

Ethics in an Unethical Culture

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This presentation will encourage planning and zoning administrators to contemplate the ethical challenges they will face in the coming years. Attendees will learn the foundation and pillars of ethics through a review of the New Jersey Local Government Ethics Law.

Participants will be guided through a review and renewal of their ethics “pledges” as they learn about the quickly changing ethical landscape impacting their careers. The Instructor will define and explain the ethical culture and ethical climate of organizations and provide new information regarding the Ethics Law and its application to our times given the burgeoning demands on planning and zoning administrators.

Students will be confronted with the most common lapses of judgment and, as time allows, be encouraged to discuss specific ethics challenges they are facing, as well as, share ideas and solutions. The high level of tension fostered by ethical dilemmas and case studies will spur attendees to challenge their own assumptions and beliefs, thereby enhancing their moral and ethical thinking skills.

The ultimate goal of the presentation is to help students cultivate attitudes that foster an ethical culture in their organization, make behavioral changes that enhance the ethical climate in their individual workplace units, nurture a greater desire to exemplify ethical decision-making in their professions and take positive corrective action where misconduct is observed or perceived.

INSTRUCTOR: Dave Nenno Ethics Law Consulting Services: Ethics training and professional development seminars. 1976-2010 NJDCA Local Finance Board (retired); Daily guidance to local governments in matters pertaining to the jurisdiction and application of the Local Government Ethics Law, the establishment of local ethics boards and the statutory filing requirements of the Annual Financial Disclosure Statement. Custodian of records.

PRESENTATION OBJECTIVES - Participants will:

- 1) Learn about the quickly changing ethical landscape impacting local governments;
- 2) Acquire new knowledge regarding the Ethics Law and its application to our times;
- 3) Nurture a desire to exemplify ethical decision-making;
- 4) Make behavioral changes that enhance the ethical climate* in the workplace;
- 5) Cultivate attitudes that foster an ethical culture* in the organization; and
- 6) Take positive corrective action where misconduct is observed or perceived.

Ethical Climate: The collective personality of a specific workplace or unit as expressed in the prevailing attitudes, perceptions, standards, and environmental conditions.

Ethical Culture: The beliefs and behaviors of an organization that issue from personal convictions regarding what is considered excellent and acceptable.

The Foundation and Pillars of Ethics:

Integrity / Trust, Honor, Duty, Respect, Transparency

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The Challenges and Issues:

Some of the challenges and issues listed below will be explored:

Our PostModern Times: The Assault on Absolutes

The New Normal: Our Culture of Entitlement

Private Victory: Harvesting the Integrity Crop

Trust: The Two-Way Street

The Trauma of Transparency: Open Government, Social Media and Financial Disclosure

Climate Control: Keeping the Sun Shining

The Free-Lunch Dilemma: Gifts and Favoritism

Customer Service: Whatever Happened To Respect?

The Truth About Sustainability: Can we really legislate this stuff?

Choose Your Hat: The Incompatibility Dilemma and abuses of office

Locking the Barn Door: The Importance of Conviction

The Enforcement Problem

Our Ethics Pledges:

Pledge #1: I receive the Trust conferred upon me by the citizenry through the powers that be and will live up to this calling.

Pledge #2: I will sacrificially represent the best interests of both supporters and detractors and graciously accept the reproach that will naturally be directed toward me as a public servant.

Pledge #3: I choose now to make future decisions that are in the best interest of the community and to complete the tasks associated with the responsibilities of my government office or position.

Pledge #4: I will treat all others with dignity and respect regardless of how I am treated believing that, at the end of the day, my conduct will benefit everyone.

Pledge #5: I will conduct government business as though my behavior is under constant public scrutiny and will at all times facilitate public awareness of the government decision-making process.

“What Would You Do?” Ethical dilemmas and real-life scenarios are spliced throughout the presentation to facilitate group discussion and convey practical applications of ethical principles.

“You Be the Judge”- as time permits we will review summarized case histories for in-class discussion and instruction.