

**CONTRA COSTA COUNTY EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT
ASSOCIATION**
Code of Fiduciary Conduct and Ethics
Adopted 7/23/03

WHEREAS, the National Conference on Public Employee Retirement Systems has published NCPERS' Model Code of Ethics, the Guiding Principles of which are as follows:

1. Service to the beneficiaries of public pension funds is the primary function of public pension fund trustees.
2. The beneficiaries of public pension funds are sovereign and the trustees of those funds are ultimately responsible to them.
3. In those situations where the law is not clear, the best interests of the fund beneficiaries must be served. Conscience is critical. Good ends never justify unethical means.
4. Efficient and effective administration and investment management is basic to public pension funds. Misuse of influence, fraud, waste or abuse is unacceptable conduct.
5. Safeguarding the trust of fund beneficiaries is paramount. Conflicts of interest, bribes, gifts or favors which subordinate fund trustees to private gains are unacceptable.
6. Service to public pension fund beneficiaries demands special sensitivity to the qualities of justice, courage, honesty, equity, competence and compassion.
7. Timely and energetic execution of fiduciary responsibilities is to be pursued at all times by pension fund trustees.

WHEREAS, the Political Reform Act of 1974 and Government Code section 1090 set forth specific circumstances which require public officials to disqualify themselves from making, participating in, or attempting to influence governmental decisions which may affect any of their financial interests.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of the Contra Costa County Employees' Retirement Association (the "Board") hereby adopts the following Code of Fiduciary Conduct and Ethics:

PREAMBLE

The Contra Costa County Employees' Retirement Association ("CCCERA") is a public pension plan organized under the County Employees Retirement Law of 1937. (California Government Code Section 31450, et seq.)

The management of CCCERA is vested in the Retirement Board.

Each member of CCCERA's Board shall discharge his or her duties with respect to the system solely in the interests of, and for the exclusive purposes of providing benefits to, participants and their beneficiaries, minimizing employer contributions thereto, and defraying reasonable expenses of administering the system, with the duty to the participants and beneficiaries taking precedence over any other duty. (California Constitution Article XVI, Section 17(b).)

The members of CCCERA's Board are mindful of the positions of trust and confidence held by them. They adopt this Code to ensure the proper administration of CCCERA, and to foster unquestioned public confidence in CCCERA's institutional integrity as a prudently managed and fiduciarily governed public pension system.

CCCERA's *Code of Fiduciary Conduct and Ethics* provides a fiduciary framework for the proper conduct of CCCERA's affairs.

1. Fiduciary Duties.

Each member of CCCERA's Board shall execute their duties as set forth in the County Employees' Retirement Law of 1937, as amended, with the care, skill, prudence, and diligence under the circumstances then prevailing that a prudent person acting in a like capacity and familiar with these matters would use in the conduct of an enterprise of a like character and with like aims.

Each member of CCCERA's Board shall diligently attend to the business of the Board and shall not leave to other Board members control over the administration of the affairs of the Board.

Each member of CCCERA's Board shall comply with CCCERA's *Code of Fiduciary Conduct and Ethics*.

2. Fiduciary Conflicts of Interest.

Each member of CCCERA's Board shall abide by the provisions of California Government Code Sections 1090 et seq., which prohibit Board Members from being financially interested, directly or indirectly, in any contract made by the Board.

Each member of CCCERA's Board shall abide by the provisions of the Political Reform Act, Government Code sections 81000, et seq, including section 87100 which prohibits Board Members from making, participating in making, or using their positions to influence Board and Association decisions in which they have a financial interest.

No member of CCCERA's Board shall engage in any employment, activity, or enterprise for compensation which is inconsistent, incompatible, or in conflict with, his or her duties as a member of CCCERA's Board, or with the duties, functions, or responsibilities of CCCERA's Board.

No member of CCCERA's Board shall perform any work, service, or counsel for compensation outside his or her Board responsibilities where any part of his or her efforts will be subject to approval by any other members of the Board on which he or she serves.

