



## **Introduction:**

*Who are we?*

*What do we do?*

*Why do you need to know about us?*

### ***Q. What is the Conflicts of Interest Board?***

A. The New York City Conflicts of Interest Board is an independent body whose five members are appointed by the Mayor with the advice and consent of the City Council. The Board was established in 1990 under Chapter 68 of the City Charter, replacing the Board of Ethics.

### ***Q. What is its purpose?***

A. Public service is a public trust, and it is the Board's responsibility to foster that trust through the conflicts of interest law. The Board is also responsible for enforcement of the Financial Disclosure Law, as provided for in Section 12-110 of the Administrative Code. Approximately 8,000 City workers, including elected officials, high ranking employees, contracting officers, and candidates for public office are required to file financial disclosure reports with the Board.

### ***Q. What is the Conflicts Of Interest Law?***

A. The law is a *basic* ethics code for all public servants of the City. It includes rules regarding accepting gifts; personal use of City property; misuse of City position/time/resources/personnel/letterhead for personal gain; outside

businesses and employment; volunteer work; political activities; restrictions on lobbyists giving gifts to public servants; and even post-City employment. In addition, each City agency may have its own set of rules that may be stricter than the Citywide conflicts of interest law. Public servants are bound to comply with these stricter agency-specific restrictions.

***Q. Who is covered by this law?***

- A. The Board's jurisdiction covers all City agencies, such as the Mayor's Office, City Council, Comptroller, Borough Presidents, DA's offices, Health and Hospitals Corp., Economic Development Corp., Housing Development Corp., Police Pension Fund, boards and commissions, and the Department of Education, including the community school boards, as well as each of the 59 community boards throughout the five boroughs. Every officer and employee of every City agency, from the Actuary's Office to Youth and Community Development, is covered by this law.

***Q. How does the Board function?***

- A. The Board meets once each month to consider cases brought before it and to issue opinions and orders and impose penalties for violations of the conflicts of interest law or financial disclosure law. On a daily basis, staff lawyers respond to phone and mail inquiries regarding all facets of these laws. The Board also directs a training and education program. Using videotapes, printed materials, and interactive classroom instruction, the Board staff presents this program to the employees of any City agency upon request. It is a primary responsibility of the Board to educate the City workforce, as well as the general public, about the ethics laws that apply to all City workers. **Click here to get more info on training or book a class for your agency.**

***Q. What happens to violators?***

A. Violators of the Conflicts of Interest Law can be fined up to \$25,000. The law also contains a ‘disgorgement’ provision, under which the Board may require a person who profited from violating the Conflicts of Interest Law to pay all of the profits to the city. In addition, the City officer or employee may face suspension or removal from City office or employment, as well as misdemeanor prosecution.

***Q. How can I learn if I have a conflict of interest?***

A. Call or write the Conflicts of Interest Board. A staff attorney will review your situation and will advise you accordingly. All inquiries are confidential. You do not even have to give your name when you call.

***Q. What should I include in my letter to the Board?***

A. Your letter should include the following information:

- ◆ Your name and City agency,
- ◆ Your City job title and duties,
- ◆ Your question,
- ◆ The address where you want the Board to send its answer,
- ◆ A daytime telephone number or pager number (if you don’t want to be called at work, say so in your letter, and give another number where we can contact you).

For example, if you are asking for advice about a second job, first give your City job title and duties and then describe the job you want to take, including the name of the company, the position and duties you will have, the person you will work for, how much you will be paid, when you will

work, how long the job will last (if it is temporary), and whether or not the company does business with the City. The more complete the information in your request, the quicker we can send you an answer.

***Q. What if I disagree with the opinion I get?***

A. You can ask for a review by the full Board.

***Q. How do I get an order or a waiver from the Board?***

A. Sometimes you need an order or waiver from the Board before you can take a particular job. For example, if you are a full-time City employee who wishes to work part-time as an electrician for a company that does business with the City, you would need a waiver from the Board. Under the law, the Board cannot grant a waiver unless the City employee's own agency head first approves the request. Therefore, before coming to the Board for the waiver, you must obtain approval from your agency head (not just your supervisor). For information on how to obtain that approval, contact your agency's general counsel or personnel office. After obtaining agency-head approval, when you do write to the Board, make sure to include the necessary information (see above).

***Q. What if I know of a violation?***

A. You can call or write the Board, anonymously if you'd prefer. Or you can contact the Inspector General of the agency or agencies involved, or you can contact the City Department of Investigation. DOI's general number is 212-825-5900.

***FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, CONTACT  
NEW YORK CITY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST BOARD  
2 LAFAYETTE STREET, SUITE 1010  
NEW YORK, NY 10007  
212-442-1400 (TDD 212-442-1443)  
OR VISIT THE BOARD'S WEB SITE AT  
<http://nyc.gov/ethics>***

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