The COE

PALM BEACH COUNTY COMMISSION ON ETHICS NEWSLETTER

Fall 2026



Post-Employment Ordinance **P.1**

Advisory Opinions **P.2**

Disclosure of Voting Conflicts **P.2**

Upcoming Events **P.3**

Misson Statement

The mission of the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics is to foster integrity in public services, to promote the public's trust and confidence in that service, and to prevent conflicts between private interests and public duties.

The ONE Ethics Movement

The Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics and the Office of the Inspector General were both established in 2010. The ONE Ethics movement speaks to our independent but collective and collaborative efforts to provide objective oversight of ethics in our local government.

COE Hotline:

561-355-1915

Post-Employment Restrictions: What You Need to Know

Since 2010, the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics (COE) has worked to promote integrity, accountability, and transparency in local government. As a quasi-judicial board, the COE enforces the countywide Code of Ethics, which emphasizes the principle that public service is a public trust.

That responsibility extends beyond public service. The Post-Employment Ordinance places restrictions on certain former public officials and employees to help prevent conflicts of interest after they leave their positions. Specifically, the ordinance limits certain types of representation on behalf of others after leaving county service.

Former Palm Beach County Commissioners are prohibited from knowingly representing anyone other than the county or another public entity in connection with any matter for a period of two years after leaving office.

Similar restrictions apply to Level 1 and Level 2 employees. Both groups are subject to a six-month restriction, along with additional restrictions involving certain matters related to the county. The specific restrictions depend on the employee's former position and the matter involved.

To learn more about the Post-Employment Ordinance and the restrictions that may apply, visit www.PalmBeachCountyEthics.com.

Join us at our next Meet & Greet: Commission on Ethics & Office of Inspector General



Make COE Advisory Opinions Your Go-To Resource



586 Advisory Opinions

Over the past 16 years, the COE has issued nearly 600 advisory opinions, providing guidance on how the Code of Ethics and related ordinances apply to specific situations. These opinions help covered individuals, including public officials and county and municipal employees, vendors, and lobbyists, understand their ethical obligations. They can submit the facts of their own situations to the COE and receive formal guidance explaining how the Code applies. Here's a sample of our most recent advisory opinions.

August 2026 RQO 26-015: Does the Code prohibit a person from serving on both the Delray Beach Downtown Development Authority and the City of West Palm Beach Planning Board?

COE ANSWER: Based on the facts presented, the Code does not prohibit simultaneous service on two separate and independent municipal boards, nor does such dual service alone create a per se conflict of interest. A conflict would arise if he were to use his official position on either board to give a special financial benefit to any prohibited person or entity listed in the Code or otherwise violate another provision of the Code.

October 2026 RQO 26-019: A county employee asked if the Anti-Nepotism provision of the Code would prohibit her from working or acting in a supervisory capacity within the same section as an employee who will soon become her son-in-law when that employee falls within her overall organizational responsibilities?

COE ANSWER: Provided certain conditions are met, the Code does not prohibit this situation. The Anti-Nepotism provision generally does not preclude the continued employment or advancement of individuals who are currently employed with the same governmental agency when a familial relationship later occurs. It also does not require the discharge of a person who becomes a relative after employment is established. Thus, the Code does not prohibit the supervisory employee from continuing to work in a supervisory capacity within the same section as the subordinate employee when he becomes her son-in-law as long as the guidance in the opinion is carefully followed, including exercising no control over her future son-in-law's employment or potential promotion and abstaining from advocating for any promotion for him in the future.

COE Commissioner Profile

Dr. Peter Cruise has served the Commission on Ethics for 13 years. As the longest-serving member on the present commission, Commissioner Cruise is also an ethics professor at Florida Atlantic University and serves on the West Palm Beach Downtown Development Authority.



Disclosure of Voting Conflicts Sec. 2-443(c)

County and municipal officials as applicable shall abstain from voting and not participate in any matter that will result in a special financial benefit as set forth in subsections (a)(1) through (7). The term "participate" as used in this section shall be defined as: "To take any action, or to influence others to take any action, or to attempt to do any of these things, in order to affect the passage or defeat of the specific matter before the voting body in which the official is required to abstain from voting." The official shall publicly disclose the nature of the conflict and when abstaining from vote, shall complete and file a State of Florida Commission on Ethics Conflict Form 8B pursuant to the requirements of the Florida Statutes Section 112.3143. Simultaneously with filing Form 8B, the official shall submit a copy of the completed form to the county commission on ethics.

Get Involved

Request a speaker



The Commission on Ethics offers dynamic training programs that ignite ethical insight, sharpen your skills, and empower civic-minded individuals and groups to advocate for integrity. Guided by our passionate ethics experts, you will learn how ethics play a vital role in our community and discover ways to support a culture of ethical excellence in public service. Whether you belong to a civic, business, professional, or educational organization, these programs promise to energize your ethical commitment and make an impact!

To schedule a speaker, contact us.

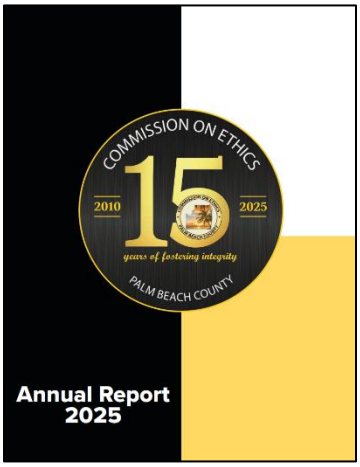
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Upcoming Events

- **We're coming to YOU!**
  - The ONE Ethics movement is on the road to meet you in your local community and at your local library. Stay tuned!
    - Jupiter Community Library: October 23
    - Main Library Halloween Parade: October 29
    - Alliance of Delray: December 2

- **Monthly Commission on Ethics Meetings**
  - The first Thursday of each month at 1:30 pm at the Governmental Center or on PBC TV Channel 20.
    - Join us to see a glimpse of our COE Commissioners and staff at work for YOU.

In Case You Missed It!
Take another look at the COE's
2025 Annual Report!



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CONNECT WITH US

Visit: **www. palmbeachcountyethics.com**

Call: **561-355-1915**

Email: **ethics@pbc.gov**

Follow: **@pbccoe**

Got Ethics? When faced with a possible ethical dilemma, local public officials and employees are encouraged to follow the *Ask First, Act Later* motto. The COE staff is available to help you understand your responsibilities under the Code of Ethics. See our FAQ page online.