



2022-2023

ANNUAL REPORT

**MIAMI-DADE COMMISSION
ON ETHICS & PUBLIC TRUST**

Building trust & confidence in local government



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FY 22-23

Annual Report

Commissioners

Dr. Judith D. Bernier, Chairwoman

Wifredo "Willy" Gort, Vice Chair

Nelson C. Bellido, Esq,

Dava J. Tunis, Esq.

Lourdes B. Fernandez, Esq.

Executive Staff

Jose J. Arrojo, Executive Director

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Message From the Chairwoman



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The year 2023 marks a significant anniversary at the Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics & Public Trust (COE). The opportunity to serve as Chairperson in 2022 and 2023 was an honor and privilege. It continues to be a rewarding experience to be part of an organization that has existed for almost three decades to uphold the public's trust through practice, service, and training. We are thankful for the service of all the Commissioners who served in 2023: Vice Chair Willy Gort, Nelson Bellido, Esq., and the Honorable Lawrence “Larry” Schwartz, who ended 10 years of service this summer.

With great pleasure, I warmly welcome our newest members, former Circuit Judge Dava J. Tunis and Professor Lourdes B. Fernandez, Esq., who have recently joined our esteemed organization. We are thrilled to have you on board and look forward to the valuable contributions you will undoubtedly bring to the commission and our community.

Under the directorship of Executive Director Jose Arrojo, the COE team upholds Miami-Dade County's ethics and public trust with a thoughtful commitment to public service and advocacy. Within the past fiscal year, the COE provided approximately 322 written ethics opinions to County and municipal elected officials, board members, employees, lobbyists, and vendors, including housing and Section 8 opinions, and conducted 92 training and outreach events. This level of productivity attests to the executive team, attorneys, investigators, trainers, and staff's commitment to the COE's mission, which is to ensure the integrity of both the governmental decision-making process and the electoral process, to restore public confidence in government, and to serve as the guardian of public trust. The heart of the Ethics Commission is its people—special recognition to Loressa Felix, who transitioned from COE staff attorney to General Counsel in spring 2023. The COE will benefit from her guidance in this role.

As we move into the new year, let us challenge the citizens of Miami-Dade County and beyond to reach new heights in ethical excellence. Let us remain vigilant in upholding the highest standards of integrity, ensuring that our actions reflect our shared values. We can create a positive ripple effect beyond the COE's mission and reach. I am confident that together, we can make a lasting impact and contribute to the betterment of society.

On behalf of my fellow Commissioners and the Ethics Commission, we appreciate the privilege of serving the residents of Miami-Dade County. I wish you all a year filled with growth, wisdom, and fulfillment from knowing we are contributing to a more ethical and just society.

Dr. Judith D. Bernier
Chairwoman

Message From the Executive Director



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This last year, 2023, marked the 25th anniversary of the commencement of the Ethics Commission’s work in Miami-Dade County, Florida. As the Commission Chairperson notes in her annual message, the Ethics Commission was established in 1996 through a vote of the electorate amending the County Charter. Nevertheless, early on, some sought to limit the Commission’s authority, and it took two years after voting for the agency to commence its work on behalf of the community.

In 1997, during debate on the enabling ordinance that would allow the Commission to begin work, some members of the Board of County

Commissioners resisted affording the Ethics Commission investigatory subpoena power. There was a suggestion that the proposed enabling ordinance went beyond the Charter amendment question posed to the voting public. A Commissioner argued that the Ethics Commission’s proposed investigative authority was an unnecessary level of scrutiny and harassment. Some county employee unions agreed.

Finally, over a year after the Charter amendment vote, in July 1997, the County Commission passed the enabling ordinance. Even then, there was additional debate concerning the Ethics Commission’s authority to self-initiate its own investigations. This authority was not recognized until after the passage of the original enabling ordinance.

Eventually, and thankfully, a majority of the Board of County Commissioners coalesced around the idea of an independent Ethics Commission, and in 1998, two years after the citizens’ vote, the Ethics Commission’s first employee, Robert Meyers, an attorney and university professor, was hired to serve as its first Executive Director. Also, in that year, Chief Judge Gerald Wetherington appointed retired Circuit Judge Michael Salmon as the Ethics Commission’s first Chairperson.

