

Merriam-Webster's Dictionary defines ethics as a noun meaning the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation, or a set of moral principles governing an individual or a group.

The 2011 Sterling Criteria for Organizational Performance Excellence states: "Organizations should stress ethical behavior in all stakeholder transactions and interactions. Highly ethical conduct should be a requirement of and should be monitored by the organization's governance body."<sup>1</sup>

Since November 1991, the United States Sentencing Commissions "Federal Sentencing Guidelines Manual" has encouraged organizations (including governments) to adopt formal ethics and legal compliance programs.<sup>2</sup> These include establishing standards and procedures, high-level oversight, due diligence in hiring and promoting, effective communication (including training), compliance monitoring, enforcement, and preventive measures.

In January 1999, Governor Jeb Bush issued Executive Order 99-20, directing the immediate adoption and implementation of a revised Code of Ethics by all Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries of executive agencies under the purview of the Governor. In the Order, the Executive Office of the Governor/Lieutenant Governor was to provide training on ethics to each executive agency head. It was the desire of the Governor that such agencies will, thereafter, arrange for similar ethics training to all employees on an annual basis. Another stipulation of the Order declared that each executive agency shall designate an Ethics Officer. The Ethics Officer shall undertake appropriate measures to ensure that the employees responsible for adhering to the Code of Ethics become familiar with all relevant ethics requirements. In January 2007, Governor Charlie Crist issued Executive Order 07-01, which also directed immediate adoption and implementation of a Governor's Office Code of Ethics and a Code of Personal Responsibility. Executive Order 07-01 both reinforced and built upon sections of Executive Order 99-20.

In January 2011, Governor Scott issued Executive Order 11-03, directing the immediate adoption and implementation of a revised Code of Ethics by the Office of the Governor and that it applies to all employees within the Office of the Governor, as well as the secretaries, deputy secretaries, and chiefs of staff of all executive agencies under the Governor's purview. It requires each executive agency secretary to designate an individual at his or her agency to act as the agency's chief ethics officer, who will make reasonable efforts to ensure that the employees responsible for adhering to this Code become familiar with relevant ethics, public records and open meeting requirements. Each agency is directed to implement any agency-

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<sup>1</sup> The 2011 Sterling Criteria for Organizational Performance Excellence, page 49.

<sup>2</sup> Chapter 8, Part B, Section 2.1, of the manual entitled, Effective Compliance and Ethics Program, outlines the minimum requirements to achieve an effective ethics and legal compliance program.

specific adjustments to the code within 45 days of the date of the order. This Code of Ethics imposes more stringent requirements than the Code it revises.

To provide an overall look at ethics in state government in Florida, the Governor's Chief Inspector General has called on all inspectors general to come together to conduct an enterprise evaluation of each agency's ethical climate. Over 20 state agencies have undertaken this assignment. Each team will provide a report to their agency head. Based on findings and recommendations in agency reports, the Chief Inspector General will provide a roll-up report to the Governor.