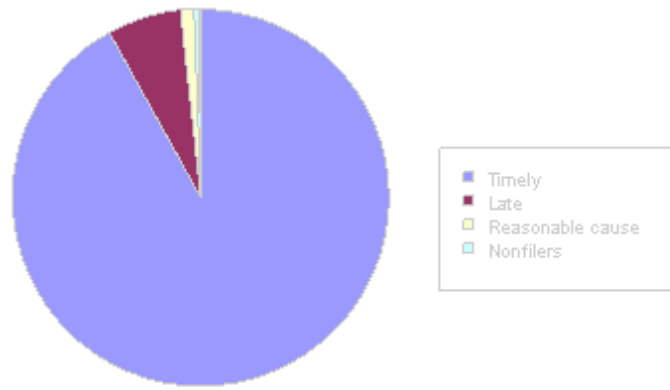
To review previous questions, visit the [Ask the Ethics Officer](#) webpage.

[\(top\)](#)

A Matter of Fact -- New Filing Records Set in 2008

Of the 1,646 required filers in 2008, 1514 persons filed by the February 15 deadline, 104 filed late, 18 had reasonable cause for not filing on time, and 10 have not yet filed.

2008 Financial Disclosure Filings



Two departments had timely filing rates that fell below 90 percent: the Department of Finance (89%) and the Solicitor's Office (81%). Boards, commissions, and neighborhood planning units had an 89 percent timely filers rate.

For more information on filing records, visit the [Reports](#) webpage.

[\(top\)](#)

Ethics Matters is produced by the City of Atlanta Ethics Office.
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