And then our work began with the agency’s first ethics opinion. RQO 98-01 was issued to a county employee’s spouse who asked whether he could enter into a contract with the county through a company in which he had a financial interest. He was advised that he could not bid on a county contract. The first complaint filed with the Ethics Commission, C 98-01, was a complaint by Fisher Island Developers against members of a Miami-Dade Community Council.

In the twenty-five years since, the Ethics Commission has issued almost 1,500 formal opinions. Additionally, Ethics Commission legal staff has issued over 4,500 informal ethics opinions. Each one of these 6,000 opinions is the result of public officials, board members, and employees seeking conflict-of-interest guidance, before they acted.

(cont’d on next pg.)

Message From the Executive Director



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Celebrating
— 25 YEARS —

Commission staff have also conducted hundreds of training sessions to help officials, board members, employees, and the general public understand the ethical rules that guide our local government.

Also, each year since 1998, the Ethics Commission has successfully prosecuted complaints against elected officials, board members, and employees. Perhaps most relevant, in partnership with police and prosecutors, over the years, our investigations have resulted in arrests and prosecutions of elected officials and caused their removal from public office.

This past year has been no different. In addition to over 90 training and outreach engagements, the Commission issued in excess of 300 opinions, successfully prosecuted several ethics enforcement cases, and an agency-originated investigation led to the felony arrest and charging of an elected local government official, and his removal from office by the Governor.

In the last twenty-five years, the Ethics Commission has evolved from a good governance initiative with one employee, whose full authority had not yet been established - or accepted - to a mature agency staffed by seventeen employees, legal, enforcement, and outreach sections, and a budget of approximately 3 million dollars. It has become an essential component of local county and municipal governance.

With your support, the Ethics Commission, as reflected by its work product in the last year, will continue to be a force for transparent and ethical local governance.

Jose J. Arrojo, Esq.
Executive Director

Meet the Commission

Chairwoman Bernier

Dr. Judith Bernier was appointed by Florida International University to serve as a Commissioner of the Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics and Public Trust in May 2014. Dr. Bernier is the Director of the Center for Labor Research and Studies and an Associate Teaching Professor in the School of International and Public Affairs at Florida International University. She teaches conflict management, mediation, education, diversity and inclusion, and labor studies courses. Her publications and research interests include career development and mobility, diversity and inclusion, social equity, and leadership. She brings invaluable expertise in employment and labor relations, dispute resolution, and human resource management and development to the Commission on Ethics. In addition to serving Miami-Dade County to uphold public trust, Dr. Bernier serves as a peer reviewer for academic journals in her field and a mentor to doctoral students and junior faculty. She has served in various roles to develop and implement organizational and institutional initiatives. Dr. Bernier earned a Doctorate in Adult Education and Human Resource Development, an M.S. in Human Resource Development, a B.S. in Communication, and a Graduate Certificate in Conflict Resolution and Census Building from Florida International University. Dr. Bernier is a Supreme Court Certified County, Circuit, and Family Mediation Mediator.

Vice Chair Gort

Wifredo "Willy" Gort is a longtime Miami-Dade County resident with almost two decades of municipal service, having been elected to the City of Miami Commission several times and acting as its mayor in 1996 after the passing of then City of Miami Mayor Stephen Clark. Mr. Gort has been an active member of his community for decades and has served on numerous boards and committees within the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County. He is a founding member and board member of the Latin Chamber of Commerce (CAMACOL), a former President of the Miami-Dade County League of Cities and has served on the boards of the Christian Community Service Agency, the East Little Havana Development Corp., the United Way, and the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Gort is a graduate of both Miami-Dade Community College and Florida International University, holding a B.A. in Business Administration.



Dr. Judith Bernier
Chairwoman

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in local government*



Wifredo "Willy" Gort
Vice Chair

Meet the Commission

Commissioner Bellido

Nelson C. Bellido was appointed to the Ethics Commission by the Chief Judge of the Eleventh Circuit, Joel Brown, in July 2010. Mr. Bellido is a managing partner in the Miami-based law firm ROIG Lawyers, a former adjunct professor of Business Law at Florida Memorial College, worked with the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office from 1993 to 1997, was a Director of the Cuban American Bar Association, past president and director of the League of Prosecutors and has been serving on the Miami-Dade County Fair and Exposition Inc.'s board of directors for the past eight years. Mr. Bellido received his Juris Doctor from the University of Florida College of Law and earned an undergraduate degree in Political Science and History with emphasis on Latin American History from Duke University.



