



Code of Ethics for County Officials

Preamble

The National Association of Counties (NACo) is committed to the highest standards of conduct by and among county officials in the performance of their public duties. Individual and collective adherence to high ethical standards by public officials is central to the maintenance of public trust and confidence in government.

While county officials agree on the need for proper conduct, they may experience personal conflict or deferring views of values or loyalties.

In such cases the principles contained in this Code of Ethics provide valuable guidance in reaching decisions which are governed, ultimately, by the dictates of the individual conscience of the public official and his or her commitment to the public good.

Certain of these ethical principles are best expressed as positive statements: actions which should be taken; courses which should be followed; goals which should permeate both public and private conduct. Other principles are expressed as negative statements: actions to be avoided and conduct to be condemned.

The Code of Ethics for County Officials has been created by and for elected county officials. However, these principles apply to the day to day conduct of both elected and appointed officials and employees of county government.

NACo recognizes that this Code of Ethics should serve as a valuable reference guide for all those in whom the public has placed its trust.

Ethical Principles

The ethical county official should:

- Properly administer the affairs of the county.*
- Promote decisions which only benefit the public interest.*
- Actively promote public confidence in county government.*
- Keep safe all funds and other properties of the county.*
- Conduct and perform the duties of the office diligently and promptly dispose of the business of the county.*
- Maintain a positive image to pass constant public scrutiny.*
- Evaluate all decisions so that the best service or product is obtained at a minimal cost without sacrificing quality fiscal responsibility.*
- Inject the prestige of the office into everyday dealings with the public employees and associates.*
- Maintain a respectful attitude toward employees, other public officials, colleagues and associates.*

- *Effectively and efficiently work with governmental agencies, political subdivisions and other organizations in order to further the interest of the county.*
- *Faithfully comply with all laws and regulations applicable to the county and impartially apply them to everyone.*

The ethical county official should not:

- *Engage in outside interests that are not compatible with the impartial and objective performance of his or her duties.*
- *Improperly influence or attempt to influence other officials to act in his or her own benefit.*
- *Accept anything of value from any source which is offered to influence his or her action as a public official.*

The ethical county official accepts the responsibility that his or her mission is that of servant and steward to the public.

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