

SAMPLE POLICIES

CODE OF ETHICS



City of Huntington Beach Code of Ethics

Preamble

The citizens of the City of Huntington Beach are entitled to responsible, fair and honest city government that operates in an atmosphere of respect and civility. Accordingly, the Huntington Beach City Council adopts this code to:

1. Describe the standards of behavior to which its leaders and staff aspire.
2. Provide an ongoing source of guidance to elected leaders, city officials and staff in their day-to-day service to the city.
3. Promote and maintain a culture of ethics.

Pledge

On November 21, 2016, the City Council of the City of Huntington Beach adopted a Code of Ethics, which applies to all City elected or appointed officials, city employees, and members of its boards, commissions, committees, and task forces and requires the following pledge:

Code of Ethics

Responsibility

- I understand that the community expects me to serve with dignity and respect, as well as be an agent of the democratic process.
- I avoid actions that might cause the public to question my independent judgment.
- I do not use my office or the resources of the city for personal or political gain.
- I am a prudent steward of public resources and actively consider the impact of my decisions on the financial and social stability of the city and its citizens.

Fairness

- I promote consistency, equity and non-discrimination in public agency decision-making.
- I make decisions based on the merits of an issue, including research and facts.
- I encourage diverse public engagement in our decision-making processes and support the public's right to know.

Respect

- I treat my fellow city officials, staff, commission members and the public with patience, courtesy, civility, and respect, even when we disagree on what is best for the community and its citizens.

Honesty

- I am honest with all elected officials, staff, commission members, boards, the public and others.
- I am prepared to make decisions when necessary for the public's best interest, whether those decisions are popular or not.
- I take responsibility for my actions, even when it is uncomfortable to do so.

City of Elk Grove California City Code of Ethics

Prepared by Citizens of Elk Grove

Preamble

The citizens of the City of Elk Grove are entitled to responsible, fair and honest city government that operates in an atmosphere of respect and civility. Accordingly, the Elk Grove City Council, with citizen input, has adopted this code to:

1. Describe the standards of behavior to which its leaders and staff aspire.
2. Provide an ongoing source of guidance to elected leaders, city officials and staff in their day-to-day service to the city.
3. Promote and maintain a culture of ethics.

Pledge

On April 27, 2005, the City Council of the City of Elk Grove adopted this City Code of Ethics, which applies to all City employees, officers, commissions, and elected or appointed officials and requires the following pledge:

City Code of Ethics

Responsibility

- I understand that the community expects me to serve with dignity and respect, as well as be an agent of the democratic process.
- I avoid actions that might cause the public to question my independent judgment.
- I do not use my office or the resources of the city for personal or political gain.
- I am a prudent steward of public resources and actively consider the impact of my decisions on the financial and social stability of the city and its citizens.

Fairness

- I promote consistency, equity and non-discrimination in public agency decision-making.
- I make decisions based on the merits of an issue, including research and facts.
- I encourage diverse public engagement in our decision-making processes and support the public's right to have access to public information concerning the conduct of the City's business.

Respect

- I treat my fellow city officials, staff, commission members and the public with patience, courtesy, civility, and respect, even when we disagree on what is best for the community and its citizens.

Honesty

- I am honest with all elected officials, staff, commission members, boards, the public and others.
- I am prepared to make decisions when necessary for the public's best interest, whether those decisions are popular or not.
- I take responsibility for my actions, even when it is uncomfortable to do so.

**CITY OF WATSONVILLE
CITY COUNCIL
CODE OF ETHICS AND VALUES**

STANDARDS

The residents of the City of Watsonville are entitled to responsible, fair, and honest city government that operates in an atmosphere of respect and civility consistent with the City Council's Mission Statement. Accordingly, the Watsonville City Council has adopted this code to: 1) describe the standards of behavior to which its leaders aspire; 2) provide an ongoing source of guidance to City officials in their day-to-day service to the City; and 3) promote and maintain a culture of ethics.

This code applies to the City Council and its appointed boards and commissions. The code will be reviewed and evaluated annually, as part of the City's strategic planning process.

RESPONSIBILITY

- I understand that the community expects me, as a leader, to serve with dignity, integrity, and respect for my office, as well as be an agent of the democratic process.
- I avoid actions that might cause the public to question my independent judgment.
- I do not use my office or the resources of the City for personal or political gain.
- I am a prudent steward of public resources and actively consider the impact of my decisions on the financial and social stability of the City and its residents.

FAIRNESS

- I promote consistency, equity and non-discrimination in public agency decision-making.

- I make decisions based on the merits of an issue, including research and facts.
- I encourage diverse public engagement in our decision-making processes and support the public's right to know.

RESPECT

- I treat my fellow officials, staff and the public with patience, courtesy and civility, even when we disagree on what is best for the community.

