ESCAMBIA COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER
LOBBYING POLICY

I. Intent.
The Escambia County Property Appraiser ("ECPA") hereby determines and declares that the operation of responsible government requires that the fullest opportunity be afforded to the people to petition the Property Appraiser for the redress of grievances and protection of their rights, consistent with the Florida Taxpayer's Bill of Rights. To preserve and maintain the integrity of the governmental decision-making process, it is necessary to identify the activities of persons who engage in efforts to influence the Property Appraiser and his deputies, decision-making bodies under his jurisdiction, and certain ECPA employees on matters within their official jurisdictions, either by direct communication to such officials, decision-making bodies, or employees, or by solicitation of others to engage in such efforts, be publicly and regularly disclosed.

II. Definitions.
As used in this Article, unless the context otherwise indicates:

(a) Property Appraiser means the Escambia County Property Appraiser ("ECPA") and, where appropriate, his deputies and designees.

(b) Lobbying means communicating directly or indirectly, on behalf of third persons, either in person, by telephone or by letter, or any other form of communication, with the Property Appraiser and his deputies, or any member of any decision-making body under his jurisdiction, or any ECPA employee, where the lobbyist seeks to encourage the change concerning a property assessment, or concerns the granting or denial of an exemption or property classification, or the awarding of a contract, or seeks to influence the Property Appraiser or his deputies on any item which may be presented for a vote before a decision-making body under his jurisdiction, or which may be presented for consideration by any employee making a final ECPA procurement decision.

(c) Person means any individual, business, corporation, association, firm, partnership, non-profit organization, or other organization or group.

(d) Lobbyist means any person who is employed and receives payment or who contracts for economic consideration (including on a future contingency fee or commission basis) for the purpose of lobbying, or a person who is principally employed for tax representation purposes by another person or entity to lobby on behalf of that other person or entity. Any person who, in his or her individual capacity, merely communicates with the Property Appraiser, any ECPA employee, or a decision-making body under the jurisdiction of the Property Appraiser, for the purpose of self-representation, without compensation or reimbursements, and who shall so declare to the person with whom he or she discusses any such item, shall not be required to register as a lobbyist. Additionally, any individual who engages in lobbying as a volunteer, without payment of any compensation or reimbursement of expenses, either directly or indirectly, shall not be required to register as a lobbyist.

(e) Employer means any person providing compensation of any kind (including on a future contingency fee or commission basis) to a lobbyist in consideration for his or her performance of lobbying activities.

III. Post-Employment Restrictions on ECPA Employees.
No ECPA employee shall personally represent another person or entity for compensation in any matter before the ECPA Office for a period of two (2) years following vacation of the position, unless employed by another agency of government to do so. Nothing herein shall prohibit any former ECPA employee from meeting with the ECPA Office on any property in which the former ECPA employee owns an interest. Further, nothing herein shall prohibit any former ECPA employee from representing another person or entity for compensation in any matter before the Escambia County Value Adjustment Board (VAB), so long as the only contact between the former ECPA employee and the ECPA Office on said matter is limited to formal evidentiary exchanges, and participating in quasi-judicial hearings before either a special magistrate of the VAB or the full VAB board.

IV. Restrictions on Lobbying by Relatives of ECPA Employees.
No spouse, domestic partner, parent, child, or sibling of any ECPA employee shall personally represent another person or entity for compensation in any matter before the ECPA Office while said family member is employed by the ECPA. Nothing herein shall prohibit said designated relatives from meeting with unrelated ECPA staff members on behalf of any property in which said designated relative owns an interest.

V. Gift Ban.
No ECPA employee shall be permitted to accept any gift or gratuity in excess of the nominal value of $2 from any lobbyist, tax representative, attorney or vendor who does business with, or seeks to do business with ECPA.

VI. Penalties.

(a) Any person engaged in lobbying activities who has failed to comply with the registration, reporting requirements and prohibitions of this act, and, in each such instance, the ECPA General Counsel shall conduct such investigation as he or she shall deem necessary under the circumstances. The results of each investigation shall be reported to the Property Appraiser.

