



Kentucky League of Cities



Certification under the Kentucky League of Cities (KLC) Certified City of Ethics Program is a way to recognize cities and city officials that have adopted principles and procedures that offer guidance on ethical issues, and a mechanism to resolve complaints at the local level. In addition, this program increases public trust and confidence in city governments and their services through the training and recognition that this program promotes.



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**TO EARN A “CERTIFIED CITY OF ETHICS” DESIGNATION, A CITY MUST TAKE THE FOLLOWING STEPS.**

**STEP  
1**



**Adopt a resolution establishing the six ethics principles to govern the conduct of your city’s officials and employees.**

These principles are designed to guide the elected officials and employees as individuals and as a governing body.

These principles are:

- ♦ Serve the public interest, not our own
- ♦ Fulfill the duties and responsibilities of holding public office
- ♦ Be ethical and professional
- ♦ Be fiscally responsible with the city resources
- ♦ Communicate effectively and respectfully
- ♦ Create an environment of honesty, openness and integrity

The adopted resolution must include or at least reference the definitions of these principles. A sample resolution is available from KLC. A majority of the city’s elected governing body must approve the resolution. A copy of the approved resolution should be mailed or emailed to KLC.

Email – [ashindlebower@klc.org](mailto:ashindlebower@klc.org)

Mail – Kentucky League of Cities, Attention: Andrea Shindlebower, 100 East Vine Street, Suite 800, Lexington, KY 40507

**STEP  
2**



**Review ethics ordinance that meets minimum standards set out in KRS 65.003.**

The city’s ethics ordinance should be reviewed to be certain that it contains all the required elements of KRS 65.003, including definitions, an enumeration of permissible and impermissible activities by elected officials, and due process procedures for elected officials charged with a violation of the ordinance.

City officials, along with their city attorney, can consult KLC’s Sample Ethics Ordinance when considering provisions to include in a comprehensive code of ethics or when amending the code of ethics.

The ordinance must be emailed or mailed to the KLC Municipal Law and Training Department staff, for their cursory review. The review will consist of making sure that all requirements in KRS 65.003 have been met.

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If the city ethics ordinance is found to be deficient, the city will need to amend the ordinance to bring it into compliance with the statute.



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**STEP** Training on City Ethics Ordinance



Once the ordinance has been reviewed and is found to meet the requirements of KRS 65.003 and the resolution has been adopted, all elected city officials (and the Ethics Board/Commission) shall be trained on their specific city code of ethics.

The training shall take place at an open meeting of the city legislative body. City officials would be eligible for ethics training credit.

In addition, any employees, boards and commissions covered under the city code of ethics may also be trained at the rate of \$150.00 per session.

**STEP** Certification



Once it is determined that the ordinance and resolution meet the established requirements and the city has received the required training, the city will be designated as a "Certified City of Ethics."

Each city designated as a Certified City of Ethics will receive a framed certificate and a logo which can be incorporated into city stationery, road signs and other materials at the city's discretion. In addition, KLC will send news releases to the local media notifying them that the city has earned this designation, as well as provide recognition in KLC publications and events.

To maintain this status the city must receive training every four years on the ethics ordinance.

**OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS TO NOTE**

- ◆ **Once a city adopts an ethics ordinance and qualifies as a Certified City of Ethics, it is important to note that KLC does not enforce the ordinance.**

KLC does not act as an enforcement or regulating agency. It is the city's local enforcement board that determines the acceptable level of ethical conduct of those elected to and retained in office and employed by the city.

- ◆ **Cost for the program.**

The initial review time to make certain that the ordinance complies with KRS 65.003, preparation for training and the actual training will be five hundred dollars (\$500.00). Additional costs associated with this program will be mileage from the KLC office to and from the training location, any per diem or hotel if required, and any additional employee and or board training sessions at one hundred and fifty dollars (\$150.00) per session. The need to spend the night will be determined on a case-by-case basis. These costs will be billed to the city at the completion of this program.

In the event that more than one city can be trained within one travel period, the additional travel costs will be divided between the two cities.

