



KEY ETHICS RULES EVERY CITY BOARD MEMBER NEEDS TO KNOW

- A public board's decision should be based solely on what best serves the public's interest
- The ethics law is aimed at the perception, as well as the reality, that a public official's personal interests may influence a decision
- Having a conflict of interest does not mean that you have done something wrong; it means that you have a financial or personal interest that disqualifies you
- Violating the ethics law can result in monetary fines, public reprimands, criminal penalties, and recommendations for removal from office

Conflicts of Interest. A conflict of interest occurs when a city official has a financial or personal interest in a decision pending before the individual or the board of which the official is a member.

Remedies for Conflicts. If a conflict of interest exists, the board member is disqualified and must refrain from discussing, deliberating, voting, or participating in the matter. The official is required to publicly disclose the financial or personal interest orally at the meeting where the matter is to be determined, have the disclosure made a part of the board's minutes or other official record, and complete the Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest form online at <https://apps.atlantaga.gov/efile>.

Contract Decisions. A board member may not participate directly or indirectly in any contract or subcontract in which the official, an immediate family member, an employer, or a prospective employer has a financial or personal interest.

Doing Business with the City. Board members may not do business with the board on which they serve either personally or through a business in which they own stock, are employed, or have an ownership interest unless the business is conducted through a sealed competitive bid process.

Representing Private Interests. Board members may not appear on behalf of private interests before any city agency, except as a matter of public record in a court of law, and may not represent private interests before the courts in actions in conflict with the city's interests or involving the City as a party.

Annual Financial Disclosure. The purpose of financial disclosure is to alert board members to personal interests that could potentially affect their public decisions and to enable the public to review those financial interests for actual and potential conflicts of interest. All city board members, hearing officers, persons appointed by the City to other public boards, and NPU chairs and vice chairs are required to publicly disclose their employment, sources of business income, employment or contracts of immediate family members with the City, and certain assets, such as real property.

Ban on Gratuities. The Code of Ethics prohibits city officials from accepting anything of value from a “prohibited source.” A prohibited source is a person or entity that seeks official action from the City, seeks to do or is doing business with the City, represents a client seeking official action or business, is a registered lobbyist under state law, or has interests that may be substantially affected by the performance of the board member’s official duties.

Exceptions to Gift Ban. Among the 11 exceptions to the ban on gratuities are reasonable meals furnished at a public event, awards given in recognition of public service, and anything of value offered to and accepted on behalf of the City. Gifts given to the City must be publicly disclosed on an online Gift to the City Report.

Solicitations. A board member may not request or accept anything of value that is intended to influence a decision or the performance of official duties.

Use of City Property. City board members may use public property to perform official city business. They may not use city property, equipment, labor, or services for their own personal use or for the private advantage of any other person, unless the general public may use the property in the same way.

Post-City Service Restrictions. After leaving city service, a city board member may not appear before any city agency on behalf of private interests for one year. In addition, city board members may not receive compensation for services in connection with any matter in which they were directly concerned, personally participated, actively considered, or acquired knowledge while serving on the board and must file a financial disclosure statement in the year after they leave city service.

This list is a summary of key provisions in the Code of Ethics, sections 2-801 to 2-824 of the Code of Ordinances. It is not a comprehensive description of all the ethical standards and is not intended as a guide in any specific situation. For questions about how these rules apply to you in a particular situation, contact:

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Website: <http://www.atlantaga.gov/government/boards/boardofethics.aspx>