

July 2021

*Promoting
Integrity in
County
Government*

ETHICALLY SPEAKING

Milwaukee County Ethics Board

Ethics Code 101

What's in it?

There are 14 sections of the Ethics Code:

- Section 1 is a policy statement declaring why Milwaukee County needs an Ethics Code.
- Section 2 covers key definitions of language in the Code (ex: “anything of value” means \$50).
- Sections 3, 4 and 14 relate to Statements of Economic Interest, their content, and how certain employees and officials have to file them.
- Section 5 contains the Standards of Conduct. A majority of the questions County personnel have relate to the rules listed in this section.
- Section 6 limits the types of political activity one can engage in while at work.
- Sections 7 through 13 have to do with the composition and procedures of the Ethics Board. Among them are two provisions in particular worth highlighting:
 - 9.09(1) contains information on how employees can request advisory opinions from the Ethics Board and the confidential nature of those requests.
 - 9.09(4) contains information on how investigation requests and verified complaints are filed with and handled by the Ethics Board.

Where can I read it?

The Ethics Code appears in Chapter 9 of the Milwaukee County Code of Ordinances. [Click here to read it!](#)

You can also find links to the full Ethics Code, the Ethics Board’s Annual Ethics Reports, past newsletters, and our contact information on the Board’s website by [clicking here](#).

Who does it apply to?

The Ethics Code applies to Milwaukee County employees and officials.

What's the difference between morals and ethics?

Morals are a person’s own subjective standards for what is or is not acceptable behavior. It is from such morals that a community may create its own objective rules, or *ethics*, to be followed. So, just because a person may not agree with someone or something out of their own morals doesn’t mean a violation of the Ethics Code has occurred.

Disclaimer

Any scenarios presented above are general examples and provided for informational purposes only. They are not intended to address specific scenarios. If you have questions concerning a potential conflict of interest, contact the Ethics Board. Pursuant to the Ethics Code, your request will remain closed to public inspection unless you request in writing that it be made a public record.