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ATLANTA ETHICS

IN ACTION

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Building Trust Together: Ethics Office Hosts Inaugural Ethics Week

The City of Atlanta Ethics Office proudly hosted its first-ever Ethics Week, a citywide celebration of the values that define ethical public service, integrity, transparency, and accountability. The week-long initiative highlighted the many ways City employees embody these principles each day through their commitment to ethical decision-making and public trust.

Ethics Week, held from October 13 to 17, 2025, and built on the success of Ethics Day 2024, expanded into a whole week of programming designed to foster open dialogue, reflection, and engagement. Guided by the theme “Building Trust Together”, the initiative encouraged employees across all departments to engage directly with Ethics Office staff through in-person events held at City Hall and Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, as well as through virtual sessions designed to reach all corners of city government.

Throughout the week, employees participated in a variety of engaging activities and outreach efforts.

“Building trust isn’t just a theme, it’s how we serve,” said Ethics Officer Jabu Sengova. “By building trust together, we all help to strengthen the foundation of good governance in Atlanta.”

This year’s events featured a citywide trivia competition with departments and individual employees competing for prizes, pop-up events across city facilities, and a welcoming “Breakfast with the Ethics Office.” These activities provided employees with an opportunity to meet the team behind the City’s ethics programs and learn more about the work that helps maintain Atlanta’s reputation as a national leader and gold standard in ethical governance.

The highlight of the week was the Fireside Chat Lunch & Learn, attended by more than 100 city employees. Featuring remarks from Mayor Andre Dickens and a distinguished panel of ethics and compliance professionals, Cricket Snyder, Kate Wasch, Dr. John Fuchko III, and moderator Dr. Edward Queen, the discussion explored the importance of ethical behavior and leadership in public service. Panelists shared insights from their own careers, offering employees practical guidance for navigating ethical challenges while remaining grounded in fairness, honesty, and respect.

As the first week-long program in our Office's history, Ethics Week 2025 was an overwhelming success. The Ethics Office extends its heartfelt gratitude to every employee who participated, supported, and helped bring the theme of "Building Trust Together" to life. This marks the beginning of a new chapter in Atlanta's ongoing commitment to ethical excellence, and we look forward to continuing this critical work of fostering a culture of trust, integrity, and accountability throughout the City of Atlanta.

Ethics Day: Fireside Chat and Lunch and Learn Recap



During Ethics Week, the Ethics Office hosted a dynamic Fireside Chat on "Building Trust," bringing together four distinguished leaders who shared powerful insights on integrity, the human side of ethics, and lessons on what it really takes to earn and keep trust. As Mayor Andre Dickens noted, "I am grateful for this Ethics Office. For their oversight and all that they provide for us" a sentiment that set the tone for a powerful and reflective conversation. The panel featured Cricket Snyder, Chief Compliance Officer for the Jefferson County Commission (Alabama); Edward L. Queen, Ph.D., J.D., Associate Teaching Professor and Director at Emory University's Center for Ethics; John M. Fuchko, III, Ed.D., President of Dalton State College; and Kate Wasch, Interim Deputy General Counsel for Academic Affairs, Employment & Litigation at Georgia Tech.

The conversation explored the foundations of trust—transparency, accountability, and connection. Cricket Snyder reminded attendees that "you may not always be right, but you must always act right," emphasizing how consistent ethical conduct strengthens credibility. Dr. Queen encouraged leaders to help employees understand the "why" behind ethical behavior, not just the rules that govern it. Dr. Fuchko reflected on the role of leadership tone, explaining that when leaders model honesty and humility, they create cultures where others naturally follow suit. Kate Wasch added that while policies and procedures provide structure, trust is ultimately cultivated through respect, empathy, and open communication.

The key takeaway from this engaging discussion was clear: trust cannot be mandated—it must be earned. It is built through everyday choices, genuine relationships, and a shared commitment to doing what is right, even when no one is watching.

New Ethics Board

We're pleased to introduce four exceptional professionals recently appointed to the Ethics Board, each nominated by a respected civic organization and selected for their commitment to ethical leadership and community impact.



Gabriella Cole, nominated by the Atlanta Bar Association, is an attorney at Bradley Arant Boult Cummings, focusing on tax controversy and white-collar defense. A dual citizen of the U.S. and Belgium, Gabriella holds a JD and MBA from the University of Houston and lives in Southwest Atlanta with her family.



Keith Lamar Jr., nominated by the Gate City Bar Association, is the founder of The Law Offices of Keith Lamar Jr. and a former Fulton County Deputy District Attorney. A Morehouse and Thurgood Marshall Law graduate, he has led over 1,000 cases and is a national advocate for criminal justice reform, serving on several legal and academic boards.



Nkoyo-Ene Efflong Lewis, nominated by the League of Women Voters of Atlanta-Fulton County, is a leadership strategist and attorney with over 13 years of experience in law, education, and social enterprise. She directs the Law Practice Management Program at the State Bar of Georgia and leads Iban Ison Solutions, advising boards and executives on governance and change leadership. Her career spans private practice, public service, and nonprofit education, all grounded in a deep commitment to equity and ethics.



