


CITY OF HAMILTON, OHIO

No. 316

ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE

Effective Date: 9-26-18

Supersedes: Directive No. 316 dated 11/18/82

Approved by: Joshua A. Smith,
City Manager 

SUBJECT: CODE OF ETHICS FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE CITY OF HAMILTON, OHIO

PURPOSE: The proper operation of a public agency requires that its employees be independent, impartial, equitable, efficient, honest, and responsible; that public employment not be used for personal gain; and that the public have confidence in the integrity of its government. In recognition of these goals there is hereby established this Code of Ethics for all City of Hamilton employees to assist them in making proper judgements in the exercise of their official duties.

1. Policy.

a. Responsibilities of Public Service

i. City of Hamilton employees are agents of the public and hold their position for the benefit of the public. Employees are required to conduct their official duties with efficiency, integrity, honesty, impartiality, and in the public interest. They are bound to discharge faithfully their duties regardless of personal considerations, recognizing that the public interest must be the primary concern. Public employment is a public trust to which the employee owes a duty of strict loyalty. An employee must faithfully and conscientiously carry out the policies, determinations and directions of the City, its officials and their supervisors.

b. Avoiding Wrong Appearances

i. The final judge of official conduct is the public as a whole, which is likely to form its judgements in broad generalizations. Each public employee must be cognizant of how one's actions and behavior might be interpreted, or misinterpreted, by the public. For this reason employees' conduct and actions must be conducted in a manner to assure that they cannot be improperly influenced in the performance of their duties and that their actions, conduct and comments are appropriate including social media actions, conduct and comments.

c. Fair, Impartial, and Equal Treatment

i. Fair, impartial and equal treatment is a part of the heritage of American government and must be afforded to all citizens and employees without regard to their race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including sexual harassment), age, disability, genetic information, military status, veteran status, ancestry, or any other non-job related characteristic protected by law. The public and fellow employees have the right to expect and receive courteous treatment. This is a primary requirement of public employment. The ultimate standard for conduct of a public employee is the public interest as opposed to a particular group or private interest. As a holder of the public trust, it is the duty of the employee to insure that no special consideration, treatment, advantage or disadvantage is given to any citizen or other employee beyond that which is available to others.

- d. Efficiency
 - i. Efficient delivery of municipal services is a primary interest of the public and is a requirement of each public employee's position. Employees must endeavor to serve with efficiency, conserve and protect all City resources, and strive towards improving the efficiency, economy, and effectiveness of their work.
- di. Conflict of Interest
 - i. City employment cannot be utilized for personal gain or advantage or for the benefit of any special interests. Public employees cannot seek personal gain, advantage or other private benefit in the course of their work for themselves or others. Any situation or circumstance which promotes employees' or others private interests over the public interest constitutes misuse and abuse of the public trust and is strictly prohibited.
- dii. Political Activity
 - i. City of Hamilton employees must maintain an impartial and non-partisan position in political matters. Laws have been established which protect City employees from political pressures. Due to the nature of their work, employees must refrain from partisan political activities which are in conflict with the requirements of City service and the administration of City affairs, as specified by the City Charter and Codified Ordinances and the Ohio Revised Code. As City of Hamilton employees, we must take steps to avoid even the inference of the endorsement of a partisan candidate or issue by the City of Hamilton by exercising caution when displaying a political pin, badge or other political paraphernalia at work including political satire.
- diii. City and State Requirements
 - i. Every City of Hamilton employee in the administrative service of the City comes under provisions of the City Charter, the Codified Ordinances of the City, and State and Federal Statutes in matters such as those relating to prohibited political practices and activities; disclosure or use of confidential information; financial or unlawful interest in public contracts; and use of official position
- div. City Values
 - i. City of Hamilton employees shall personify the six (6) Values: (1) Passion for Hamilton; (2) Own the Outcome; (3) Respect; (4) Sense of Urgency; (5) Innovate ; (6) Inclusion.

These provisions include, but are not limited to, the following City and State requirements:

- City Charter sections 10.17, 10.18, 10.19 governing political practices and activities; and 18.02 – Financial Interest in Contracts, etc.
- City Ordinance sections: 179.01 Employment Besides City Service; 525.01 – Definitions; and 525.10 – Having An Unlawful Interest in a Public Contract.
- Ohio Revised Code Chapter 102 – Public Officers, Ethics; and Section 2921.42 – Having an unlawful interest in a public contract (same as C.O. 525.10).

Any action of a public employee which is in violation of City, State or Federal provisions constitutes a violation of the public trust and is not permitted. In addition, many of these provisions provide for penalties for violation of these restrictions, including forfeiture of the right to continued public employment.

An employee should seek the advice of his supervisor on any instance in which he has doubts regarding actions or activities related to this Code of Conduct.