Each member of CCCERA's Board shall abide by the provisions of California Government Code Sections 87200 et seq., which require the public disclosure of economic interests as prescribed therein.

In keeping with the provisions of the Government Code, a member of CCCERA's Board shall not become an endorser, surety, or obligor on, or have any personal interest, direct or indirect, in the making of any investment for the Board, or in the gains or profits accruing therefrom. These people are prohibited from having any financial interest in any contract made by them in their official capacity and from making or influencing official decisions in which they have a financial interest.

Each member of CCCERA's Board shall strive to avoid activities which may impair the ability to exercise independent judgment in the discharge of official duties.

In order to maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics above the minimum requirements of the California Government Code and to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest, each member of CCCERA's Board should conduct official and private affairs so as to avoid giving rise to a reasonable conclusion that he or she can be improperly influenced in the performance of his or her public duty.

Members of the CCCERA Board shall be accountable for recognizing a potential or actual conflict of interest and for disqualifying themselves from making, participating in, or attempting to influence Board decisions which may affect any of their financial interests. Immediately prior to the Board's consideration of the matter, a Member shall publicly disclose the actual or potential conflict in detail sufficient to be understood by the public, recuse himself or herself from acting on the matter, and, except in the case of consent agenda items, leave the room until the matter is concluded. Disclosure during Board meetings may be made 1) orally or 2) by handing a written statement to the Chair of the CCCERA Board, with a

copy to all trustees and the Retirement Administrator. Such a disclosure shall be reflected in the official record of the meeting.

3. Limitations on Gifts, Honoraria and Personal Loans; and Disclosure of Gifts on the Record.

Each member of CCCERA's Board and designated staff shall comply with the gift limitation provisions and the prohibition on acceptance of honoraria under California Government Code Sections 89500 et seq.

Each member of CCCERA's Board and designated staff shall abide by the loan limitation provisions of California Government Code Sections 87460 et seq., which prohibits receiving personal loans from any officer, employee, member, consultant, or contractor with the CCCERA.

In addition to the minimum gift limitation requirements of California Government Code Sections 89500 et seq., CCCERA Board Members shall not accept or solicit gifts, favors, services or promises of future benefits which might compromise or impair the Board Member's exercise of independent judgment, or which the Board Member knows, or should know, are being offered with the intent to influence that Board Member's official conduct.

If a Board Member or designated staff has received gifts of \$75.00 or more in the current calendar year from a person, firm or entity conducting business or seeking to conduct business with the CCCERA Board, immediately before the Board considers an item involving that donor, the Board Member or designated staff shall disclose on the record the receipt of the gift(s), the donor's name, and the nature and value of the gift(s).

If CCCERA has received a gift(s) (i.e., of travel, admission to seminars, tickets to events, use of sporting facilities, entertainment) of \$75.00 or more in the current calendar year from a person, firm or entity, at the time the Board considers assignment to a particular Board Member or designated staff, the Retirement Administrator shall disclose on the record the original donor's name, and the nature and value of the gift(s).

4. Contacts with Vendors, Consultants and Advisors.

- (a) **Prospective Vendors, Consultants and Advisors.** During the time when the CCCERA is in the process of selecting a vendor, consultant or advisor (a "service provider"), no member of the CCCERA Board or staff shall accept any gifts, favors, or services from any current or prospective service provider that the Board Member or staff knows has responded to a Request for Proposal, or is otherwise a candidate in a non-RFP selection process. During the time when CCCERA is in the process of selecting a vendor, consultant or advisor, no member of the CCCERA Board or staff shall accept any gift, benefit or service from CCCERA if it was donated to CCCERA by a current or prospective service provider that the Board or

staff knows has responded to a Request for Proposal, or is otherwise a candidate in a non-RFP selection process. Furthermore, each member of the Board shall refrain from any discussions with any current or prospective service provider who is a finalist in the selection process regarding the Request for Proposal outside of an open public meeting, other than as part of a regularly scheduled interview during the selection process.

