

Administrative Policy

**CODE OF ETHICS
AND
STANDARDS OF CONDUCT
FOR
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AND EMPLOYEES
OF THE
HOUSING AUTHORITY CITY OF LONGVIEW**

Revised by the Board of Commissioners March 20, 2000

PREFACE

The Housing Authority City of Longview has established Standards of Conduct for its employees and members of its Board of Commissioners. These Standards are designed to assure the utmost in public trust and confidence in the policies and practices of the Authority. Because of its' status as a Washington municipal corporation, the Authority recognizes its responsibility to conduct all business in a manner above reproach or censure. This Code of Ethics will describe in detail the Standards by which members of the Board of Commissioners and employees are to be held accountable.

AUTHORITY

This code recognizes and incorporates those sections of Federal, State and Local Law which govern the conduct of public employees, and in no way supplants those provisions of law. In cases where no statutory precedent exist, the policy of the Authority shall be applied, except that this policy shall in no way be taken to supersede the provisions of any contracts, labor agreements, or other external agreements affecting the rights and privileges of employees.

DEFINITIONS

Within the Code of Ethics, certain words or phrases will be used. The definitions contained within this Code shall apply to these words as they are used herein, notwithstanding any other usages or more common usages.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

The Standards of Conduct contained within the Code of Ethics shall be generally applied so as to avoid the appearance, or actual occurrence of any favoritism or special treatment towards any applicants, enrollees, vendors, or agents having business, or dealings of any kind with the Authority. No Commissioner or employee shall use or cause to be used the position to secure any personal privileges for himself or other, or to influence the activities, actions, or proceeds of the Authority.

POLICY REGARDING EXTERNAL VENDORS AND SERVICES

The Housing Authority City of Longview, in establishing Standards of Conduct for its employees, recognizes the importance of establishing Standards of Conduct for external vendors and suppliers of products and/or services to the Authority. While the Authority cannot legislate the internal conduct or policies of vendors, it nevertheless requires that vendors and suppliers adhere to certain basic principles in conducting business with the Authority. Specifically, these principles include:

1. No direct or indirect personal inducement of Authority employees. This includes the giving of gifts, money, tickets or any item or service having value.
2. No direct or indirect inducement of members of the Board of Commissioners. This shall include the same provisions covering employees, except that it is recognized that in the course of business dealings, there may be times when meals and/or visits may be arranged. In such cases, such events should be reported to the Chairman of the Board, with the nature of the visit explained.

It is expected that vendors or suppliers of professional services to the Authority will be governed by the Code of Ethics to which their particular profession subscribes.

Any vendor or supplier found in violation of Authority policy shall be barred from future business dealings with the Authority. The Authority reserves the right to have vendors and suppliers sign a statement of compliance with the Standards of Conduct of the Authority.

CODE OF ETHICS

SECTION I. TITLE

This shall be called the "Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct."

SECTION II. APPLICABILITY

This provision contained herein shall apply to all employees and the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority City of Longview. With respect to contracted professional services of the Authority (legal, accounting, or otherwise), it is assumed that these professionals will abide by the professional ethics of their particular profession.

SECTION III. PURPOSE

This Code of Ethics establishes Standards for employee and Commissioner conduct which will assure the highest level of public service and trust. Recognizing that compliance with any ethical standards rests primarily on personal integrity, and also recognizing in general, the integrity of Commissioners and employees, it never the less sets forth those acts or omissions of acts which could be deemed injurious to the general mission of the Authority.

This Code of Ethics is not intended, nor should it be construed as, an attempt to unreasonably intrude upon the individual employee's or Commissioner's right to privacy, and the right to participate freely in a democratic society and economy.

SECTION IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. "Agent" shall mean any employee of the Authority (whether full or part time) acting in his/her official capacity as an agent of the Authority.
- B. "Claim" shall mean any demand, written or oral, made upon the Authority to fulfill an obligation arising from law or equity.
- C. "Contract" shall mean any obligation to do something arising from an exchange of promises for consideration between persons, regardless of the particular form in which it is stated.
- D. "Commissioner" shall mean one of the five (5) persons comprising the Board of Commissioners of the Authority.

- E. "Employee" shall mean any person appointed or hired, whether full or part time, seasonal, temporary, paid or unpaid, on a fixed or unfixed term, provisional or permanent status.
- F. "Family" shall mean any sibling, spouse, parent or child of a person, or any member of a person's immediate household.
- G. "Interest" shall mean a benefit or advantage of an economic or tangible nature that a person or a member of his family would gain or lose as a result of any decision or action or omission to decide or act, on the part of the Authority, its Board, or employees.
- H. "Public Information" shall mean information obtainable pursuant to the Authority guidelines adopted pursuant thereto.
- I. "Person" shall mean any individual, corporation, partnership, or business entity, association, or organization, and may include an Authority employee.
- J. "Leasing Program" shall mean those programs operated by the Longview Housing Authority including the Section 8 Housing Assistance Programs, the Moderate Rehabilitation Program, the Project-Based Assistance Program, the HOME Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program and the 515 Rural, Economic and Community Development Program.
- K. "Enrollee" shall broadly mean any applicant, tenant, or program participant regardless of which program they are in or that will be operated by the Authority. Specifically, an "enrollee" shall be a person who either expects to receive, or is receiving, some form of housing assistance from the Authority.

