



ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Tallahassee
Independent Ethics
Board

“Living Up to the Standard”

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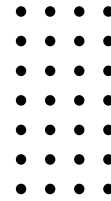
Prepared by
Tasker Leverson-Green

Presented by
Dwight Floyd





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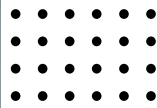
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Statement from the Chair

Kristen Costa

ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN A TIME OF CHANGE

The 2024 legislative session brought a significant shift in the operational scope of the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board. A bill was enacted that limits the Board's authority to receive and initiate complaints, including the ability to act on anonymous submissions. Since its passage, there has been a noticeable decline in both the quantity and quality of calls from individuals seeking to report unethical behavior.

Paradoxically, in at least one Florida city ethics complaints have increased—not due to improved oversight, but seemingly because individuals feel emboldened to violate ethical standards more openly with the revised legal framework. This contrast invites a critical reflection: What are the long-term implications for ethics oversight in Tallahassee?

Across all levels of government—local, state, and federal—the tension between ethical governance and personal self-interest has intensified. In addition, the public must now navigate a complex media landscape where distinguishing between credible information and misinformation is increasingly difficult. These challenges coincide with a period of rapid growth for our city.

Tallahassee's budget has surged over the past decade, rising from approximately \$719 million in 2015 to \$1.07 billion in 2024. With this growth has come expanded infrastructure and services, increased population, heavier traffic, and a rising unhoused population. As Tallahassee's budget has grown, so too has its infrastructure for ethical governance and civic transparency. The Ethics Office's work is strategically embedded in broader efforts to build public trust. Investments in training, digital access, and policy enforcement reflect a city that understands ethics not as a siloed function, but as a foundation for sustainable growth and community confidence.



Statement from the Chair

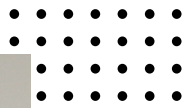
Kristen Costa

ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN A TIME OF CHANGE

Additionally, Tallahassee has earned recognition as one of the best places to live, receiving several awards in 2025 that reflect the city's aspirations and achievements. These accolades are encouraging yet they must not overshadow the vital role ethics plays in shaping a trustworthy and equitable civic future. Ethical standards must never be compromised in the pursuit of prosperity or political gain. Regardless of fiscal metrics or public praise, the threat of complacency remains a constant concern, as well as concerns over external pressures that may influence policy and perception. Even positive news can lead to gratuitous comfort.

Despite all that has happened recently, the mission of the Independent Ethics Board remains steadfast: to promote the actual and perceived integrity of city government and to prevent unethical conduct before it occurs. This responsibility is more important than ever, as the choices we make today will shape Tallahassee's trajectory for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Kristen Costa



Statement from the Ethics Officer

Dwight Floyd

ELEVEN YEARS OF ETHICAL OVERSIGHT: GROWTH, RESILIENCE, AND PURPOSE

It has been almost eleven years since the establishment of the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board, created through a public referendum in response to allegations of corruption in City Hall. Much like the origins of the Council on Government Ethics and Laws following the Watergate scandal, Tallahassee residents sought transparency, integrity, and public accountability in the wake of perceived corruption.

A landmark moment in the City's history occurred when an investigative trip by the FBI from Tallahassee to New York enabled them to uncover a bribery and extortion scheme that might otherwise have gone unnoticed. Three prominent figures—once considered beyond reproach—were convicted and served prison terms. Their downfall underscored the need for a permanent mechanism to uphold integrity.

The Board began modestly—with one full-time employee serving a dual role as Executive Director and Ethics Officer, supported by a part-time administrative assistant. At its inception, the Board lacked jurisdiction over offenses native to government corruption. That changed in 2019 when the City Commission adopted ordinances expanding the Board's authority. Since then, the City Commission has continued to respond to recommendations for further structural and jurisdictional changes.

Over the years, the Board has remained remarkably stable. It has had only two executive directors and two administrative assistants, including the current staff. Legal counsel has also been consistent, with the current board attorney having served since 2019. The administrative assistant role has evolved into a full-time professional position, making meaningful contributions to training design and delivery.