HONESTY

- I am honest with my fellow elected officials, the public and others.
- I am prepared to make decisions when necessary for the public's best interests, whether those decisions are popular or not.
- I take responsibility for my actions, even when it is uncomfortable to do so.



CITY OF LODI Code of Ethics and Values

PREAMBLE

The proper operation of democratic government requires that decision-makers be independent, impartial, and accountable to the people they serve. The City of Lodi has adopted this Code of Ethics and Values to promote and maintain the highest standards of personal professional conduct in the City's government. All elected and appointed officials (i.e. City Manager, City Attorney, City Clerk), and Executive Management (i.e. Department Heads not represented by a bargaining group) are required to subscribe to this Code, understand how it applies to their specific responsibilities, and practice its eight core values in their work. Because we seek public confidence in the City's services and public trust of its decision-makers, our decisions and our work must meet the most demanding ethical standards and demonstrate the highest levels of achievement in following this Code.

Core Values:

1. **As a representative of the City of Lodi, I will be ethical.**
In practice, this value looks like:
 - a) I am trustworthy, acting with the utmost integrity and moral courage.
 - b) I am truthful, do what I say I will do, and am dependable.
 - c) I make impartial decisions, free of bribes, unlawful gifts, narrow political interests, and financial and other personal interest that impair my independence of judgment or action.
 - d) I am fair, distributing benefits and burdens according to consistent and equitable criteria.
 - e) I extend equal opportunities and due process to all parties in matters under consideration. If I engage in unilateral meetings and discussions, I do so without making voting decisions.
 - f) I show respect for persons, confidences, and information designated as "confidential" to the extent permitted by California law.
 - g) I use my title(s) only when conducting official City business, for information purposes, or as an indication of background and expertise, carefully considering whether I am exceeding or appearing to exceed my authority.

2. **As a representative of the City of Lodi, I will be professional.**
In practice, this value looks like:
 - a) I apply my knowledge and expertise to my assigned activities and to the interpersonal relationships that are part of my job in a consistent, confident, competent, and productive manner.
 - b) I approach my job and work-related relationships with a positive attitude.
 - c) I keep my professional knowledge and skills current and growing.

3. **As a representative of the City of Lodi, I will be service-oriented. In practice, this value looks like:**
 - a) I provide friendly, receptive, courteous service to everyone.
 - b) I am attuned to, and care about, the needs and issues of citizens, public officials, and City workers.
 - c) In my interactions with constituents, I am interested, engaged, and responsive.
4. **As a representative of the City of Lodi, I will be fiscally responsible. In practice, this value looks like:**
 - a) I make decisions after prudent consideration of their financial impact, taking into account the long-term financial needs of the City, especially its financial stability.
 - b) I demonstrate concern for the proper use of City assets (e.g. personnel, time, property, equipment, and funds) and follow established procedures.
 - c) I make good financial decisions that seek to preserve programs and services for City residents.
5. **As a representative of the City of Lodi, I will be organized. In practice, this value looks like:**
 - a) I act in an efficient manner, making decisions and recommendations based upon research and facts, taking into consideration short- and long-term goals.
 - b) I follow through in a responsible way, keeping others informed, and responding in a timely fashion.
 - c) I am respectful of established City processes and guidelines.
6. **As a representative of the City of Lodi, I will be communicative. In practice, this value looks like:**
 - a) I convey the City's care for and commitment to its citizens.
 - b) I communicate in various ways that I am approachable, open-minded, and willing to participate in dialog.
 - c) I engage in effective two-way communication, by listening carefully, asking questions, and determining an appropriate response, which adds value to conversations.
7. **As a representative of the City of Lodi, I will be collaborative. In practice, this value looks like:**
 - a) I act in a cooperative manner with groups and other individuals, working together in a spirit of tolerance and understanding.
 - b) I work toward consensus-building and gain value from diverse opinions.
 - c) I accomplish the goals and responsibilities of my individual position, while respecting my role as a member of a team.
 - d) I consider the broader regional and state-wide implications of the City's decisions and issues.
8. **As a representative of the City of Lodi, I will be progressive. In practice, this value looks like:**
 - a) I exhibit a proactive, innovative approach to setting goals and conducting the City's business.

- b) I display a style that maintains consistent standards, but is also sensitive to the need to compromise, "thinking outside the box," and improving existing paradigms when necessary.
- c) I promote intelligent and thoughtful innovation in order to forward the City's policy agenda and City services.