SECTION V.

ETHICAL STANDARDS

1. No employee of the Longview Housing Authority shall have any employment, or engage in any business or commercial transaction, or engage in any professional activity, or incur any obligation in which directly or indirectly, he would have an interest that would impair his independence or judgment or action in the performance of his official duties or that would be in conflict with the performance of his/her official duties at the Authority.

2. No employee shall have or enter into any contract with any person who has or enters into a contract with the Authority unless:
 - A. The Contract between the person and the Authority is awarded pursuant to competitive bidding procedures and/or purchasing policies as outlined in regulations promulgated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and internal bidding purchasing procedures developed by the Authority; or
 - B. The contract between the person and the Authority is one in which the Authority employee has no interest, has no duties or responsibilities, or if the contract with the person is one which the Authority employee entered into prior to becoming an employee, he abstains from any performance of duties or responsibilities, and exercised or attempts to exercise no influence.
3. No Authority employee may use his/her position to secure special privileges or exemptions for himself, herself, or others.
4. No Authority employee may, directly or indirectly, give or receive or agree to receive any compensation, gift, reward, or gratuity from a source except the employing municipality, for a matter connected with or related to the officer's services as such an officer unless otherwise provided by law.
5. No Authority employee may accept employment or engage in business or professional activity that the officer might reasonably expect would require or induce him/her by reason of his/her official position to disclose confidential information acquired by reason of his/her official position.
6. No Authority employee may disclose confidential information gained by reason of the officer's position, nor may the officer otherwise use such information for his/her personal gain or benefit.
7. No Authority employee shall use or permit the use of Authority owned vehicles, equipment, materials or property for the convenience or profit of himself or any other person, except that his provision shall not apply in the case of usage for "diminutive" purposes, i.e., purposes which in and of themselves should not be construed as abuse of Authority property.

8. No Authority employee shall disclose without proper authorization non-public information or records concerning any aspects of the operation of the Authority, nor shall he use such information to the advantage or benefit of himself or any other person. This shall include records maintained on enrollees of the Authority, for whom a properly executed release of information form shall be obtained and kept in the client file. The release of any information relative to enrollees of the Authority shall be done following pursuant to government regulations allowing the release of information among governmental agencies or agencies receiving governmental subsidy, and shall be done following prescribed methods of requesting and transmitting such information, and shall be done with full knowledge of the enrollee except in those cases where through action of law the enrollee's knowledge is not required.
9. No Authority employee currently employed shall represent any person, other than himself, in business negotiations, judicial or administrative actions or procedures, to which the Authority may be a party.
10. No employee formerly employed by the Authority shall represent any person in a matter in which the former employee personally participated while in the employ of the Authority, if such representation would be adverse to the interests of the Authority.

Note: This provision shall not bar the timely filing by a current or former employee, of any claim, account, demand, or suit arising out of personal injury, property damage, or for any benefit authorized or permitted by law.

11. No member of the family of any Authority employee shall be appointed or hired to serve under the direct supervision or authority of that employee, and in no event shall any Authority employee participate in the decision-making process regarding employment, or contract for services of any family member.
12. No Authority employees shall have an interest in a contract between any person and the Authority, except that:
 - 1) the employee discloses his/her interest in contract prior to employment.
 - 2) after employment, the employee has no power to authorize or approve payment under the contract and the remuneration of the employee will not be affected under the contract.

13. No employee of the Authority shall discuss, vote upon, decide or take part in (formally or informally) any matter before the Authority in which he has an interest. Exception shall be made in the case of an employee whose interest in the matter is minimal, provided the employee shall fully and specifically describe his interest, in writing, and the underlying basis of it, whether it be ownership, investment, contract, claim, employment or family relationship, to his/her immediate supervisor prior to his participation. If in the opinion of the supervisor, there is any question as to whether the interest is minimal, the matter shall be referred to the Ethics Review Committee for a binding decision on the question.
14. Any matter decided on, contracted, adjudicated, or in any other way acted upon by an employee who does not disclose a personal interest either in the matter, may be considered null and void to the Authority. Such a matter, may be referred to the Ethics Review Committee to render judgment and assess any penalties if necessary.
15. If the Ethics Review Committee renders judgment that a matter was performed, a contract entered into, or any matter was conducted, decided or acted upon in a manner prohibited by the Code of Ethics, it may then propose that the Board of Commissioners seek an injunction against the proscribed action.
16. "Leasing Operation"- no person employed by the Authority and participating in a Leasing Operation shall be permitted to authorize, approve or certify eligibility or expenditure relating to their occupancy. *(Revised 2/00)*

(See "definitions" for programs under leasing.)

SECTION VI. ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

The Board of Commissioners of the Longview Housing Authority is the architect of policy governing the operations of the Authority, and under the Public Housing law of Washington State, retains legal and fiscal responsibility for the Authority. Insofar as is possible, the members of the Board of Commissioners are generally to follow the Standards of Conduct as set forth herein. Further, it is expected that a commissioner will voluntarily execute a statement of conflict of interest prior to assuming his/her seat on the Board.

(Note: Please see Commissioner's File for disclaimers.)

NOTE: As revised 3/20/00, Section VII has been deleted from this policy.