Although the number of sworn complaints and advisory opinions has slowed, the Board's effectiveness and resolve have not waned. In December 2024, Kristen Costa, a physician assistant and long-time Board member, was re-elected as Chair. Former Police Chief Patrick Kelly was also re-elected as Vice Chair. The outgoing Chair, Carlos Rey, completed his term but continued to serve as General Counsel for the Florida Senate—testament to the character and quality of those who serve.

The staff's workload remains vigorous. With the assistance of the Board counsel and the cooperation of city employees serving as subject matter experts, the staff developed new training materials for the ethics refresher course required of all City employees, delivered customized instruction to Commission aides, updated online courses for newly elected officials, and drafted specialized training for citizen advisory committee members. Throughout the year, the staff also led virtual and in-person training sessions for new hires.



Statement from the Ethics Officer

Dwight Floyd

ELEVEN YEARS OF ETHICAL OVERSIGHT: GROWTH, RESILIENCE, AND PURPOSE

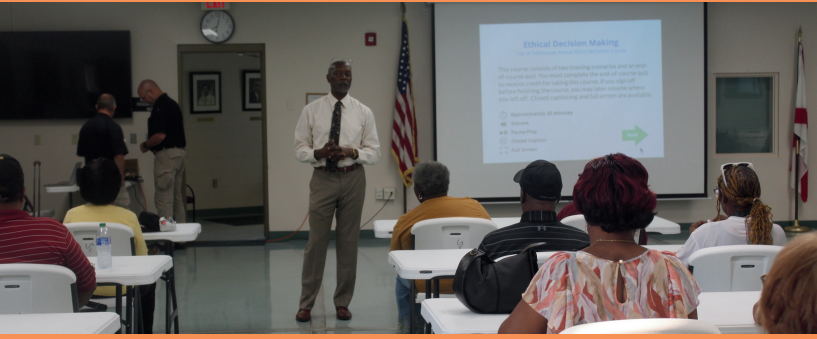
Beyond instruction, the Board continues to monitor ethical standards and offer both formal and informal guidance. Increasing familiarity with state ethics laws and legal opinions has strengthened its advisory capacity. In early 2025, the staff identified a potential violation involving elected officials receiving free promotional exposure, which is considered a gift under state law, while appearing on a radiothon to help raise funds for a nonprofit. Though no formal complaint was filed, due to the practice's longstanding nature, the staff proactively advised the Commissioners and Mayor of the relevant statutes and ordinances, emphasizing public interest over precedent.

Today, it is fair to say the Ethics Board has matured. Its members and staff fully appreciate the weight of their responsibilities and the importance of ethical vigilance. That understanding fuels a continuing commitment to transparency, service, and the public trust.

Sincerely,

Dwight Floyd

“Living Up to the Standard”

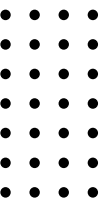


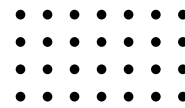
About Us

In 2014, the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board was established through a citizen referendum. The City Commission funds the Ethics Board within its discretionary budgetary authority at a level sufficient to discharge the Board's responsibilities. The Board is an independent, quasi-judicial body whose members are registered City of Tallahassee electors with appropriate subject matter expertise, none of whom are officers or employees of local government. The Board consists of seven volunteers, selected by the City Commission, Florida A&M University, Florida State University, State Attorney's Office Second Judicial Circuit, and the Public Defender's Office Second Judicial Circuit. Two are selected at-large by the Board. Each member may serve up to two full three-year terms.

The City Charter establishes the Ethics Office. The Executive Director and Ethics Officer are one and the same and oversee the functions of the Ethics Board. The Ethics Officer receives complaints, conducts investigations, develops and coordinates training, and oversees every function of the Board. There is an administrative assistant/ethics training coordinator who maintains the budget, handles purchases, coordinates the Board's monthly meetings, and develops and coordinates training. The Board contracts with an outside attorney for legal matters.

