



Ethics Week - Coming This Month

Ethics Week is coming to City Hall, November 13th through the 18th. Ethics Week will celebrate the value of ethics and integrate it into our lives. The theme of this year's event is "Many Cultures, One Code." The theme recognizes the great strength in our diversity and shared commitment to the Code of Ethics in the City of Dallas.

Activities for Ethics Week include digging deeper into the topic of gifts, ethics themed games of Jeopardy and Bingo, celebrating the winners of the ethics essay and the ethics hotline naming contest, and recognitions of employees and officials for ethics achievement. On Thursday, lunch will be served at City Hall and special speakers will be on hand!

Ethics Week is being held in coordination with the International Fraud Awareness Week sponsored by the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE). You will find their resources very engaging. Representatives from the ACFE will be our guests at City Hall on Thursday.

Ethics in Focus: FAQs About Gifts

Now that the holiday season is approaching, it is the perfect time to answer common questions about gifts. Here are some frequently asked questions and answers.

The questions:

- Where are the rules on gifts?
- Is there a resource to help me analyze gifts?
- What gifts are listed in Section 12A-12?
- What if I am still not sure what to do?
- How do I value a gift?
- How do I make a report?
- What is required to be in the report?
- When are gift reports due?
- Does a gift report need to be sworn?

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Ethics Week Save the Dates Schedule of Events:

Day	What	Where	When
Monday	Ethics Jeopardy	Teams	Noon to 1:00
Tuesday	Ask an IG	Teams	Noon to 12:30
Wednesday	Lunch and learn	Teams	Noon to 1:00
Thursday	Main event	City Hall	Noon to 1:30
Friday	Essay reading	Teams	Noon to 12:30



If you are motivated by reading these exciting developments, stay tuned as more is to come each month. Things to look forward to include an essay contest, an ethics and equity week, and opportunities to dig deeper into certain topics through training events. **Baron Eliason**, and the CMO ethics officer **Hai Tran**, would love to hear from you about ethics in the city. Also, feel free to request a special training event in your department on any part of the Code of Ethics by contacting baron.eliason@dallas.gov.



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- What counts as a year for purposes of calculating the accumulated value of multiple small gifts received from a single source?
- Do I have to file a report if no gift was received in this quarter?
- Do I also report gifts over \$300 in the annual financial disclosure report?
- Can I use the annual financial disclosure report as my quarterly gift report?
- What about giving gifts?
- What about giving gifts to employees?

Does a gift report need to be sworn?

No. The current form does not require the gift report to be sworn.

What counts as a year for purposes of calculating the accumulated value of multiple small gifts from a single source?

One calendar year, which is January 1st to December 31st. To calculate the value of multiple small gifts received from a single source, go back to January 1st of the current year and add up the value of the gifts from then to now.

Do I have to file a report if no gift was received in this quarter?

Some do. They include the mayor, city council members, the city attorney, the city manager, and city officials listed in Section 12A-40(a).

Do I also report gifts over \$300 in the annual financial disclosure report?


Yes, if that is a report you are already required to make. This applies to the mayor, city council members, the city attorney, the city manager, and city officials listed in Section 12A-40(a).

Can I use the annual financial disclosure report as my quarterly gift report?

Yes, you can use the annual financial report as your quarterly gift report in the first quarter of each year if you are required to file this report. Doing so will keep you from having to create two reports for that quarter.

What about giving gifts?

This is a great question that usually comes up in conjunction with the desire to give constituents or volunteers a token of appreciation for their service or a desire to give away table decorations left over after an event. Giving gifts of recognition is common in the private sector and it makes sense not to let table decorations go to waste. However, because we operate in government, there are some restrictions for us because our funds come from taxpayers.



Upcoming Events: Ethics Week begins November 13th and will conclude with a special event at City Hall. Be on the lookout for more details about this event.

ETHICS MATTERS



City of Dallas

November, 2023

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For this reason, the safest way to provide gifts for constituents or volunteers is to do so out of our own pockets. Do not forget, you can get help in your specific case by seeking an advisory opinion by submitting an inquiry to ATTethicsadvisoryinquires@dallas.gov.

What about giving gifts to employees?

This generally comes up when an employee or official has done a great job and they are leaving the city. This is a natural time to give them a going away gift or recognition. It may also come up with employees and officials who are not leaving but have done something worthy of recognition. Like gifts to constituents and volunteers, the best way to accomplish this is to use your own money.

In these cases, cash and cash equivalents such as gift cards should be avoided. Any gift should have a value of less than \$50 per gift per occasion to avoid the Texas Penal Code's prohibition on gifts to public servants.

If public funds are being used, the gift must serve a legitimate public purpose such as increasing employee morale or productivity. Do not forget, you can get help in your specific case by seeking an advisory opinion by submitting an inquiry to ATTethicsadvisoryinquires@dallas.gov.



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