Once training is complete, KLC will invoice the city for the remaining expenses to be paid within thirty (30) days from the date of the invoice.

To officially engage the Kentucky League of Cities to complete this project, please provide a Resolution authorizing the signature below:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_



**RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

A RESOLUTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE BODY OF THE CITY OF \_\_\_\_\_ APPROVING  
CERTIFIED CITY OF ETHICS PROPOSAL.

\* \* \*

WHEREAS, the Legislative body of the City of \_\_\_\_\_ does desire to become a Certified City of Ethics in accordance with the Kentucky League of Cities (KLC) Certified City of Ethics Program; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to enter into an agreement with KLC to carry out the program requirements, including ordinance review, adoption of a resolution, and training; and

WHEREAS, the attached agreement outlines the program requirements and requires City approval of all elements;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATIVE BODY OF THE CITY  
OF \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY, KENTUCKY:

THAT the agreement attached to this resolution between the City of \_\_\_\_\_, and the Kentucky League of Cities, be and the same is approved; the mayor is authorized and directed to execute the agreement for and on behalf of the city; and the city clerk is authorized and directed to attest such signature.

RESOLVED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Legislative Body Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
ATTEST:



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## RESOLUTION

**WHEREAS** the Kentucky League of Cities has established a Certified City of Ethics Program; and,

**WHEREAS** the City of \_\_\_\_\_, wishes to be certified as a Certified City of Ethics under the Kentucky League of Cities Program; and,

**WHEREAS** part of the certification process requires the City Officials to subscribe to the ethics principles set out in KRS 65.003 and Ordinance No. \_\_\_\_\_;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the governing authority of the City of \_\_\_\_\_, Kentucky, that as a group and as individuals, the governing authority subscribes to the following ethics principles and pledges to conduct its affairs accordingly:

- ◆ Serve the public interest, not our own
  - Provide courteous, equitable, and prompt service to all citizens
  - Be in tune with and care about the needs and issues of all citizens, public officials and employees
  - Be interested, engaged and responsive in interactions with citizens
  - Recognize and support the public's right to know the City's business
  
- ◆ Fulfill the duties and responsibilities of holding public office
  - Observe the highest standards of integrity in official acts and undertake responsibilities for the benefit of the greater public good
  - Faithfully discharge the duties of office regardless of personal considerations, recognizing that the public interest is the primary concern
  - Uphold the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Kentucky and carry out impartially the laws of the nation, state, and City and thus foster respect for all government
  - Comply with both the letter and the spirit of the laws and policies affecting operations of the City
  - Recognize the obligation to implement the adopted goals and objectives of the City in good faith, regardless of personal views
  - Present both official and personal conduct in a manner that is above reproach
  - Do not use the position to secure special privileges or exemptions that are different from those available to the general public
  - Understand and abide by the respective roles and responsibilities of elected and appointed officials and city staff and do not undermine them in their work
  - Be independent, impartial, and fair in judgment and actions



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- ◆ Be ethical and professional
    - Be trustworthy, acting with the utmost integrity and moral courage
    - Be truthful and reliable
    - Be accountable for actions and behavior and accept responsibility for decisions
    - Make impartial decisions, free of influence from unlawful gifts, narrow political interests, and financial and other personal interests that impair independent judgment or action
    - Be fair, distributing benefits and burdens according to consistent and equitable criteria
    - Oppose all forms of harassment and unlawful discrimination
    - Extend equal opportunities and due process to all parties in matters under consideration
    - Be respectful of confidences and confidential information
    - Avoid giving the appearance of impropriety and of using the position for personal gain
    - Apply knowledge and expertise to assigned activities and to the interpersonal relationships that are part of the position in a consistent, confident, competent, and productive manner
    - Approach the position and work-related relationships with a positive attitude, contributing to a supportive, respectful, and non-threatening work environment
    - Keep professional knowledge and skills current and growing
    - Be respectful of all city staff, officials, volunteers, and others who participate in the City's government
  - ◆ Be fiscally responsible with the city resources
    - Make decisions after prudent consideration of their financial impact, taking into account the long-term financial needs of the City, especially its financial stability
    - Demonstrate concern for the proper use of City assets (e.g., personnel, time, property, equipment, funds), follow established procedures, and do not use public resources for personal gain
    - Make decisions that seek to preserve the financial capacity of the City to provide programs and services for City residents
    - Provide full disclosure of any potential financial or other private conflict of interest and abstain from participating in the discussion and vote on these matters
    - Prevent misuse of public funds by establishing, maintaining, and following strong fiscal and management controls
    - Report any misuse of public funds
  - ◆ Communicate effectively and respectfully
    - Convey the City's care for and commitment to its citizens
    - Communicate in a manner that is approachable, open-minded, and willing to participate in dialog