The City Charter established the Ethics Hotline to receive calls that allege a violation of the ethics code. The Ethics Office receives the complaints, determines if there should be an investigation, and facilitates the process for administrative hearings. The Ethics Office conducts extensive ethics training for elected officials, city employees, City Commission-appointed advisory committees, commissions, and boards. At the request of City officials and employees, the Ethics Board is authorized to provide written opinions on the application of the ethics code. The Ethics Office administers the Campaign Contribution Refund Program, which was established through the referendum. Through this program, registered voters who live within the City limits may claim a refund of up to \$25 during an election cycle when they donate to a City Commission or Mayor's campaign.





Mission Statement & Core Values



Mission

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



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.

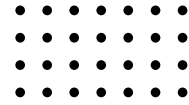
Excellence

Hold oneself accountable.

Respect

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

Meet the Board Members



Chair

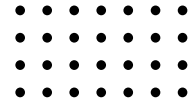
Kristen Costa is a Physician Assistant at Southeastern Plastic Surgery in Tallahassee. She is a national trainer for injectables, a faculty member at the Allergan Medical Institute, and Florida State University in the Physician Assistant Program. She worked previously as a Neurosurgery Clinical Coordinator at the Tallahassee Memorial Hospital and the Organ Procurement Coordinator in Gainesville. She has served as the liaison between the American Society of Plastic Surgeons and the American Academy of Physician Assistants, the Secretary for the Florida Academy of Physician Assistants, Treasurer for the Fellowship of Christian Physician Assistants, Youth Leadership Tallahassee Development Steering Committee, and President of Lakeshore Gardens Homeowners Association. She currently serves on several boards, including the Young Actors Theatre, Treasurer for the Association of Plastic Surgery Physician Assistants, Advisory Board Member for Alpha Chi Omega, and the House of Delegates for the American Academy of Physician Assistants. She received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing from Florida State University and a Master's Degree in Physician Assistant Studies at the University of Florida.



Vice-Chair

Patrick Kelly manages prevention programs and conducts investigations into controlled substance prescription fraud and diversion for a Fortune 500 pharmaceutical and healthcare organization. He has over 30 years of public service experience, including chief executive law enforcement positions with two different Florida municipalities and the Florida Attorney General's Office. He also served as a long-time member and Chair of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission. He has his Bachelor's Degree in Criminology from Florida State University, a Master of Science in Management from St. Thomas University, and an Educational & Human Resource Development Doctorate, ABD, from Florida International University. In addition, he has years of law enforcement consulting experience and has trained police and corrections professionals in diversity, cross-cultural communications, conflict resolution, leadership, and ethics. He is also a graduate of the Florida Martin Luther King Jr. Institute for Nonviolence and has taught undergraduate and graduate business and criminal justice courses for the University of Phoenix Online for over 20 years.

Meet the Board Members



Board Member

Rica Calhoun serves as Chief Compliance and Ethics Officer at Florida A&M University (FAMU). She is responsible for collaborating with University stakeholders throughout the institution to promote ethical decision-making and compliance with the law, regulation, and policy. Prior to her arrival at FAMU, she served as General Counsel, Ethics and Freedom of Information Officer for Western Illinois University (WIU). She also served as a member of the enterprise risk management committee, which identified and analyzed risk and compliance across WIU. She received her Juris Doctor from the College of William and Mary Marshall-Wythe School of Law in Virginia. She graduated from Florida State University with a Master's Degree in International Affairs and received her Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from the University of Central Florida.



Board Member

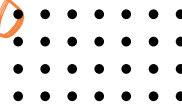
Adam Komisar is an attorney practicing criminal defense and civil litigation with Komisar Spicola, P.A. A graduate of Chiles High School, Adam attended the University of Florida, where he received an undergraduate degree in Business Finance and a Law degree. After law school, Adam returned to Tallahassee, where he served as an Assistant State Attorney from 2010 to 12. He is a past president of the Tallahassee chapter of the Florida Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers and a former Chair of the Florida Bar's local grievance committee.



Board Member

Bryan Smith is the associate vice president for student affairs and ombudsman for Florida A&M University (FAMU). In February 2013, he became FAMU's special assistant to the president for anti-hazing. Prior to joining FAMU, he served for ten years on the DeKalb County Ethics Board, and as a mediator throughout the State of Georgia. Smith received his Juris Doctor from John Marshall Law School, Master of Applied Social Science, with a concentration in Public Administration from FAMU, and a bachelor's degree in political science from North Carolina A&T State University.