(b) The Property Appraiser may warn, reprimand, or censure the violator or may suspend or prohibit the violator from appearing on behalf of any employer or client on any matter within this Office or from otherwise lobbying for any employer or client in any fashion for a period of time; provided, however, that any suspension or prohibition may not exceed

a period of two (2) years, and no sanction shall be imposed unless the lobbyist allegedly in violation has been afforded reasonable notice and an opportunity to be heard.

(c) The validity of any action taken by the Property Appraiser, any decision-making body under his jurisdiction, or ECPA employees, shall not be affected by the failure of any lobbyist to comply with the provisions of this Article.

VII. Cone of Silence.

(a) "Cone of Silence" means a prohibition on any communication regarding particular Invitation to Bid ("ITB"), Request for Proposals ("RFP"), Invitation to Negotiate ("ITN"), or Request for Letters of Interest ("RLI"), bid, or other competitive solicitation between:

(1) Any person who seeks an award therefrom, including a potential vendor or vendor's representative; and

(2) Any person appointed by the Property Appraiser to evaluate or recommend selection in such procurement process.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Cone of Silence shall not apply to communications with the ECPA General Counsel and his or her staff to obtain clarification or information concerning the subject solicitation. Further, nothing herein shall prohibit ECPA employees from communicating with each other. For purposes of this Section, "vendor's representative" means an employee, partner, officer, or director of a potential vendor, or consultant, lobbyist, or actual or potential subcontractor or sub-consultant of a vendor.

(b) A Cone of Silence shall be applicable to each ITB, RFP, ITN, RLI, bid, or other competitive solicitation upon short listing. At the time of imposition of the Cone of Silence, the Property Appraiser or the Property Appraiser's designee shall provide public notice of the Cone of Silence. The Property Appraiser shall include in any advertisement and/or public solicitation for goods and services a statement disclosing the requirements of this Section. Said public notice will be published on the ECPA website.

(c) The Cone of Silence shall terminate at the time the Property Appraiser (or his designees) executes a contract, rejects all bids or responses, or otherwise takes action which ends the solicitation.

(d) Nothing contained herein shall prohibit any potential vendor or vendor's representative:

(1) From making public presentations at duly noticed pre-bid conferences or before duly noticed Selection Committee meetings;

(2) From engaging in contract negotiations during any duly noticed public meeting;

(3) From making a public presentation to the Property Appraiser during any duly noticed public meeting; or

(4) From communicating in writing with the ECPA General Counsel and his or her staff for purposes of seeking clarification or additional information, subject to the provisions of the applicable ITB, RFP, ITN, RLI, bid, or other competitive solicitation documents.

The potential vendor or vendor's representative shall file a copy of any written communication with the ECPA General Counsel, who shall make copies available to the public upon request.

(e) For purposes of this Section and when not otherwise precluded by the operation of this Section from doing so, the ECPA General Counsel or designee shall accept communications from potential vendors or vendor's representatives when a Cone of Silence has been applied to an ITB, RFP, ITN, RLI, bid, or other competitive solicitation. Such contact shall be in writing and shall be provided to the members of the applicable Selection Committee, including any response thereto.

(f) The ECPA General Counsel, or a designee of the ECPA General Counsel, shall be informed of any person who is alleged to have violated the requirements of this Section. In each such instance, an investigation shall be performed and the results of each investigation including a determination of violation, if any, shall be compiled in a report.

(g) If there is a determination of violation, the Property Appraiser may reprimand, penalize in the form of lower ranking or points, or entirely disqualify the vendor from further consideration for the pending ITB, RFP, ITN, RLI, bid, or other competitive solicitation.

(h) A copy of the report, including a determination of violation, if any, and notice of the penalty imposed of a fine as provided for in this Section, if any, shall be immediately furnished or mailed to the person who has been investigated.

(i) A person who is determined to have violated this Section may appeal such determination by providing an oral or written response to the Property Appraiser.

(j) In addition, a later determination of a violation discovered after any ITB award, RFP award, ITN award, RLI award, bid award, or other competitive solicitation award shall render said award to said potential vendor voidable, at the sole discretion of the Property Appraiser.

(k) Upon a vendor having been found to have violated the provisions of this Section a third time, the Property Appraiser shall bar the vendor from participating in any manner in the ITB, RFP, ITN, RLI, bid, or competitive solicitation for any contracts for a period of not less than two (2) years and not more than four (4) years.

This policy shall become effective immediately.

Approved and adopted this 21st day of August, 2026.



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