Nelson C. Bellido, Esq.
Commissioner

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Commissioner Tunis

Commissioner Dava J. Tunis was appointed to serve on the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust by Chief Judge of the Eleventh Circuit, Nushin Sayfie, in 2023. Commissioner Tunis served as a judge in Miami-Dade County for over 20 years. She was appointed in 2000 to the County Court bench and elevated to the Circuit Court in 2005. She served the Miami-Dade County community in that judicial capacity through January 2021. Commissioner Tunis was an active and experienced trial judge, having tried over 150 jury trials and over 1,000 bench trials. She presided over numerous protracted and complex trials, including first-degree murder and death penalty cases. She has also handled cases involving domestic violence, civil family injunctions, juvenile matters and Florida Bar cases in which the conduct of lawyers and ethical rules are at issue.

Commissioner Tunis has served on the faculty teaching other judges in Florida's judicial educational programs over 17 years. She was appointed and served for over 15 years as a Judicial Mentor to new judges. This appointment is made by Florida's highest court, The Supreme Court of Florida. Commissioner Tunis is a graduate of Colgate University and the University of Miami School of Law.



Dava J. Tunis, Esq.
Commissioner

Meet the Commission

Commissioner Fernandez

Commissioner Lourdes B. Fernandez was appointed to serve on the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust by the St. Thomas University School of Law Dean, Tarlika Nunez-Navarro, in 2023. Commissioner Fernandez is the Assistant Dean for the Office for Career Development at St. Thomas University College of Law. Commissioner Fernandez, a graduate of St. Thomas Law, joined St. Thomas University College of Law as a Career Counselor in 2014, and as an Adjunct Professor of Law in 2020.

After graduating law school and before joining the St. Thomas Law faculty, Commissioner Fernandez served as a career law clerk to The Honorable Robert L. Dube and, later, to The Honorable Alicia M. Otazo-Reyes, at the United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida, Miami Division. Commissioner Fernandez clerked for over eleven years and the majority of the work she performed in federal court was handling the East Everglades Land Condemnation cases and Social Security Appeals. Commissioner Fernandez has extensive experience in conducting legal research and drafting reports and recommendations in civil cases, including Writ of Habeas Corpus petitions. Also, she assisted in criminal matters when the Judge was on duty.

Currently, Commissioner Fernandez oversees the Office for Career Development and teaches Professional Responsibility.



Lourdes B. Fernandez, Esq.
Commissioner

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APPOINTING AUTHORITIES TO THE COMMISSION ON ETHICS BOARD



About the Commission



ABOUT US

The Ethics Commission was created in 1996 as a result of a citizens' vote to amend the Home Rule charter. It is an independent agency with advisory and quasi-judicial powers. Government employees and officials have a special duty to serve the public in a fair and just manner. The Ethics Commission is dedicated to bolstering public trust in the administration of government by informing the public and private sectors about ethics laws and seeking strict compliance with them. It is empowered to subpoena, audit, and investigate all facts and persons materially related to a complaint at issue.

MISSION

The mission of the Ethics Commission is to ensure the integrity of both the governmental decision-making process and the electoral process, to restore public confidence in government, and to serve as the guardian of the public trust.

Staffing / Budget



STAFFING

The COE is funded for a staff of 17 full time positions including 6 attorneys, 5 investigators, and 6 community outreach, and administrative and support staff team members.



BUDGET

Pursuant to County ordinance, the County is required to provide the Ethics Commission with financial support as part of the official County budget. It is noteworthy that while the agency has jurisdiction in the County, Jackson Health Systems, and all 34 municipalities, its annual budget is amongst the smallest in all of County service, coming just ahead of the law library and teen court. This fiscal year's budget was just over 2.9 million.