Meet the Board Members



Board Member

Caroline Klancke is an attorney, ethicist, author, and lecturer. She serves as Florida State University's Associate Compliance Officer and Director of Ethics and Integrity Programs, where she also teaches Public Service Ethics. Ms. Klancke has served as General Counsel and Deputy Executive Director of the Florida Commission on Ethics where she assisted the agency in its constitutional mandate to interpret and enforce the Florida Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees. Prior to her tenure with the Florida Ethics Commission, she served as Chief Ethics Officer and Senior Attorney with the Florida Public Service Commission.

In 2022 she founded the Florida Ethics Institute, an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing ethics in government through education. She is the author of the Florida Ethics Handbook: A Public Servant's Guide to the Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees—the only comprehensive guide to governmental ethics regulations in Florida. She has lectured extensively for the Florida Commission on Ethics, the Florida Bar, Florida Association of Counties, and others on ethics, open government, and other compliance requirements.

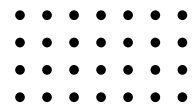
In 2015, the Florida Government Bar Association selected her as a finalist for Government Attorney of the Year. In 2023 the Florida Association of County Attorneys honored her with the Ethics in Government award.



Board Member

MaryAlice Harris David attended Florida State University in the early 1980s and later earned her law degree from Loyola University New Orleans. She joined the U.S. Air Force in 1991 as a Judge Advocate, serving for 20 years. Her career spanned active duty at Luke and Maxwell Air Force Bases, followed by a decade of service in the Reserve at Tyndall AFB, where she specialized in medical-legal issues and federal ethics law. She trained commanders and personnel on the Joint Ethics Regulation, covering misuse of position, gift restrictions, and command influence. In 2005, Major David and her husband, whom she met during her service, founded David & David Law in Tallahassee. She also worked as a Senior Attorney for Florida's Agency for Health Care Administration. An engaged community advocate, she volunteers with the Guardian Ad Litem program and coaches moot court and mock trial teams at FSU and local high schools.

Meet the Executive Staff



Dwight Floyd joined the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board in February 2020 as the Executive Director and Ethics Officer. Before joining the City of Tallahassee, he served thirty-four years with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). During his tenure, he directed the training of law enforcement officers, corrections officers, and correctional probation officers statewide. He oversaw the development and administration of entry-level testing and state officer certification examinations. He also managed officer discipline cases for administrative hearings. He is a native of Tallahassee, where he attended public schools before completing a Bachelor of Science Degree in Political Science with a Concentration in Public Administration from Florida A&M University. He is a member of the Council on Governmental Ethics and Laws and the Society of Corporate Compliance and Ethics.



Tasker Levenson-Green joined the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board in February 2023, serving as the Administrative Specialist II and Ethics Training Coordinator. Before joining the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board, she served for fifteen years with the City of Tallahassee Disbursement Services Department as an Accounts Payable Specialist/Purchase Card Administrator. During her tenure, she conducted training on the purchase card for new cardholders. She oversaw purchase card transactions for all City of Tallahassee cardholders. She also managed and updated the purchase card policy and procedure manual, serving as the liaison between the City's purchase cardholders and the bank. She is a native of Quincy, Florida, where she attended public schools before completing a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration from Flagler College.



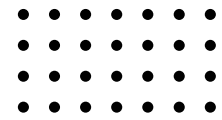
John Laurance Reid is an attorney with decades of legal experience and is the founder of the Law Office of John Reid PLLC. His practice encompasses government and administrative law as well as family law, civil litigation, state appeals, and governmental relations. He also serves on the Federal Judicial Nominations Conference, which is tasked with recommending judicial nominees and other federal officials to the President of the United States.

John Reid advises the Board on enforcement responsibilities and training curricula. He assists the Ethics Officer in evaluating current administrative procedures, bylaws, and city ordinances. In addition, he reviews complaints for legal sufficiency and probable cause, drafts advisory opinions and final orders, and provides recommendations to the Tallahassee Code of Ethics and the Ethics Board's bylaws and administrative procedures.

