

§ 163A-158. Ethics education program.

(a) The State Board shall develop and implement an ethics education and awareness program designed to instill in all covered persons and their immediate staffs, and legislative employees, a keen and continuing awareness of their ethical obligations and a sensitivity to situations that might result in real or potential conflicts of interest.

(b) The State Board shall offer basic ethics education and awareness presentations to all public servants and their immediate staffs, upon their election, appointment, or employment, and shall offer periodic refresher presentations as the State Board deems appropriate. Every public servant shall participate in an ethics presentation approved by the State Board within six months of the public servant's election, reelection, appointment, or employment, and shall attend refresher ethics education presentations at least every two years thereafter in a manner as the State Board deems appropriate.

(c) A public servant appointed to a board determined and designated as nonadvisory under G.S. 163A-154(a)(3) shall attend an ethics presentation approved by the State Board within six months of notification of the designation by the State Board and at least every two years thereafter in a manner as the State Board deems appropriate.

(d) The State Board, jointly with the Committee, shall make basic ethics education and awareness presentations to all legislators and legislative employees upon their election, reelection, appointment, or employment and shall offer periodic refresher presentations as the State Board and the Committee deem appropriate. Every legislator shall participate in an ethics presentation approved by the State Board and Committee within two months of either the convening of the General Assembly to which the legislator is elected or within two months of the legislator's appointment, whichever is later. Every legislative employee shall participate in an ethics presentation approved by the State Board and Committee within three months of employment, and shall attend refresher ethics education presentations at least every two years thereafter, in a manner as the State Board and Committee deem appropriate.

(e) Upon request, the State Board shall assist each agency in developing in-house education programs and procedures necessary or desirable to meet the agency's particular needs for ethics education, conflict identification, and conflict avoidance.

(f) Each agency head shall designate an ethics liaison who shall maintain active communication with the State Board on all agency ethical issues. The ethics liaison shall attend ethics education and awareness programs as provided under this section and lobbying education and awareness programs as provided under G.S. 163A-253 and continuously assess and advise the State Board of any issues or conduct which might reasonably be expected to result in a conflict of interest and seek advice and rulings from the State Board as to their appropriate resolution.

(g) The State Board shall publish a newsletter containing summaries of the State Board's opinions, policies, procedures, and interpretive bulletins as issued from time to time. The newsletter shall be distributed to all covered persons and legislative employees. Publication under this subsection may be done electronically.

(h) The State Board shall assemble and maintain a collection of relevant State laws, rules, and regulations that set forth ethical standards applicable to covered persons. This collection shall be made available electronically as resource material to public servants, and ethics liaisons, upon request.

(i) This section shall not apply to judicial officers. (2006-201, s. 1; 2007-347, s. 9(a); 2008-213, ss. 59, 60; 2009-10, s. 4; 2009-549, s. 12; 2010-169, s. 22(a); 2017-6, s. 3.)