COE STAFFING CHART

Ethics

Commission on Ethics and Public Trust - Staffing Chart/Table of Organization FY 2022-23 Proposed Budget

Office of Executive Director			
FY 21-22	Occ. Code	Title	FY 22-23
1	8840	Director	1
1	8836	Executive Assistant	1
3			3
3			3
Legal Unit			
FY 21-22	Occ. Code	Title	FY 22-23
1	8814	General Counsel	1
3	8813	Staff Attorney	3
1	8801	Paralegal	1
5			5
Enforcement Unit			
FY 21-22	Occ. Code	Title	FY 22-23
1	8818	Advocate	1
1	8830	Auditor	1
4	8833	Investigator	4
1	0095	Executive Secretary	1
7			7
Education and Outreach Unit			
FY 21-22	Occ. Code	Title	FY 22-23
1	8816	Community Outreach Coord.	1
1	8815	Comm. Affairs & Pub. Info. Spec.	1
2			2

17 FULL TIME
STAFF
MEMBERS

2.956
MILLION
OPERATING
BUDGET

34
MUNICIPALITY
JURISDICTION
IN ADDITION TO
COUNTY

ETHICS OPINIONS & GUIDANCE

Highlighted Opinions

The Ethics Commission's lawyers provided approximately 322 ethics opinions, including one formal opinion, during this past fiscal year to County and municipal elected officials, board members, employees, and persons that transact with local government including lobbyists and vendors



2023-54, Employee Family Member, Prohibitions on Contracting with County

The spouse of a county water and sewer assistant department director may not contract with the water and sewer department through her private company. Her private company may serve as a subcontractor on county contracts as long as her county employee spouse and his subordinates are not involved in overseeing or managing the subcontracting work.

2023-60, Lobbyist Registration

Volunteers and the paid consultant of a non-profit organization dedicated to improving a public trail do not need to register as lobbyists prior to attending purely informational meetings with local government personnel. However, the volunteers and the consultant are required to register as lobbyists prior to meeting with city personnel to advocate for changes to the public trail's master plan as this constitutes lobbying activity.

2023-65, Employee, Conflicting Outside Employment

A county fire rescue captain may not engage in outside employment as fire investigator hired by private parties. The proposed outside employment conducting fire investigations for private employers creates prohibited conflict of interest with his county employment because he may be assigned by the county fire department to investigate fires involving his private employers' clients.

2023-96, Elected Official, Voting Conflict

A city commissioner has a prohibited voting conflict on a matter before the city commission concerning the pre-payment of legal fees for his own defense in a civil case because the case was not closed, and the Commissioner is a beneficiary of the legal services agreement. Because the matter before the commission involves a financial benefit to the commissioner, he must abstain from participating or voting on the matter.

ETHICS OPINIONS & GUIDANCE (cont'd)

Highlighted Opinions

Anyone within the jurisdiction of the Ethics Commission may request an Ethics opinion or an Inquiry as to the proper interpretation or applicability of ordinances within the Ethics Commission's purview. The request must pertain to the particular facts of the individual's situation.



2022-142, Elected Official, Two-Year Rule

A former elected county official is prohibited by the "Two-Year Rule" from lobbying the county for a period of two years following separation. The prohibition includes attempts to persuade any county elected official, departmental personnel, or employee, whether in person or by written communication, to take a particular course of action in any transaction, as well as any activity where the former elected county official would be publicly identified as part of a lobbying team.

2022-145, Elected Official, Conflicting Outside Employment & Voting Conflict

An elected member of a City Council and member of the City's Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) may work as a construction project manager and mortgage originator in the city in which she is a council member of. However, the councilperson should seek further guidance if a conflict of interest arises. The Council member may not appear before the City Council or the CRA board to make a presentation on behalf of either employer or those companies' clients, must not lobby or try to influence the City or CRA staff for the benefit of the companies or clients, may not receive compensation from a person seeking a benefit from the City or CRA, and may not vote on any matter that comes before the council that may affect either outside employer or those entities' clients.

2022-148, Employee, Prohibitions on Contracting with County

A county employee and his private company may not contract with the county agency that employs him, because such a contract would give rise to a prohibited conflict of interest. However, the employee and his private company may contract with cities, and other county departments as long it is not his own county department. The employee may not use any county resources in support of his private business and may not engage in private work activities while on county time.