Additionally, he serves as the Town Attorney to the Town of Greenville in Madison County. In Greenville, he is responsible for drafting ordinances and advising public officials on all aspects of local government.

A graduate of the University of Miami School of Law, he has been a licensed attorney since 2000. He is admitted to practice law in Florida and the District of Columbia and is admitted to the United States Supreme Court, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit, and the U.S. District Courts for the Northern, Middle, and Southern Districts of Florida. John is a founding member of the North Florida Chapter of the American Constitution Society.

Strategic Planning



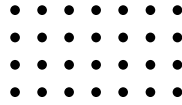
The Board reviews its strategic plan at the end of each fiscal year and updates its priorities and strategies accordingly. To preserve continuity, the Board maintains a three-year plan, where applicable.



Priorities

- Investigate alleged violations of the Ethics Code and administer a formal process for resolving complaints.
- 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.
- Make recommendations concerning proposed ordinances, resolutions, or charter amendments to the City Commission in all areas of ethics and corruption, including but not limited to conflicts of interest, financial disclosure, voting conflicts, hotline policies, ethics education, ethics in procurement, campaign ethics and financing, and lobbying.
- Promote citizen participation in the electoral process through the Campaign Contribution Refund Program.

Advisory Opinions



The Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board may issue advisory opinions related to ethics, conflict of interest, and any other topic over which it has jurisdiction. An advisory opinion is an interpretation of the City Charter as it applies to a set of facts provided in writing by the individual requesting the opinion. The purpose of an advisory opinion is to guide public officials and city employees before they engage in activities that may be prohibited.

The Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board issued these opinions during the 2025 fiscal year:

Misuse of Public Position- June 17, 2025

Q: Does a city employee employed by the City of Tallahassee Fire Department violate Section 2-8 of the Tallahassee Ethics Code by wearing his or her firefighter uniform or similar apparel during activities sponsored or conducted by a private business in which the city employee has an ownership stake that exceeds 2 percent and will receive compensation?

A: Based on the facts presented by the inquirer and this Board's reliance on those facts, this question is answered in the affirmative. The Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board finds that the inquirer would violate the Tallahassee Ethics Code's prohibition on misuse of public position by wearing a city-issued firefighter uniform or similar apparel during practices, games, or other events sponsored, operated, directed, managed, or supervised by his or her private business as it would constitute an improper use of public position and city resources for personal benefit.

Misuse of Public Position- June 17, 2025

Q: Does a city employee employed by the Tallahassee Fire Department violate the Tallahassee Ethics Code by holding an ownership stake in excess of 2 percent in a private business and receiving compensation or by wearing his or her firefighter uniform in advertisements for activities sponsored by this business?

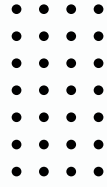
A: Based on the facts presented by the inquirer and this Board's reliance on those facts, this question is answered in the negative. The Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board finds that the inquirer would not violate the Tallahassee Ethics Code's prohibition on misuse of public position by engaging in compensated outside employment, even with an ownership interest in the business that exceeds 2 percent and where he or she will receive compensation from said business.

Misuse of Public Position -September 16, 2025

Q: Does a city firefighter, whether a covered individual or city employee, violate Section 2-8 of the Tallahassee Ethics Code by soliciting in-kind donations from businesses while in uniform for a program sponsored by the City of Tallahassee and operated by the TFD?

A: Based on the facts presented, the firefighters soliciting such donations, conducted with supervisory approval and in connection with a City-sponsored program, would not violate the misuse of public position prohibition under Section 2-8 of the Tallahassee Ethics Code, so long as appropriate safeguards are followed to avoid any appearance of coercion or preferential treatment.

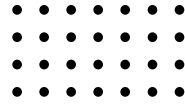
ETHICS TRAINING



“Living Up to the Standard”

Ethics Training

“Living Up to the Standard”



The Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board plays a vital role in promoting public trust by coordinating ethics training for City officials, employees, and citizen advisory committee members. While some jurisdictions may treat ethics training as a procedural requirement, the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board remains committed to delivering meaningful, engaging instruction that reinforces the values of transparency, accountability, and integrity.