Code of Ethics

City Council Code of Ethics & Public Service Values

Preamble



Value: Respect

1. As a leader of the community, I **model civility**. In practice, this means that:

- I treat my fellow officials, staff and the public politely, professionally and with an appreciation for our common humanity, even when we disagree on what is best for the community.
- When I explain my disagreement with a colleague or City Council decision to others, I do so in a way that focuses on the merits of an issue and recognizes that reasonable people of differing interests and/or good intentions can disagree on what is best for our community.
- When my perspective doesn't prevail, in discussing the outcome in the community, I frame my colleagues' differing positions in the spirit of moving onward from the decision and in the same way I would want my colleagues to frame my own differing positions.
- I contribute to a culture and practice of active acknowledgement by recognizing colleagues and persons who model values-based decision-making under challenging circumstances.
- I refer to my colleagues on the City Council by their formal city titles (for example, "Council Member," "Mayor," etc.), and/or appropriate gender pronouns unless an individual has expressed a preference for an alternative title (for example, "Reverend," "Dr.," etc.)

2. I **invite and respect public input** to inform my sense of what is in the community's best interests and incorporate it in the decision-making process to ensure meaningful public engagement. In practice, this means that:

- I am attentive and engaged in meetings.
- I welcome diverse perspectives and consider them in my decision-making.
- I act in ways that help people feel valued when they participate in our city's decision-making processes.
- As an elected official, I gather public input and information to make the best decision with a spirit of curiosity and inquiry.
- I involve all appropriate stakeholders and the public in general in meetings affecting city decisions.
- I strive to make people feel heard, by listening carefully, sharing what I think I have heard, asking clarifying questions, and seeking to understand the interests underlying their positions.



3. My actions reflect the belief that **elected officials, city staff and others who serve the agency are on the same team in service to the community, even though we have different roles. In practice, this means that:**

- I act on the understanding that staff's role is to provide objective information and analysis to inform the decision-making process within the resources that they have available, even if this information and analysis don't support the decision I believe is best.
- When I know I will be asking one or more questions on an agenda item, I alert the City Manager or City Attorney as appropriate in advance so staff can be prepared to provide the most complete answer to inform both the City Council and the public.
- I ask questions to authentically deepen my understanding of staff analysis and its factual underpinnings, as well as inform the public; I argue the merits of decisions with my fellow City Council Members.
- I communicate any concerns I have about city functions, staff analyses or individual staff

Value: Responsibility

1. I model and promote clear communication. In practice, this means that:

- I support defining important words, terms, and context, avoiding jargon (including use of acronyms) and using examples.
- I ask questions to test any inferences and assumptions I may be inclined to make based on what I am hearing people say; I support others doing likewise.
- I am direct and transparent in explaining my reasoning, interests, goals and intentions to help others understand what I am saying and why. I contribute to an interpersonal environment that supports such transparency and forthrightness from others to help move conversations forward with the goals of finding common ground and maximizing the public's best interests.
- I verify (fact check) statements reportedly made by a colleague directly with that colleague.
- I make myself available for one-on-one conversations about the values in this code.
- I am transparent and publicly disclose relevant information.

2. I work collaboratively to improve our community's quality of life and promote the public's best interests. In practice, this means that:

- I gain value from diverse perspectives and consider them in my decision-making.
- I recognize that I am an agent for the democratic process, not the owner of authority.
- I seek information from community members and my colleagues about what qualities an acceptable solution might have to a problem (their interests), in addition to hearing what their positions are.



I consider the larger picture in my decision-making and actions. In practice, this means that:

- I consider the short-, medium-, and long-term effects of my decisions and actions.

- I strive to foster effective relationships with state, regional and other public agencies and their officials.
4. I am **accountable** for my actions and words. In practice, this means that:
- I am prepared to make unpopular decisions when my sense of the public's best interests requires it.
 - I take responsibility for my actions, even when it is uncomfortable to do so. This includes apologizing when I realize that my behavior has fallen short of the aspirational standards in this code.
 - As part of my commitment to growth and learning, I am open to constructive feedback from my colleagues and others—ideally first expressed on a human-to-human (one-on-one) basis--when they think I may have acted in a way that falls short of my goal of the values-based decision-making and the behaviors described in this code.
 - I keep open communication with my fellow City Council members when speaking or making presentations in other City Council members' districts.

Values: Compassion and Fairness

1. I am **empathetic and care about** the needs of the public, my colleagues and staff. In practice, this means that:
- When interacting with others, I put myself in others' shoes, understanding that people have different lived experiences.
 - I am sensitive that those interacting with public officials, whether staff or community members, can be intimidated by public officials and public agency processes. I try to make interactions with the City Council as stress-free as possible.
 - My actions reflect an awareness that people respond to both verbal (including tone of voice) and non-verbal cues; I also recognize that some people, including me, can interpret verbal and non-verbal cues differently, depending on the attributes of the source.
 - I use active listening techniques (repeating back, follow-up questions, taking notes as appropriate, and other verbal and non-verbal cues) to demonstrate that I am hearing and listening to what people are saying.
 - I carefully consider all colleague's and public's perspectives and input when making decisions.
 - I value the personal experiences that contribute to my colleagues' and the public's views on a given matter.
 - I initiate one-on-one conversations with those who have different positions on issues to better understand those positions; I look for opportunities to identify shared values and interests.
 - I view the opportunity to provide feedback to my colleagues relating to values-based decision-making—ideally first on a human-to-human (one-on-one) basis—as opportunities for mutual understanding, growth and learning.