2023-14, Employee, Reverse Two Year Rule

A county aviation department chief who was previously employed by an airport contractor within the past two years may not engage in any contract-related duties involving his former employer for two years, including service on county certification, evaluation, selection, and technical review committees involving his former employer. Any requests, authorizations, or purchase orders related to his former employer should be delegated to another division chief for two years, and he must avoid any interactions and/or meetings with his former employer in his county role for the same two-year period.

FORMAL OPINION RQO 23-10

Ethics Commission formal opinion leads to proposed changes to County Code of Ordinances to facilitate access to housing, childcare, utilities, public transit, healthcare, or other basic or essential human or social services.

Followed By : RESOLUTION 2023-10

The Ethics Commission passes a resolution urging the Board of County Commissioners to amend the County Ethics Code so as to facilitate county and municipal employees' receipt of human services benefits from their employing departments.

Resulted in Proposed Legislation to Change Local Law



Board of County Commissioners Proposes Amendment to the County Ethics Code

ORDINANCE NO. ORDINANCE RELATING TO CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND CODE OF ETHICS ORDINANCE; AMENDING SECTION 2- 11.1 OF THE CODE OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA; REVISING PROVISIONS PERTAINING TO PROHIBITION ON CONTRACTING WITH THE COUNTY FOR CERTAIN COUNTY EMPLOYEES AND THEIR IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBERS; PROVIDING ADDITIONAL EXCEPTION TO SUCH PROHIBITION FOR CERTAIN CONTRACTS RELATING TO ESSENTIAL HUMAN AND SOCIAL SERVICES UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES.

"Any such employee shall seek advice from the Ethics Commission as to the appropriate mitigation measures prior to submitting an application for any assistance. If, after consultation with the employee and proper inquiry, the Ethics Commission finds that specific mitigation measures would be sufficient to abate the potential conflict of interest, then the employee may proceed with his or her application for assistance, provided that such mitigation measures are fully implemented and followed for the duration of the employee's contract."

ETHICS TRAINING & OUTREACH



ETHICS TRAINING

The Ethics Commission is committed to public education, training and community outreach. This responsibility is discharged in a variety of settings including training sessions and workshops for government personnel, to conferences and seminars on topics of interest in the community.



The COE wants to ensure all parties involved in government relations — including employees, elected officials, candidates and their campaigns, advisory board members, and lobbyists — are following the Miami-Dade County Ethics Code.

Residents and other groups can also request training onsite or virtually.



92

TOTAL TRAINING AND OUTREACH SESSIONS DURING THE 2022-2023 FISCAL YEAR

OCTOBER 2022						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

- FIU Government Ethics Presentation
- County Small Business Enterprise Meeting
- Miami-Dade League of Cities Best Practices Conference
- Ethical Governance Day Dozens of High Schools
- County Community Councils Orientation
- County Competitive Selection Committee Training
- County Mayor's Career Fair
- Miami-Dade Municipal Clerk's Meeting

NOVEMBER 2022						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
						2
						3
						4
						5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

- CLE Presentation – Constitutional Standards on Lobbying: Consequences for Elected Officials
- County Commission District 4 Commissioner & Staff Ethics Training
- County Advisory Board Training
- County Mayor's Career Fair
- County Competitive Selection Committee Training



ETHICS TRAINING & OUTREACH



ETHICS OUTREACH SPOTLIGHT, ETHICAL GOVERNANCE DAY

One of the COE's most highly anticipated outreach efforts is Ethical Governance Day, and this past year marked the 13th consecutive year of its successful partnership with the Miami-Dade County Public Schools. A total of 138 public officials, judges, attorneys, and community leaders with civic and government experience were sent to meet with students and were asked to emphasize the importance of becoming a fully informed citizen, who can engage in civil debate and discourse with others that may not share the same viewpoints, all as a means to ensure ethical governance and the continuing strength of our democracy.



Each training contact with a government official, not-for-profit, or private educational entity, also served the Commission's outreach charge by including not only ethics training but Commission on Ethics messaging.