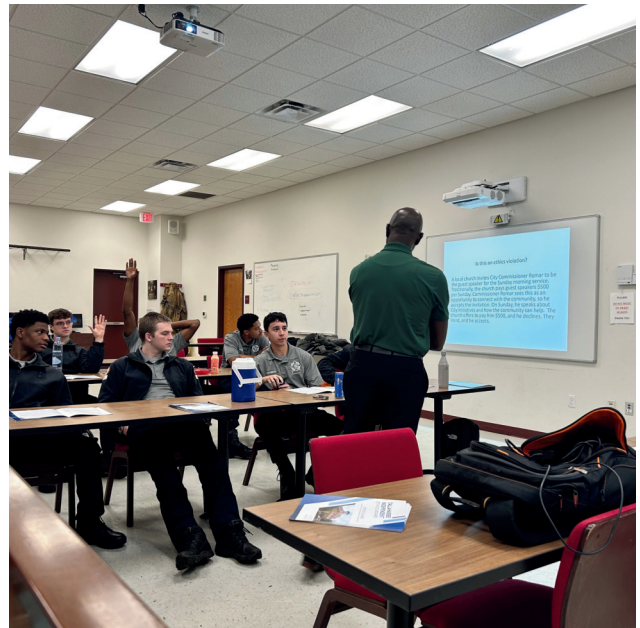
The City Ordinance directs the Ethics Officer to manage and coordinate ethics training for:

- Elected officials
- Aides to elected officials
- Appointed officials
- Employees
- Members of citizen advisory committees

In addition, the Ethics Board has tasked staff with maintaining an ethics guide for use by both employees and the public.



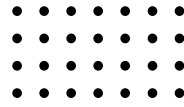
New Employee Orientation



Firefighters Employee Orientation

Ethics Training

“Living Up to the Standard”



In 2024, elections were held for two City Commission seats. Per city ordinance, both newly elected officials—regardless of prior service—were required to complete a comprehensive ethics training within 60 days of taking office. The Ethics Office updated the training course to reflect current standards and ensured timely completion by both officials.



Separately, the State of Florida Ethics Code requires City Commissioners to complete a four-hour ethics training annually. There are similar requirements in the City Ordinance. Commissioners fulfilled this requirement using an approved external provider and reported full compliance in June 2025.

The ordinance also mandates annual ethics training for City Commission aides. Board Attorney John Reid conducted two sessions during the reporting period, resulting in 100% compliance among aides.



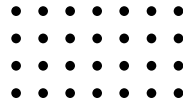
Crossing Guards 2025 Annual Ethics Training



Employee Ethics Training

Ethics Training

“Living Up to the Standard”



During FY2025 the Ethics Office conducted 29 in-person and virtual training sessions for newly hired City employees. Specialized sessions were tailored for:

- Tallahassee firefighters
- Newly trained police officers
- Crossing guards
- Parks and Recreation part-time staff
- Fleet Management personnel
- High school students in the Tallahassee Future Leaders Academy

Each participant received a copy of the ethics guide, while other employees accessed it via the internal website.

The annual ethics course for all City appointees and employees was redesigned with the theme “*Living Up to the Standard.*” Using storytelling and gamification techniques, the course delivered relevant and relatable content that resonated with participants. Post-training assessments showed high passing scores for the end-of-course quiz, and employee feedback indicated that this was one of the most engaging ethics courses to date.



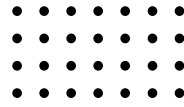
Ethics Training New Employee Orientation



Ethics Training New Employee Orientation

Ethics Training

“Living Up to the Standard”



The Ethics Board staff drafted an online course for citizen advisory committee members and committed to launching it in 2026. Once implemented, all current and incoming members will be required to complete the training annually.

All training programs incorporate ethical standards from City policy, the City Ordinance, and the State of Florida Ethics Code, ensuring a consistent and comprehensive foundation for ethical decision-making across all levels of City government.

