



**Three-Year Strategic Plan  
October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2028**

**Updated September 16, 2025**

## Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board



### Our Mission

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

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### Our 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.

## **Executive Summary**

The Ethics Code was established through a referendum in 2014, creating the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board, a seven-member body appointed by the City Commission, Florida A&M University, Florida State University, the State Prosecutor's Office, the Public Defender's Office, and two members selected at large by the Board members. The Ethics Office's staff includes a director/ethics officer and an administrative specialist. The Board contracts with a legal advisor.

The Board oversees ethics training for City officials, appointees, employees, and advisory board members. The Board has subpoena power and investigates alleged violations of the Ethics Code. The Board relies on citizens, vendors, City employees, and City officials to report violations of the Ethics Code.

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. Accordingly, the Board has established the following priorities, effective October 1, 2025.

### **Priorities**

1. Investigate alleged violations of the Ethics Code and administer a formal process for resolving complaints.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Promote citizen participation in the electoral process through the Campaign Contribution Refund Program.

## Strategic Priority 1

Investigate alleged violations of the Ethics Code and administer a formal process for resolving complaints.

### Key Indicators

- The Board's bylaws and administrative procedures provide a transparent and efficient process for handling complaints.
- Investigations are conducted objectively, thoroughly, and efficiently, and without bias.

### Major Initiatives

- Conduct a comprehensive review of the Board's bylaws and administrative procedures by September 1, 2026, identifying at least two areas for improvement and submitting a written report with recommended revisions to the Board for consideration.
- Complete 100% of assigned investigations within 90 days of initiation, ensuring each includes documented findings, relevant evidence, and a summary of applicable ethics standards, as verified through a review by the board's legal counsel.
- Establish a vetted list of external investigative resources by January 1, 2026, and utilize outside assistance when there are three or more active cases, with documentation of scope, cost, and impact included in the Ethics Office's report to the Ethics Board upon conclusion of the case.
- Participate in at least two professional ethics forums, conferences, or peer exchanges annually, and document key takeaways or collaborative opportunities in monthly ethics officer reports.
- The Ethics Officer completes a minimum of 8 hours of formal investigative training annually, including at least one course focused on ethics-related investigative techniques, and applies learned strategies in subsequent casework.
- The Ethics Training Coordinator completes a minimum of 12 hours of formal instructional design training annually, and applies learned strategies in subsequent course development and delivery.

## Strategic Priority 2

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.

### Key Indicators

- New City employees, City officials, and Board members have access to the Tallahassee Ethics Guide.
- Every City official and employee receives ethics training relevant to our mission.
- The public is actively engaged through social media.

### Major Initiatives

- Ensure that 100% of newly hired City of Tallahassee employees who attend new employee ethics training receive the ethics guide within 15 days of course completion, tracked monthly through training records, and verified by HRWD documentation.
- Deliver ethics training to 100% of active advisory group committee members by September 30 of each fiscal year, with attendance tracked and reported in the annual ethics report.
- Review and update the Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board's website monthly, ensuring all training materials, meeting agendas, reports, and advisory opinions are current and accessible.
- Publish a minimum of one ethics-related post per month across official Tallahassee Independent Ethics Board social media platforms, highlighting Board initiatives.
- Ensure compliance of state and local ethics training requirements for 100% of elected officials and their aides within the required timeframe, with completion verified through signed documentation and course completion records.
- Ensure that 100% of newly elected City of Tallahassee officials complete a comprehensive ethics course within 60 days of taking office, with compliance documented and reported annually.
- Design, develop, and publish an updated online ethics training course by July 1 of each year, for delivery to the City of Tallahassee appointees and employees, incorporating feedback from prior sessions and aligning with current policies and laws.
- Conduct an annual evaluation of ethics training effectiveness using pre-test and post-test data, and data available through the online delivery learning management system, tracking the data monthly, and including findings in the Ethics Office's annual report.
- Issue formal advisory opinions within 60 calendar days of receiving a request. If a formal opinion cannot be completed within 30 calendar days, provide an informal written response within that timeframe to address the immediate concern, with the formal opinion to follow.

### **Strategic Priority 3**

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.

#### Key Indicators

The City Commission hears and acts on the Board's recommendations.

#### Major Initiatives

- When identified by the Ethics Board, prepare and present action items to the City Commission recommending revisions to the City Ordinance that serve the public interest, with supporting documentation and rationale submitted within 90 days of Board approval, or preferably submitted with the annual report.

## **Strategic Priority 4**

Promote citizen participation in the electoral process through the Campaign Contribution Refund Program.

### **Key Indicators**

- The Campaign Contribution Refund Program performs more actively in the local campaign financing.
- Tallahassee residents demonstrate an awareness of the City of Tallahassee Campaign Contribution Refund Program.

### **Major Initiatives**

- During each City of Tallahassee election cycle, actively promote the Campaign Contribution Refund Program by conducting at least two public interviews, issuing one press release, and distributing informational materials to 100% of registered campaign managers, with outreach documented and summarized in the Ethics Office's annual report.