- (b) **Existing Vendors, Consultants and Advisors.** Business meetings and discussions, including meetings which include meals, with current vendors, consultants and advisors (“service providers”) may provide useful information of benefit to the Board member, and are not prohibited by this *Code of Fiduciary Conduct and Ethics*.

5. Use of CCCERA Resources and Facilities for Private Gain.

No member of the CCCERA Board shall use Board consultants or staff, or CCCERA facilities, equipment, materials or supplies for any purpose other than the discharge of his or her responsibilities to the retirement system.

6. Use of Official Position.

No CCCERA Board member shall use his or her Board position either to negotiate on behalf of the CCCERA Board outside of any process established for that purpose or to become involved in personnel matters. Furthermore, no Board member shall use his or her official position to secure a special privilege or exemption for himself or herself or on behalf of others.

7. Confidential Information.

No member of the CCCERA Board shall obtain or use for personal reasons or for private gain any confidential information acquired as a result of his or her position as a member of the Board.

Each Board Member shall abide by the provisions of Government Code section 54963, which prohibits the disclosure of confidential information acquired during authorized closed sessions.

8. Conduct at Retirement Board Meetings.

The CCCERA Board shall provide fair and equal treatment for all persons and matters coming before the Board or any Board committee.

Board members shall listen courteously to all discussions at meetings and avoid interrupting other speakers, including other Board members, staff or committee members, except as may be permitted by established Rules of Order.

Board members shall refrain from abusive or disruptive conduct, personal charges or verbal attacks upon the character, motives, ethics, or morals of others.

9. Communications with Service Providers and other Non-CCCERA Persons and Entities.

A Board member shall be respectful of the Board and its decisions in all external communications, even if he or she disagrees with such decision.

Board members shall indicate when they are speaking in a capacity as a member of the CCCERA Board or in another capacity in their external communications.

A Board member shall not correspond with a non-CCCERA person or entity using CCCERA letterhead or as a spokesperson on behalf of the Board unless the communication is authorized by the Board.

Copies of all written communications from a Board member to a current service provider (vendor, consultant or advisor), or person or entity related to a current service provider, relating to CCCERA's business (other than purely personal or social correspondence) shall be provided to the CCCERA Administrator for subsequent distribution to all members of the Board.

A copy of any written business related communication (other than routine announcements, generally distributed newsletters, and similar material) received by a Board member from a current CCCERA service provider, or person or entity related to a current service provider, and not received by any other Board Member, shall be forwarded to the CCCERA Administrator for subsequent distribution to all members of the Board.

10. Communications with Plan Members.

Board members shall be aware of the risk of communicating inaccurate information to plan members (both active members and retirees), and the potential exposure to liability and possible harm to a plan member that may result from such miscommunications.

Board members shall mitigate the risk of miscommunication with plan members and thereby avoid creating additional plan liability by refraining from providing specific advice or counsel with respect to the rights or benefits to which a plan member may be entitled under the CCCERA plan. **To that end, any Board member communication to three or more members of the public should include the following disclaimer: "The following statement has not been authorized by CCCERA or its Board. It reflects the personal views of the author and should not be construed as an official statement of CCCERA or its Board. Additionally, members of CCCERA should not rely on any factual information contained in the following statement when making retirement related decisions. All inquires relating to a member's retirement should be directed to the CCCERA staff."**

Where explicit advice or counsel, with respect to retirement plan provisions, policies or benefits is needed, Board members will refer inquiries to the CCCERA Administrator or appropriate designee.

11. Non-Compliance Sanctions.

Violation of this *Code of Fiduciary Conduct and Ethics* is grounds to remove the offender from the position of Chair or Vice-Chair of the CCCERA Board, or from any other assignment on behalf of the Board, and may also subject the offender to censure by the Board. The Board may also pursue all of its legal remedies against any Board member who violates the provisions of this *Code of Fiduciary Conduct and Ethics*.