

CITY OF COLUMBUS ETHICS FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE
FOR MUNICIPAL OFFICEHOLDERS, CANDIDATES, & DESIGNATED CITY OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES

ORDINANCE 0086-2016, EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 29, 2016

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q - Who is required to file ethics financial disclosure statements with the Columbus City Clerk?

A – Columbus City Codes (“C.C.”) Section 2321.56 requires municipal officeholders, municipal candidates, and those persons appointed to fill a vacancy in an unexpired term in elective office to file ethics financial disclosure statements with both the Ohio Ethics Commission and the Columbus City Clerk. In addition, the Mayor’s Executive Order 2016-01 and the ethics policies of the other municipal officeholders require certain designated city employees and city officials to file ethics financial disclosure statements with the Columbus City Clerk only.

Q – What are the deadlines for filing ethics financial disclosure statements with the Ohio Ethics Commission and the Columbus City Clerk?

A – The deadlines for filing ethics financial disclosure statements and where they are filed depend on who is making the filing. (see filing calendar posted on City Council website)

Q – What forms do persons required to file ethics financial disclosure statements use?

A – The city is using the same form issued by the Ohio Ethics Commission **and** a one-page City of Columbus Financial Disclosure Addendum. Both of these forms are available on the City Council Website.

Q – What is the purpose of the City of Columbus Financial Disclosure Addendum form?

A – The form is comply with C.C. 2321.56(B)(1), which requires filers of ethics financial disclosure statements to include a brief description of each gift or aggregate of gifts from any one source valued at over \$75 if the gift was received from one of the following sources:

1. Any person with whom the office holder or designated employee, or office holder’s or designated employee’s immediate family, does business;
2. Any person who is a creditor of over one thousand dollars (\$1,000), or a debtor of over one thousand dollars (\$1,000), of the office holder or designated employee;
3. Any person with whom the office holder or designated employee has an investment, other than a primary residence or real property held primarily for personal recreation, of over one thousand dollars (\$1,000);

4. Any person that has another fiduciary relationship, such as co-owner or proprietorship of a corporation, trust, business trust, partnership, or association, with an office holder or designated employee.

Q – What time periods do the ethics financial disclosure statements cover?

A – The annual financial disclosure statement required by the Ohio Ethics Commission, generally due in the spring of each year, and filed with both the Ohio Ethics Commission and the Columbus City Clerk, covers the previous calendar year (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31). The semiannual financial disclosure statement required by the Columbus City Code, generally due in November each year, and filed with only the Columbus City Clerk covers the first half (Jan. 1 – June 30) of the current calendar year. If you have filed the required annual statement and have nothing new to report on the semiannual report required by the City you must still file the semiannual statement.

Q – Is there a filing fee to file an ethics financial disclosure statement with the Columbus City Clerk?

A – No. While there is a \$35 to file with the state, there is no fee to file it with the Columbus City Clerk.

Q – How may I file the ethics financial disclosure statement with the Columbus City Clerk?

A – The ethics financial disclosure statement and the City of Columbus Financial Disclosure Addendum may be filed with the Columbus City Clerk in three ways:

1. A paper ethics financial disclosure statement and City of Columbus Financial Disclosure Addendum may be filed in person at Columbus City Hall, 90 West Broad Street, 2nd Floor Room 231, Columbus, OH 43215, from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday (except public holidays). Please bring extra copies if you would like time-stamped copies for your records.
2. A paper ethics financial disclosure statement and City of Columbus Financial Disclosure Addendum may be mailed to: Columbus City Clerk, Ethics Filings, 90 West Broad Street, Columbus, OH 43215.
3. A scanned ethics financial disclosure statement may and City of Columbus Financial Disclosure Addendum be filed by e-mail by sending them as attachments in an e-mail to: ethicsfilings@columbus.gov.

Q – Are ethics financial disclosure statements public records? Will they be available on the city's website?

A – While the ethics financial disclosure statement and City of Columbus Financial Disclosure Addendum are public records and are available in response to a public records request, they will not be available on the city's website.

Q – What does the City Clerk do with the ethics financial disclosure statements after they are filed?

A – C.C. 2321.56(C)(4) requires the City Clerk to review all filed ethics financial disclosure statements to determine whether all the required information has been provided. If all of the required information was provided, then the City Clerk will maintain the ethics financial disclosure statement as a permanent record of the city. However, if the City Clerk determines that the ethics financial disclosure statement does not contain all of the required information or that a person who is required to file an ethics financial disclosure statement has not filed the statement by the deadline, then the City Clerk will notify the person in writing. The person then has 15 days to file a statement or an amended statement. If the person does not file within 15 days of receiving the notice, then the City Clerk will send a second written notification and will also notify the City Attorney. If the person still fails to file a statement or an amended statement within 15 days, then the City Attorney will take appropriate action as authorized by C.C. 2321.56.

Q – What are the penalties for failing to comply with C.C. 2321.56?

A – Failure to file an ethics financial disclosure statement by the deadline is a misdemeanor of the third degree. Filing a false financial disclosure statement is a misdemeanor of the first degree.

Q – Who may I contact if I need additional information?

A – You may contact Jo Ellen Cline, City Council's Ethics Officer, at 614-645-3568 or Jocline@columbus.gov or Angie Blevins, City Clerk, at 614-645-7431 or anblevins@columbus.gov if you have any questions.