

City Management Code of Ethics

(1972)

The purpose of the International City Management Association is to increase the proficiency of city managers, county managers, and other municipal administrators and to strengthen the quality of urban government through professional management. Further these objectives, certain ethical principles shall govern the conduct of every member of the International City Management Association, who shall:

1. Be dedicated to the concepts of effective and democratic local government by responsible elected officials and believe that professional general management is essential to the achievement of this objective.
2. Affirm the dignity and worth of the services rendered by government and maintain a constructive, creative, and practical attitude toward urban affairs and a deep sense of his social responsibility as a trusted public servant.
3. Dedicate himself to the highest ideals of honor and integrity in all public and personal relationships in order that he may merit the respect and confidence of the elected officials, or other officials and employees, and of the public which he serves.
4. Recognize that the chief function of local government at all times is to serve the best interests of all of the people.
5. Submit policy proposals to elected officials, provide them with facts and advice on matters of policy as a basis for making decisions and setting community goals, and uphold and implement municipal policies adopted by elected officials.
6. Recognize that elected representatives of the people are entitled to the credit for the establishment of municipal policies; responsibility for policy execution rests with the members.
7. Refrain from participation in the election of the members of his employing legislative body, and from all partisan political activities which would impair his performance as a professional administrator.
8. Make it his duty continually to improve his ability and to develop the competence of his associates in the use of management techniques.
9. Keep the community informed on municipal affairs; encourage communication between the citizens and all municipal officers; emphasize friendly and courteous service to the public; and seek to improve the quality and image of public service.
10. Resist any encroachment on his responsibilities, believing he should be free to carry out official policies without interference, and handle each problem without discrimination on the basis of principle and justice.
11. Handle all matters of personnel on the basis of merit so that fairness and impartiality govern his decisions, pertaining to appointments, pay adjustments, promotions, and discipline.
12. Seek no favor; believe that personal aggrandizement or profit secured by confidential information or my misuses of public time is dishonest.

Guidelines

Conflict of Interest

Gifts. A member should not directly or indirectly solicit any gift, or accept or receive any gift whether in the form of money, services, loan, travel, entertainment, hospitality, promise, or any other form, under circumstances in which it could reasonably be inferred that the gift was intended to influence him, or could reasonably be expected to influence him, in the performance of his official duties or was intended as a reward for any official action on his part.

It is important that the prohibition of unsolicited gifts be limited to circumstances related to improper influence. In such, de minimus situations as cigars, meal checks, etc., some modest maximum dollar value should be determined by the member for his guidance. The guideline is not intended to isolate members from normal social practices where gifts among friends, associates, and relatives are appropriate for certain occasions.

Confidential Information. A member should not disclose to others, or use to further his personal interest, confidential information acquired by him in the course of his official duties.

Representation. A member should not represent any outside interest before any agency, public or private, except with the authorization or at the direction of the legislative body of the governmental unit he serves.

Investments in Conflict with Official Duties. A member should not invest or hold any investment, directly or indirectly, in any financial, business, commercial, or other private transaction which creates a conflict with his official duties.

In the case of real estate, the possibility of the use of confidential information and knowledge to further a member's personal interest requires special consideration. This guideline recognizes that a member's official actions and decisions can be influenced if there is a conflict with his personal investments. Purchases and sales which might be interpreted as speculation for quick profit ought to be avoided. The appearance that confidential information has been used to further his personal interests (as in the section headed "Confidential Information" above) is a special possibility for a member in the case of real estate.

Recognizing that personal investments may prejudice or may appear to influence official actions and decisions, a member may, in concert with his governing body, provide for disclosure of such investments prior to the acceptance of his position as municipal administrator or prior to any official action by the governing body that may affect such investments.

Private Employment. A member should not engage in, solicit, negotiate for, or promise to accept private employment or render services for private interests or conduct a private business when such employment, service, or business creates a conflict with or impairs the proper discharge of his official duties.

Teaching, lecturing, writing, or consulting are typical activities which may not involve conflict of interest or impair the proper discharge of his official duties. Prior notification of the governing body is appropriate in all cases of outside employment.

Appearance of Being Incorruptible

Public Confidence. A member should conduct himself so as to maintain public confidence in his profession, his local government, and in his performance of his public trust.

Impression of Influence. A member should conduct his official and personal affairs in such a manner that he will give the clear impression that he cannot be improperly influenced in the performance of his official duties.

Political Activity

Elections of the Governing Body. A member should maintain a reputation for serving equally and impartially all members of the governing body of the municipality he serves, regardless of party. To this end he should not engage in active participation in the election campaign on behalf of or in opposition to candidates for the governing body.

Other Elections. A member shares with his fellow citizens the right and responsibility to exercise his franchise and voice his opinion on public issues. However, in order not to impair his effectiveness on behalf of the municipality he serves, he should not participate in election campaigns for representatives from his area to county, school, state, and federal offices.

Personnel

Equal Opportunity. A member should develop a positive program that will assure meaningful employment opportunities for all segments of the community. It shall be the intent to provide equality of opportunity in employment for all persons; to prohibit discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, political affiliation, physical handicaps, age, or marital status in all aspects of his personnel policies, programs, practices, and operations; and to promote the full realization of equal opportunity in employment through continuing programs of affirmative action at every level with the organization.

It should be the member's personal and professional responsibility to actively recruit and hire minorities and women for their professional staffs and throughout his organization.

Unprofessional Conduct

Endorsements. A member should not endorse commercial products by agreeing to the use of his picture, endorsement, or quotation in paid advertisements, whether for compensation or not.

His observations, opinions, and analyses of commercial products used or tested by his municipality are appropriate and useful to the profession when included as part of professional articles and reports.

Credentials. An application for employment should be complete and accurate as to all pertinent details of education, experience, and personal history.

Length of Service. A minimum of two years is generally considered necessary in order to render a professional service to the municipality.

However, under special circumstances it may be in the best interests of the municipality and the member to separate in a shorter time. Examples of such circumstances would include refusal of the governing body to honor commitments concerning employment, a vote of no confidence in the member, or severe personal problems.

Appointment Commitments. A member who accepts an appointment to a position should not fail to report for that position. This does not preclude the possibility of a member considering several offers or seeking several positions at the same time, but once a bona fide offer of a position has been accepted, that commitment should be honored.

Advice to Officials of Other Municipalities. When members advise and respond to inquiries from elected or appointed officials of other municipalities, they should inform the administrator of that community.

Seeking Employment. A member should not seek employment in a community having an incumbent administrator who has not resigned or been officially informed that his services are to be terminated.