

# Statement of Ethics

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All employees of WARD COUNTY are expected to observe the highest standards of ethics and integrity in their conduct. This means following a basic code of ethical business behavior, which includes:

- Complying with the letter and spirit of all applicable laws.
- Faithfully carrying out County policies, rules, regulations, and contracts.
- Dealing honestly, fairly and compassionately with taxpayers, clients, co-workers, County elected officials, and the general public.
- Respecting the County's ownership of all County equipment, supplies, books, records, and proprietary information.
- Preserving the confidentiality of County records, customer lists, plans and decisions, confidential information about employees, and any other information that is not public knowledge or covered under the open record laws.
- Understanding that books and records are County property and that it is illegal to remove them except in the course of doing their job. This includes manuals, lists, and other information that employees use in their daily work.
- Declining any gifts, gratuities, or payments offered by anyone with whom the County does business without the approval of the County Commissioners. This includes offers of free service, travel, merchandise, etc. borrowing from such sources (except banks) is absolutely prohibited. Only token gifts, including imprinted pens, or calendars and unsolicited gifts worth less than \$15, may be accepted without the authorization of the Ward County Commissioners. Certain sensitive positions may require **no** gifts or gratuities be accepted.
- Disclosing any outside financial interests that might influence an employee's decisions or actions on the job, including interests in suppliers, patrons or clients. Employees should not acquire such interests except for publicly traded securities in which the employee owns less than a one-percent interest.
- Not accepting any outside employment with a supplier or any other employment that could interfere with responsibilities to the County. For non-elected employees, employment with any person or business that has business with the County must be approved in writing, including the acceptance of directorships, honoraria for speeches, or consulting fees.
- Other than in the normal function of their job, not using authority, experience, position, prestige or information gained from County employment for personal gain.

Employees who have questions about how this code of business ethics applies in particular situations should discuss the exact circumstances with their supervisors. Supervisors may obtain further guidance by contacting their department head. Each situation disclosed will be considered on its merits.

As an employee of WARD COUNTY I have read and understand this code of ethics and understand they are conditions of my employment. Any violation may result in my immediate termination as well as civil and/or criminal charges and/or penalties.