DECEMBER 2022						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

- Local and State Ethics Training for Elected Officials
- County Commission District 11 Commissioner Ethics Training
- Ethical Governance Day at Dozens of High Schools
- County Competitive Selection Committee Training
- County Advisory Board Training

JANUARY 2023						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

- City of Miami Advisory Board Training
- Children's Trust Board of Director's Ethics Training
- County Advisory Board Training
- County Departmental Personnel Reps Financial Disclosure & Outside Employment Training
- Elected Officials Ethics Training
- Early Learning Coalition Courtesy Non-Profit Board Ethics Training
- North Miami CRA Staff Ethics Training
- County Mayor's Career Fair
- County Competitive Selection Committee Training
- County Commission District 6 Commissioner & Staff Ethics Training



ETHICS TRAINING & OUTREACH

FEBRUARY 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

- St. Thomas University College of Law Event
- County Commission District 12 Commissioner & Staff Ethics Training
- Univ. of Miami Public Interest Career Fair
- Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Executive & Procurement Staff Ethics Training
- Children's Trust Staff Ethics Training
- County Advisory Board Training
- MDEAT Board Training
- County Competitive Selection Committee Training

MARCH 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

- County Commission District 2 Commissioner & Staff Ethics Training
- County Advisory Board Training
- Doral Advisory Board Training
- County Competitive Selection Committee Training
- Opa-Locka Employee Ethics Training Day 1
- Opa-Locka Employee Ethics Training Day 2
- Ethics & Public Misconduct Conference

APRIL 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

- City of Miami Advisory Board Training
- County Advisory Board Training
- County Competitive Selection Committee Training
- Golden Beach Elected Officials Ethics Training
- Presentation to Miami-Dade Public Schools Ethics Committee

MAY 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6		
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

- Miami-Dade County Coalition of Chambers of Commerce Ethics Presentation
- A Otro Nivel Doral Community Radio & Podcast Ethics Commission Presentation
- County Procurement Vendor Academy Ethics Training
- Miami-Dade Aviation Dept. Competitive Selection Committee Training
- PortMiami Executive & Procurement Staff
- Jewish Community Services of South Florida Courtesy Non-Profit Staff
- City of Miami Elected Officials Training

MAY 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6		
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

- Children's Trust Board Ethics Training
- County Advisory Board Training
- County Comm. Dist. 11 Staff Ethics Training
- Coral Gables Good Governance Committee Ethics Panel Presentation
- Elected Officials Ethics Training
- County Competitive Selection Committee Training
- Miami-Dade Aviation Department Competitive Selection Committee Training
- Ethical Campaign Practices Training Candidates & Staff w/Elections Dept.

JUNE 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
						2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

- Sweetwater Employee Ethics Training
- Elected Officials Training for Golden Bch.
- The Underline Board Ethics Training
- Ethics Training for Elected Officials
- SE Overtown/Park West CRA Training
- County Addition Service Board Training
- County Advisory Board Training
- County Advisory Board Liaisons Disclosure Training
- County Competitive Selection Committee Training
- North Miami Mayor Ethics Training

JULY 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

- City of Miami Advisory Board Ethics Training
- Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Dept. Executive & Procurement Staff Ethics Training
- Miami-Dade Animal Services Department Procurement Staff Ethics Training
- County Advisory Board Ethics Training
- County Commission District 11 Staff Ethics Training
- County Competitive Selection Committee Training
- Public Health Trust Board Training





ETHICS TRAINING & OUTREACH

92

TOTAL TRAINING AND OUTREACH SESSIONS DURING THE 2022-2023 FISCAL YEAR



- Voting Conflict Presentation to NMB Commission
- County Advisory Board Ethics Training
- "Update on Miami-Dade County & Florida Lobbying Lays" with Holland & Knight
- State & Local Ethics Training for Elected Officials
- Miami-Dade County Vendor Fair
- Foro 17 Con Alexis Ortiz WLRN Television
- County Competitive Selection Committee Training



- Ethics Training for City of Miami Advisory Board
- County Advisory Board Ethics Training
- County Addiction Services Board Ethics Training
- County Competitive Selection Committee Training
- Coral Gables Advisory Board Ethics Training

TRANSPARENCY

INTEGRITY



BUILDING TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN
LOCAL GOVERNMENT

ENFORCEMENT

2022-2023

By the Numbers



The Commission has been significantly engaged during the fiscal year with 59 investigations handled, 51 complaints, and responding to 441 hotline, mailbox, or general inquiry responses. Additionally, the section's Investigators, Advocate, and assisting Staff Attorneys have partnered with the State Attorney's Office on matters that originated with Commission on Ethics preliminary and formal investigations