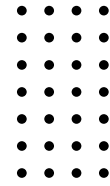


Tallahassee Future Leaders Training Academy



Tallahassee Future Leaders Training Academy

Campaign Contribution Refund Program



Under the City Charter, registered voters in Tallahassee may claim a refund of up to \$25 for monetary contributions made during the calendar year to candidates for the City Commission. Each voter may file one claim per election cycle. The Campaign Contribution Refund Program (CCRP) is designed to promote civic participation and reduce reliance on large donors and special interest groups, thereby leveling the playing field for candidates of modest means.

2024 Election Cycle Outcomes

Two City Commission seats were open during the 2024 election. Despite extensive promotion of the CCRP, participation remained low. This outcome prompted a review of contributing factors and revealed several key insights:

What We Learned

- **Timing matters:** Candidates tend to raise the bulk of their contributions nearly a year before the election, limiting the program's visibility during peak fundraising periods.
- **Candidate-driven engagement:** Voter participation in the refund program is largely influenced by whether candidates actively promote it.
- **Mixed perceptions:** Not all candidates or residents support the CCRP, which affects its adoption.
- **Limited incentive:** The \$25 refund is modest compared to programs elsewhere that offer \$50–\$100, reducing motivation to apply.
- **Application barriers:** The refund process may appear cumbersome, discouraging potential applicants.

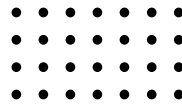
Strategic Efforts for the 2026 Election Cycle

In response to these findings, the Ethics Board has launched a renewed outreach campaign for the 2026 election cycle:

- **Early promotion:** CCRP outreach began in September 2025, well ahead of the November 2026 election.
- **Candidate support:** The Ethics Office is offering direct assistance to candidates to help raise awareness of the program.
- **Expanded messaging:** Voter communications now emphasize the multiple options available for submitting refund claims, increasing accessibility.
- **Media engagement:** The Ethics Officer is participating in radio and television interviews to highlight the CCRP and its role in ethical governance.
- **Direct voter contact:** Inserts in City utility bills are being used to inform residents about the program and encourage participation.

The Ethics Board remains committed to promoting the CCRP as a tool for strengthening democratic participation and reducing undue influence in local elections. Future efforts will continue to focus on accessibility, education, and candidate collaboration to ensure the program fulfills its intended purpose.

Ethics Complaints



Ethics Complaints – Fiscal Year 2025

One of the core responsibilities of the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board is to respond to ethics complaints submitted by members of the public, city employees, and officials. Complaints are received through multiple channels, including the ethics hotline, telephone, email, and in-person visits.

Complaint Intake and Jurisdiction

In FY2025 the Ethics Office received a range of complaints, the majority of which fell outside the Board’s jurisdiction. In accordance with its duty to ensure concerns are properly addressed, the Ethics Office referred 29 complaints to the appropriate entities. Additionally, the Board dismissed two sworn complaints after formal review.

Impact of Senate Bill 7014

The passage of Senate Bill 7014 in 2024 introduced a significant change to the Board’s authority. Under the new law, the Ethics Board may no longer initiate complaints based on anonymous allegations. The rationale cited is the respondent’s right to know the identity of their accuser.

However, anonymity in ethics reporting often stems from legitimate concerns—particularly proximity to the respondent and fear of retaliation. Since the bill’s enactment, the Ethics Officer has encountered cases within the Board’s jurisdiction where action was limited due to the complainant’s desire to remain anonymous.

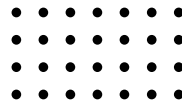
In such instances, the Ethics Office has taken proactive steps to review public records and engage relevant city departments to address the concern. These referrals have ranged from internal policy issues to matters warranting the attention of the Inspector General’s Office.