- I understand that everyone makes mistakes and, in the spirit of collegiality, I accept apologies when they are offered. I set aside grudges that may be tempting to hold.
- I look for opportunities to celebrate generative, positive examples of the application of this code.

2. I embrace our community's and city team's **diversity**. In practice, this means that:

- I consider the diversity, equity and inclusion implications of policy decisions I make.
- I participate in regular educational activities to enhance my insights into a wide variety of diversity, equity and inclusion issues.

3. I promote fair and consistent processes. In practice, this means that:

- I make decisions on policies, hiring and contracting prioritizing merit and value to the community and equitable practices rather than favoritism and/or family or personal relationships.
- I honor the law's and the public's expectation that city policies will be applied consistently.
- I am impartial in my decision-making and do not favor those who either have helped me (or are in a position to do so) and disfavor those who have not (or are not).
- I make it a practice to communicate equitably with members of the community, irrespective of their influence, power or campaign donations.

Value: Integrity

1. I am truthful with my colleagues, the public and others. In practice, this means that:

- I carefully consider any promise I make and then I keep it; I make only promises I believe are realistic.
- I treat information I receive with a spirit of inquiry and presumed positive intent; I fact-check information as necessary with colleagues, staff and others.
- I honor commitments I and my agency make.
- I credit others' contributions to moving our community's interests forward.
- I only disclose confidential information when I am authorized to do so.
- I explain the official positions of the city to the best of my ability when I am authorized to do so. I am clear in stating my own views that these views may or may not represent the city's position.

2. My actions are consistent with my words. In practice, this means that:

- I follow through on the commitments I make.
- Building and maintaining trust is an ongoing process. I act in ways that promote the public's trust in both 1) the city as an expression of community democratic processes and 2) my own role as a member of the city's governing body.



I comply with both the letter and the spirit of laws that are designed to promote public trust and confidence in our agency's decision-making. In practice, this means that:

- I demonstrate, by my actions and my words, that I am a guardian of the public's trust and confidence in the city, its elected officials and staff.
- I use public resources for public purposes, not for private benefit or political purposes.
- I decline and do not seek gifts, favors, and other special treatment.
- I make decisions based on my sense of the public's best interests. In so doing, I am mindful of the nonpartisan nature of city, county, school and judicial offices provided for in California's Constitution.



Code of Ethics & Values

Santa Clara's Code of Ethics & Values, adopted by the City Council in March of 2000 and modified by Council in August of 2001, is designed to provide clear, positive statements of ethical behavior reflecting the core values of the community. The Code includes practical strategies for addressing ethical questions and a useful framework for decision-making and handling the day-to-day operations of the municipality.

The current Code of Ethics & Values was developed in 1999 by a Committee composed of three elected officials, nine City commissioners, two community members, the City Manager and the City Attorney. A previous Code was adopted in the 1960s and periodically updated, but the Committee took a fresh approach by working with the [Markkula Center for Applied Ethics](#) at Santa Clara University to create a new Code of Ethics & Values for the City that would better reflect the issues and concerns of today's complex and diverse society.

ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR CONTRACTORS SEEKING TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF SANTA CLARA, CALIFORNIA

Goals of the Code of Ethics & Values

- To make Santa Clara a better community, built on mutual respect and trust
- To promote and maintain the highest standards of personal and professional conduct among all involved in City government elected officials, City staff, volunteers, and members of the City's boards, commissions and committees

The Code of Ethics & Values is a touchstone for members of boards, commissions and committees in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.

Preamble

The proper operation of democratic government requires that decision-makers be independent, impartial, and accountable to the people they serve. The City of Santa Clara has adopted this Code of Ethics & Values to promote and maintain the highest standards of personal and professional conduct in the City's government. All elected and appointed officials, City employees, volunteers, and others who participate in the city's government are required to subscribe to this Code, understand how it applies to their specific responsibilities, and practice its eight core values in their work. Because we seek public confidence in the City's services and public trust of its decision-makers, our decisions and our work must meet the most demanding ethical standards and demonstrate the highest levels of achievement in following this code.

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In practice, this value looks like:

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- a. I exhibit a proactive, innovative approach to setting goals and conducting the City's business.
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Last Updated:

03-22-2019