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EYE ON ETHICS

NEWSLETTER OF THE MIAMI-DADE COMMISSION ON ETHICS & PUBLIC TRUST



Issue 8 - April 2020



Commission on Ethics & Public Trust by the Numbers:

During FY 19-20 there was an increase in the availability of the existing legal staff by 832 work hours per year resulting from the hiring of the two part-time staff attorneys to full time positions

Director's Message



Dear Friends & Colleagues,

On behalf of the Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics and Public Trust, we hope that everyone who reads this newsletter, and their family, friends, and co-workers are safe and well.

In accords with state and local advisories and executive orders related to COVID 19, Ethics Commission staff continues to telework. As local governments begin a phased-in return to "the new normal," it is anticipated that our employees will physically return to the Ethics Commission's office, initially using a skeleton crew. Full on-site operations will follow, likely in June.

Quick Links

24 Hour
Complaint
Hotline
786-314-9560



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Commissioners
Nelson C. Bellido Esq.,
Chair

Ethics Commission staff continues to provide verbal and written ethics guidance; respond to public records requests; and actively work on enforcement matters. As we advised last month, absent face-to-face meetings, the Ethics Commission is fully operational.

After the cancellation of the Ethics Commission's April meeting, the May meeting will be held in a live, on-line video format, which will nevertheless allow for public participation consistent with Florida's Sunshine laws as modified by the Governor's recent Executive Order allowing virtual meetings.

Ethics Commission training for County, City of Miami, and Jackson Health System lobbyists and vendor representatives will be available in temporary on-line format by the beginning of May. A more complete and permanent on-line training format will likely replace our traditional live presentation trainings in the coming months.

In May, the Board of County Commissioners will consider two Ethics Commission related agenda items. One item eliminates the Model City Community Advisory Council as a public input source in County public housing and development planning as a result of an Ethics Commission investigation that found significant operational flaws with that board. The second item amends the County's procurement bid protest procedures by penalizing bidders that violate the Cone of Silence provisions in the County Ethics Code.

Please stay safe and be assured that the Ethics Commission continues, during this extraordinary time, to work towards ensuring ethical and transparent local governance.

Best regards,
Jose Arrojo

Dr. Judith Bernier,
Vice Chair
Judge Lawrence A.
Schwartz
Jan Jacobowitz, Esq.
Wifredo Gort

Executive Director
Jose J. Arrojo, Esq.

Advocate
Michael P. Murawski, Esq.

General Counsel
Martha Perez, Esq.



FAQ



**Florida Commission
on Ethics**

Let's Stop the Spread of Coronavirus



COVID-19

General Prevention

Florida Department of Health • FloridaHealth.gov • tinyurl.com/FLcdcprevention

Protect yourself from all infectious diseases by using these precautions.



Stay home when you are sick



Avoid contact with people who are sick



Get adequate sleep and eat well-balanced meals



Wash hands often with soap and water – 20 seconds or longer



Dry hands with a clean towel or air dry your hands



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands or after touching surfaces



Cover your mouth with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing



Clean and disinfect “high touch” surfaces often



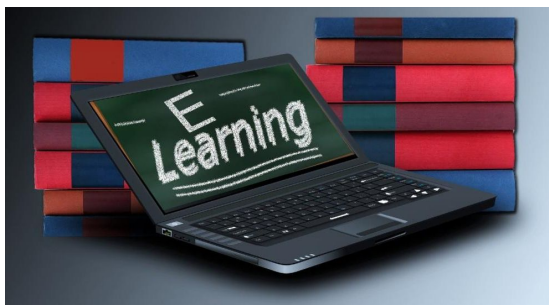
Call before visiting your doctor

Clean all “high-touch” surfaces every day.

High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tables, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

Florida Health Office of Communications 03-05-20

Educating the Community



In continuing support of the outreach and education efforts of the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust, Chairman Nelson C. Bellido recently presented a *Virtual Ventanita* webinar to local members of the National Hispanic Bar Association, where he spoke about the Ethics Commission's work and the unique challenges to ethical local governance and transparency in a

time of national health crisis.

These *Virtual Ventanitas*, online forums that provide the community with valuable education and camaraderie during a much needed time, are held on a daily basis. Recent topics have included employment opportunities, personal wellness, hospitality, and government during the current health crisis. For more information regarding these virtual sessions visit the NHBA's Region VIII website at www.facebook.com/HNBARegionVIII/.

The National Hispanic Bar is a nonpartisan, national membership organization that represents the interests of Hispanic legal professionals in the United States and its territories. Since they were founded in 1972, The NHBA has been committed to advocacy on issues of importance to the 58 million people of Hispanic heritage living in the United States.

Ethics Investigation Leads to Action



An ethics investigation undertaken late last year uncovered that the citizens of Model City were deprived of a functioning Community Advisory Committee that could have been fully engaged in the consideration of their housing and development needs and the communication of those needs to County housing officials. The investigative report also detailed the activities of two Model City Community Advisory Council members and their apparent

conflict of interest in seeking to steer public funds to their own non-profit.

As a result, in large part due to this investigation, there is a proposed action that will be presented at the next Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners meeting to amend the PHCD Community Participation Plan to eliminate the requirement that the County consult with the Model City Community Advisory Council as a prerequisite to securing and spending federal housing funds. The proposal authorizes the County Mayor to instead provide an alternative citizen participation process in the Revitalization Strategy Area for Model City.

For more detailed information on the proposal to be presented at the next commission meeting click [here](#).

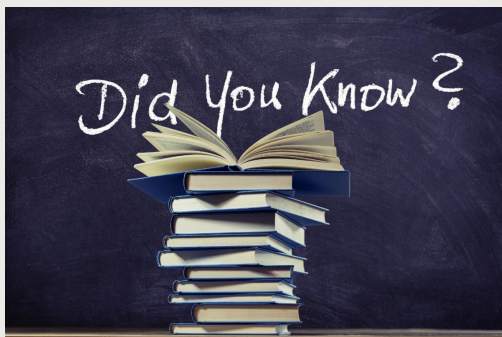
Ethics Commission to Debut Online Training Portal



Ethics Commission staff is currently in the final phase of its plan to roll-out a new online training portal that will initially offer Lobbyist and Lobbyist Refresher training courses by way of the worldwide web. In addition to various meetings, test sessions are being undertaken to assure the effectiveness of this new online initiative.

In phase one of the project, users will be able to register for the course, view the course, and ultimately print their Certificate of Completion. In Phase Two of the project, which is expected to be completed in the upcoming months, users will also be able to pay for the course and view a more polished version of the training presentation.

Educating the Community / Upcoming Events



The Commission's jurisdiction includes elected officials, employees and advisory board members in Miami-Dade County government and in all municipalities in the county. Some rules and ordinances also extend to lobbyists and contract vendors.

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Ethics & Public Trust
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