“Living Up to the Standard”



Ethics Complaints

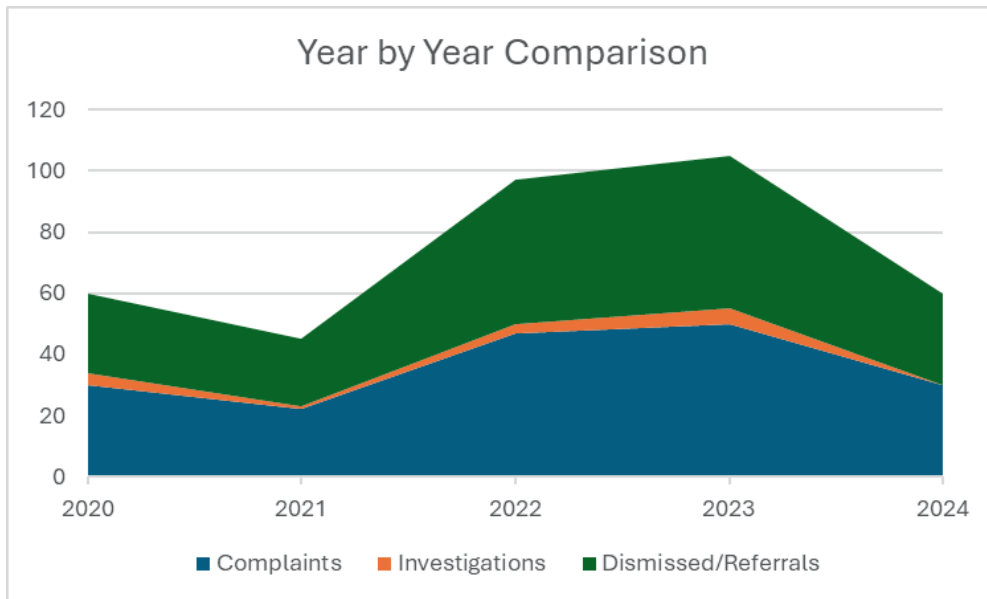


Complaint Handling Protocols

Despite legal limitations, the Ethics Board’s commitment to ethical oversight remains unchanged. The Board continues to uphold its standards and responds to complaints based on their nature and jurisdiction:

- **Criminal Allegations:** Referred to law enforcement. The Board monitors the outcome and may follow up after proceedings conclude.
- **Sworn Complaints Within Jurisdiction:** Investigated by the Board in accordance with established procedures.
- **Jurisdictional Complaints Without Sworn Submission:** Addressed through alternative remedies available within the City’s authority.

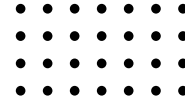
The Ethics Board remains steadfast in its mission to promote integrity and accountability in city government. While legislative changes have altered certain procedures, the Board continues to adapt and respond with professionalism, discretion, and a commitment to public trust.



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Fiscal Responsibility



Throughout FY2025 the Ethics Office maintained fiscal discipline by streamlining operational costs and leveraging digital tools to reduce training expenses. No budget amendments were required, and all expenditures remained within approved limits.

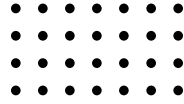
All financial activities were conducted in accordance with City procurement and reporting standards. No audit findings or compliance issues were reported.

| Category | FY2025 Budget | FY2025 Actual | Balance Remaining |
|------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Personnel Services | \$253,369 | \$250,595 | \$2,774 |
| Operating Expenditures | \$161,800 | \$73,683 | \$85,735 |
| Internal Service Funds | \$48,660 | \$49,104 | (444) |
| End of Year Balance | \$463,829 | \$375,763 | \$88,066 |

Looking ahead to FY2026, the Ethics Office anticipates modest salary increases, investments to support expanded outreach efforts for citizen advisory committee members, and increased participation in the Campaign Contribution Refund Program.



Resources



Sworn Complaint Form

<https://www.talgov.com/uploads/public/documents/ethics/eb-complaint-form.pdf>

Campaign Contribution Refund Program/Form

<https://www.talgov.com/Main/ethics>

Ethics Code Municipal Ordinances

https://library.municode.com/fl/tallahassee/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICOGEOR_CH2AD_ARTINGE_DIV3ETCO

Mailing Address

Independent Ethics Office
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Tallahassee, Florida 32301-1731






“If You See Something Say
Something!”

REPORT AN ETHICS

VIOLATION



CONTACT INFORMATION

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-  Hotline: 850-891-6550
-  Cell: 850-545-5756
-  Ethics@talgov.com
-  www.talgov.com/main/ethics



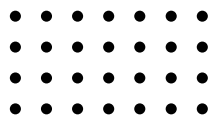
2025

Annual Report

Tallahassee
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