INVESTIGATIONS HANDLED

59

Includes preliminary investigations and matters under initial review

INFORMAL ENFORCEMENT

144

Informal enforcement not resulting in investigation

INVESTIGATIONS HANDLED

59

Initiated based on alleged ethics violations

COMPLAINTS

51

Complaints are initiated by outside 3rd parties or self-initiated

HOTLINE/MAILBOX/ GENERAL INQUIRY RESPONSES

441

Miscellaneous reports/inquiries that are logged & responded to by ethics investigators & attorneys

HIGHLIGHTED CASES



PI- 20-45 (c): City Commissioner and Attorney Criminally Charged in Case Initiated at the COE

In an investigation that began as an inquiry into possible violations of local ethics ordinances, Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) agents arrested a City Commissioner and a local attorney on one count of money laundering, three counts of unlawful compensation or reward for official behavior, one count of bribery, and one count of criminal conspiracy.

The Commissioner was also charged with four counts of official misconduct, one count of campaign contribution in excess of legal limits, and two counts of failure to report a gift. The attorney was also charged with failure to disclose lobbyist expenses.

Once it became evident that a violation of criminal law was indicated, the matter was brought to prosecutors and law enforcement.

The COE expressed their appreciation for the support of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the Broward State Attorney's Office for their support in this case.





HIGHLIGHTED CASES

C 23-05-02, C23-06-02, C 23-07-02: Three City Community Liaisons Stipulate to Probable Cause for Various Ethics Related Violations

Three former City Community Liaisons in the Office of a City Commissioner, stipulated to a finding of Probable Cause and entered into a settlement agreement for violating the Prohibition on Outside Employment and the Exploitation of Official Position Prohibited sections of the Miami-Dade County Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance.

A COE investigation revealed that the three community liaisons failed to file, under oath, an annual report indicating the source of their outside employment, the nature of the work being done, and any amounts or type of money or other consideration received as required by the Ethics Code. Specifically, all three failed to report that, in 2020 and 2021, they engaged in paid outside employment by working for two political action committees and for the 2020 campaign of a Miami-Dade County Commissioner candidate.

Under the terms of the agreement, two of the three City liaisons were issued a Letter of Instruction and were required to pay a fine.

In addition to failing to disclose her outside employment, one of the three City liaisons exploited her city position by using a City vehicle to transport herself to and from a campaign related activity. Under the terms of her settlement agreement, she was also issued a Letter of Instruction and was required to pay a heftier fine.



HIGHLIGHTED CASES



C 23-22-06: Former City Supervisor Stipulates to Probable Cause Finding for Conflict of Interest Ethics Violation



A former City Public Works Control Room Supervisor, stipulated to a finding of Probable Cause and entered into a settlement agreement for violating the Miami-Dade County Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance. A COE investigation revealed that the supervisor failed to file, under oath, an annual report indicating the source of her outside employment and any amounts or type of money or other consideration received as required by the Ethics Code. The supervisor also violated the Miami-Dade County Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance by utilizing City resources in furtherance of her outside employment activities.

Under the terms of the settlement agreement, was issued a Letter of Instruction and was required to pay a fine.



C 23-28-06 : Former Cultural Center Manager Stipulates to Probable Cause Finding for Violating Outside Employment Section of Ethics Code

The former manager of the Little Haiti Cultural Center, stipulated to a finding of Probable Cause and entered into a settlement agreement for violating the Miami-Dade County Prohibition on Outside Employment section of the Miami-Dade County Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance.

A COE investigation revealed that the manager failed to file, under oath, an annual report indicating the source of her outside employment and any amounts or type of money or other consideration received as required by the Ethics Code. Under the terms of the settlement agreement, she was issued a Letter of Reprimand and was required to pay a fine.



ETHICS COMMISSION

In the News / Headlines
FY 2022-2023

LATEST
NEWS

Title: Annual Report

Date Report Released: January 2024

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Habersham, Raisa. "North Miami Beach mayor arrested on charges related to 'voting irregularities,'" Miami Herald, 01 June 2023.

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<https://www.>



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YOU MAY REMAIN ANONYMOUS

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