- Engage in effective two-way communication by listening carefully, asking questions, and responding appropriately, which adds value to conversations
  - Do not interfere with the orderly conduct of meetings by interrupting others or making personal comments not germane to the business at hand
  - Follow up on inquiries in a timely manner
  - Encourage and facilitate citizen involvement in policy decision-making
  - Be respectful in disagreements and contribute constructively to discussions on the issue
- ◆ Create an environment of honesty, openness and integrity
- Promote intelligent, proactive, and thoughtful innovation in order to advance the City's policy agenda and provide City services while considering the broader regional, statewide, national, and international implications of the City's decisions and issues
  - Maintain consistent standards, but also be sensitive to the need for compromise, creative problem solving, and making improvements when appropriate
  - Be open to new ideas and processes, adopting them as they conserve resources and provide efficient and effective service
  - Consider the potential long-term consequences and implications of all actions and inactions

**RESOLVED** this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Legislative Body Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
ATTEST:



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News Release

Date

City Contact

City of \_\_\_\_\_ Achieves “Certified City of Ethics” Distinction

The City of \_\_\_\_\_ recently received the “Certified City of Ethics” designation.

Quote from mayor or city official expressing pride in receiving certification - add another layer to checks and balances, increases transparency, etc.

The voluntary program, developed by the Kentucky League of Cities (KLC), encourages cities to adopt and adhere to a set of key ethical principles and a comprehensive model ethics ordinance. The ordinance guides conduct of city officials and their employees in areas such as financial disclosures, conflicts of interests and outside employment. The ordinance also contains strong penalty provisions – including public reprimands, fines and removal - for city officials and employees who violate the ordinance.

The certification process also includes specific training which city officials and employees completed (date).

(Quote from mayor or city official on why city pursued certification.)

KLC reviewed the code of ethics ordinance to determine if the city complies with the criteria set out in KRS 65.003. The city received a plaque and is now authorized by KLC to use a “Certified City of Ethics” logo on stationery, road signs, city vehicles and other uses.

Based in Lexington, KLC is a voluntary, nonprofit membership association that provides legislative advocacy, legal services, consulting services, and training to more than 360 member cities. KLC also provides insurance and financial services to municipal agencies throughout Kentucky.

For more information on the Certified City of Ethics designation, contact KLC at 800.876.4552.



# City of Ethics Certification Checklist

- Complete the packet paperwork, pass the resolution
- Send the resolution to KLC Personnel Services
- Send the current ordinance to KLC Personnel Services for review for compliance with KRS 65.003
- KLC sends the current ordinance review back to the city for consideration
  - ◆ Also, review the sample ethics ordinance at the link, below, to see if there are any updates that you would like to make to your current ordinance
  - ◆ [http://www.klc.org/news/2408/Aspire\\_to\\_become\\_a\\_KLC\\_Certified\\_City\\_of\\_Ethics](http://www.klc.org/news/2408/Aspire_to_become_a_KLC_Certified_City_of_Ethics)
- The city determines (and you let KLC know) whether you want to update your current ordinance
  - ◆ If not, we can schedule training at this point.
  - ◆ If so, we will wait for the updated language so we can base the training on the new ordinance.
- We schedule a date for the training
  - ◆ If you have updated the ordinance, it is good to schedule the training between the first and second readings. This way, if you find any errors or additional changes you would like to make, it can be done without extra publication cost.
- KLC creates a customized training for your city
- KLC trains you
- You are certified!