

Miami-Dade County
Commission on Ethics and Public
Trust

Memo

To: All Municipal Clerks and Municipal Attorneys

From: Joseph M. Centorino, Executive Director, Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust

Date: April 8, 2016

Re: Municipal Ethics Officers

The Commission on Ethics and Public Trust in an effort to enhance communication on ethics issues between the Commission staff and local public officers and employees recently began biannual meetings with all Miami-Dade County Ethics Officers, who are appointed under a mandatory County Commission Resolution to represent their respective county departments as liaisons to the Ethics Commission. Because of the enthusiastic response we have received from this program, we are initiating a voluntary Municipal Ethics Officer program.

All municipalities in Miami-Dade County are invited to appoint one or more individuals from among their existing employees as designated Municipal Ethics Officers. There is no particular qualification for such officers other than that they be responsible and ethical employees trusted by both managers and employees at all levels.

Appointed Municipal Ethics Officers will be expected to fulfill the following responsibilities:

- a) Acting as a municipal resource and liaison on ethics matters;
- b) Disseminating ethics information to municipal staff;
- c) Requesting Commission on Ethics and Public Trust opinions as necessary or appropriate on behalf of municipal employees;
- d) Assisting with the coordination and implementation of ethics training programs for the municipality;
- e) Attending biannual or special meetings of Municipal Ethics Officers.

We plan to provide Municipal Ethics Officers with information about County or State ethics requirements, and to answer questions and make suggestions for the purpose of improving ethical awareness and compliance by all municipal employees.

Municipal attorneys are expected and welcome to be included in the Ethics Officer program. However, to maximize accessibility and communication with all employees, we ask that at least one person appointed as an Ethics Officer from each municipality be a non-attorney.

Our initial meeting with Municipal Ethics Officers will take place at our Commission office at 19 W. Flagler Street, Suite 820 in Miami on Wednesday, May 18 at 10 A.M.

At this meeting, which should last about an hour, we will provide an overview of our agency procedures, highlighting some of the common ethics issues that arise for municipal employees. Staff members from the Commission will be introduced. We will also invite requests for future meeting topics and gather contact information from those present to enable us to send out periodic email updates on ethics-related opinions and other legal developments.

This program is not mandatory for municipalities, but we see it as a useful way to improve ethical awareness and promote collegial relationships between municipal and Commission staffs. All appointed Municipal Ethics Officers should contact Rodzandra Sanchez, Administrative Officer for the Ethics Commission (RODZAND@miamidade.gov) at 307-579-2594 to confirm their attendance at the meeting on May 18.

We look forward to working more closely with your municipality to enhance public service ethics in Miami-Dade County.