Drew Williamson, nominated by the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, is a Senior Associate at Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP, specializing in labor and employment law. He began his career in New York City as an Assistant Corporation Counsel and remains active in community service through the Andrew P. Stewart Center and Kilpatrick's KT Education and Opportunity Fund.

Please join us in welcoming these new members whose leadership and integrity will help guide the Ethics Board's mission forward.



Lesson Learned: 36th Annual ACFE Global Fraud Conference

The 36th Annual ACFE Global Fraud Conference wasn't just a professional development event, it was a forward-looking call to action. Held in Nashville, Tennessee, under the theme "Blaze the Trail," the conference brought together anti-fraud professionals from around the world to explore how innovation, ethics, and collaboration can shape the future of fraud prevention.

LaDamian Boatwright (Sr. Management Analyst), Larry Mason (Sr. Investigation Manager), and Juan Hernandez (Investigation Manager) attended on behalf of the City of Atlanta Ethics Office. They returned with new tools, fresh insights, and a renewed commitment to strengthening the City's investigative and audit practices.

A key takeaway: technology is transforming the way fraud is detected and addressed. Sessions on artificial intelligence and data analytics, such as "Risks and Opportunities in AI to Improve Fraud Detection Rates" and "Leveraging Internal Audit Skills for Stronger Insights in Fraud Data Analysis", highlighted how AI and audit techniques can be used to identify red flags earlier, assess control weaknesses, and support more efficient investigations.

The conference also reinforced the importance of ethical leadership, transparency, and cross-functional collaboration, values that are central to the Ethics Office's mission.

LaDamian, Larry, and Juan returned with a shared understanding: meaningful ethics work isn't just about compliance, it's about building effective systems that support accountability, trust, and integrity across the City of Atlanta.



Ethical Reminder: Keep Ethics in Season; Don't Fall for Gifts.

As the holiday season approaches, the Ethics Office reminds all City employees to follow the City's Code of Ethics, which prohibits accepting gifts or gratuities related to your official duties. Even seemingly modest gestures, such as coffee, tickets, or gift cards, can create the appearance of favoritism and weaken public trust in City operations.

The greatest gift you can give the public is your honesty, impartiality, and integrity. If a vendor, contractor, or resident offers you anything of value, please politely decline and contact the Ethics Office if you need guidance or have questions.

Lesson Learned: 23rd Annual Society of Corporate Compliance and Ethics (SCCE) Compliance and Ethics Institute

This year's Compliance & Ethics Institute (CEI) in Nashville was more than a gathering of compliance and ethics professionals. Instead, it was a reminder of why the work of the Ethics Office is essential. Joe Hines, Management Analyst, represented our office and returned with valuable knowledge and insights that directly address the challenges and opportunities we face in city compliance.

One of the most compelling themes was the tension between global standards and local realities. In a session on navigating ethical gray areas, presenters challenged attendees to rethink how policies are written and applied. The message was clear: effective compliance does not ignore context; instead, it embraces it. Whether it is a symbolic gift in Southeast Asia or a conflict of interest in a small-town office, policies must be both principled and practical. That balance is what builds trust.

Other sessions explored how AI is reshaping investigations, how generational differences impact compliance engagement, and how low-cost tools can have a significant impact.

Yet across all the discussions, one message resonated most clearly: compliance and ethics are not about control; they are, at their heart, about connection. An ethical government is one that builds systems empowering people to do the right thing, not just to follow the rules.

As we continue to strengthen our programs here in Atlanta, these lessons remind us that our work is not just technical; it is deeply cultural. Together, we are shaping the environment where ethical decisions are not only made but encouraged and sustained.

Ethics Challenge:

Test Your Knowledge!!!

How To Play:
The first 10 people to email the correct answers to ethicstraining@atlantaga.gov by December 5, 2025, will win ETHICS SWAG!!!

Sharon, a city Project Manager, meets regularly with a vendor to discuss contract performance. During one meeting, the vendor presents Sharon with a \$20 coffee shop gift card as a token of appreciation for her assistance. Sharon doesn't want to offend the vendor, so she accepts it but doesn't plan to use it.

Can Sharon accept the \$20 gift card from the vendor?

- A** Yes, since it's under \$25.
- B** No, gifts from prohibited sources are not allowed.
- C** Yes, because she doesn't plan to use it.
- D** No, unless she uses it to buy coffee for her office.

Anthony works for the City's Department of Parks and Recreation as part of the team responsible for supporting community events in City parks. His department is currently preparing to publish a Request for Proposals (RFP) for catering services for several upcoming City-sponsored recreational events. On weekends, Anthony helps his spouse run a small catering business. The business occasionally bids on City events but has not yet been awarded a contract.

Is Anthony allowed to assist his spouse's company in preparing a bid for the Parks Department's RFP?

- A** Yes, if he's not paid to prepare the proposal.
- B** No, it's a conflict because he's aiding a potential City vendor.
- C** Yes, because the vendor is his spouse.
- D** No, unless he provides written disclosure to his department.

Why is it important for city officials and employees to maintain integrity in their official job duties?

- A** To maintain the respect of their peers and coworkers
- B** To avoid potential public embarrassment resulting from misconduct
- C** To earn the trust and confidence of the public, so they can be confident their tax dollars are being used responsibly
- D** All of the above