On June 21, 2018, the City Council passed Ordinance Number 2018-06-21-0491, amending the City Code of San Antonio, Chapter 2 Administration, Article III Ethics Code, and Article VII Municipal Campaign Finance Code. The amendments concerning disclosure of campaign contributor’s occupation and employer on campaign finance reports are effective July 1, 2018. The amendments to Ethics Code Section 2-59, Municipal Campaign Finance Code Section 2-307 regarding the filing of quarterly campaign finance reports and Section 2-309 are effective January 1, 2019.

**Ethics Code**

The approved amendments clarify that the “Statement of Purpose” introducing the Ethics Code cannot be the basis of a complaint. The gift prohibition now includes the gift of “entertainment”, at the same threshold of other gifts, with a value of no more than $50 each occasion and a maximum of $500 from a single source in a calendar year.

Individuals subject to the Code may now self-report a possible violation of the Code to the Compliance Auditor or Ethics Review Board, which may take appropriate action on the matter, including recommending a waiver of the Code, or filing a complaint for a hearing by the Board.

The disclosure provision was amended to extend existing disclosure requirements to persons and entities seeking 1) a contract with the City’s Urban Renewal Agency dba Office of Urban Redevelopment San Antonio (OUR SA), 2) a resolution of support or no objection from the City for a multi-family housing project seeking housing tax credits through the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, 3) the approval revenue bonds by or through the San Antonio Housing Trust Finance Corporation, the San Antonio Housing Trust Public Facility Corporation, or any other similarly-created City special purpose entity, 4) City Council appropriation of funds for an economic development incentive by or through a City-created economic development corporation, public facility corporation or local government corporation, or 5) a zoning change. The disclosure form must include contributions from the individual and entity who is a party to the transaction, subcontractors, partners, parent entities, and subsidiary entities involved in the transaction, board members, executive committee members, and officers of entities listed above, and all lobbyists, attorneys, or consultants employed for purposes relating to the transaction. The form must be supplemented by the fifth business day after changes occur.

The end of prohibited contacts during solicitation period was clarified as the date the item is posted on the Council’s “A” Session agenda. Lobbyist reporting was amended to add an email address and disclosure of other persons lobbyists have been engaged by clients to lobby on disclosure statements. Statements must be amended within thirty days if a statement from the past two years is discovered to be erroneous.

Complaints of Ethics or Campaign Finance violations shall be forwarded by the City Clerk to the Compliance Auditor, Board Chair and Vice-Chair, and City Attorney’s Office for independent review. The City Clerk will notify a respondent of a complaint filed against him or her as well as its resolution. An Outside Counsel/Compliance Auditor will be provided by the City to the Board when a respondent is a candidate for City Council. City Council may waive application of either code to a person who violated the Code but only after the Board makes a recommendation.

**Municipal Campaign Finance Code**

The Municipal Campaign Finance Code was amended to clarify contribution cycles and to add a special election contribution cycle when a vacancy occurs mid-term. Clarification was added to remind candidates and officeholders of their obligation to file monthly bank statements until their Campaign Treasurer Appointment is terminated. Quarterly campaign finance reporting was instituted, and the three-day before the election report was repealed. All candidates and officeholders are required to list contributor’s occupation and employer on campaign finance reports for contributions of $100 or more per campaign contribution cycle. Additional categories were added to the contribution prohibitions, to include officers of boards and executive committee members (except 501(c)(3), (4), and (6) corporations), clarification that subcontractors are subject to the prohibited contribution period. All first degree members of the household of these entities are also subject to the prohibition. Property owners and their spouses are prohibited from making contributions to a candidate or officeholder from the time a zoning application is submitted to the City until thirty calendar days after final action by the City Council. Council may void any zoning district boundary change awarded in violation.

Penalties for violation of either Code remain unchanged.