

CASCADE COUNTY CODE OF ETHICS

Cascade County Mission:

To provide essential services to the people of Cascade County in the most courteous, effective, and efficient manner.

CODE OF ETHICS

The Board of Cascade County Commissioners, elected and appointed officers, advisory and authority board members, and employees are charged with conducting their business affairs in accordance with the highest legal, moral, and ethical standards. This code is a collection of regulations and rules of procedures governing the conduct of public officials. It prohibits conflicts between public duty and private interest, as required by Article XIII of the Montana Constitution. It recognizes that holding office is a public trust, created by the confidence, which the voters have in the integrity of public officers, employees, and members of their respective boards.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality of information deemed not to be for public consumption should be held in confidence; this is to include any aspect of information subject to a lawsuit or hearing. Any lists that the County maintains will not be furnished to other than government entities that have a "Need to Know, without specific authorization of the Board of County Commissioners. Employees, public officials, and board members shall respect the confidentiality of people served in the course of their duties and use information gained in a responsible manner.

PROHIBITED EMPLOYMENT ACTIVITIES

As outlined in Title 2, Chapter 2 of the Montana Code Annotated, a local government officer or employee cannot engage in the following activities:

1. Cannot accept employment, or engage in employment negotiations with a person whom the officer or employee regulates without proper notification.
2. Cannot receive salaries from two separate public employment positions that overlap for the hours being compensated, without disclosing the amounts received from both entities. For example: jury duty.
3. Cannot obtain employment where the officer will take advantage of matters he or she was involved in during his or her time at Cascade County for a period of twelve months.
4. Cannot use influence for nepotism.

PROHIBITED SELF-DEALING ACTIVITIES

A local government officer or employee cannot:

1. Use public time, facilities, equipment, supplies, personnel, or funds for private business purposes.
2. Assist a person for a fee or other compensation in obtaining a contract, claim, license, or economic benefit from the officer or employee's agency or any other agency.
3. Disclose or use confidential information acquired in the course of official duties to further personal economic interests.
4. Accept a gift of \$50 or more or a substantial economic benefit that would influence a reasonable person to depart from the faithful discharge of public duties or intended to be a reward for official action taken.
5. Be interested in any contract made in an official capacity or by any body of which they are members or employees.
6. Acquire an interest in any business, or perform an official act, which directly and substantially benefits a business or undertaking in which the official or employee has a financial interest or is engaged as counsel, consultant, representative, or agent.
7. Perform an official act directly and substantially affecting a business to its economic detriment when he or she has an interest in a competing business.
8. Engage in substantial financial transactions for private business purposes with a person whom the officer or employee supervises or inspects.
9. Purchase at any sale or be a vendor at any purchase made by them in official capacity.
10. County officers, their deputies or clerks, cannot deal in county warrants, scrip, orders, claims, or other documents of indebtedness.

CAMPAIGN PRACTICES

A local government officer or employee cannot:

Use public time, facilities, equipment, supplies, personnel or funds for any campaign activity that persuades or affects a political decision.

DISCLOSURE

A local public officer must disclose:

1. The intention of engaging in an act that may create a conflict between public duty and private interest.
2. Conflicting private interests that appear improper prior to participating in official action.

In complying with the provisions of the Code of Ethics, Cascade County elected officials, employees and members of advisory boards should focus on the fact they owe an individual duty to the public. Unfairly perhaps, but even the appearance of impropriety can weaken public trust and hamper us in our ability to carry out the service mission of Cascade County.

Board of Cascade County Commissioners

