



Cortland County Whistleblower Protection Policy

Approved by Cortland County Legislature – Resolution No. 104-15

The County of Cortland requires department heads, directors, officers, legislators and employees to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. As employees and representatives of Cortland County, we must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling our responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

Reporting Responsibility

This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise serious concerns internally so that Cortland County can address and correct inappropriate conduct and actions. It is the responsibility of all board members, officers, legislators, employees and volunteers to report concerns about violations of Cortland County's code of ethics or suspected violations of law or regulations that govern Cortland County's operations.

No Retaliation

It is contrary to the values of Cortland County for anyone to retaliate against any board member, officer, department head, legislator, employee or volunteer who in good faith reports a suspected ethics violation, or a suspected violation of law, such as a complaint of discrimination, or suspected fraud, or suspected violation of any regulation governing the operations of Cortland County. An employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment. A volunteer or legislator who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith may be subject to further action by the appropriate Department Head, Legislative Chair or Legislative Committee Chair as deemed necessary and prudent.

Reporting Procedure

Cortland County has an open door policy and suggests that employees share their questions, concerns, suggestions or complaints with their supervisor. If you are not comfortable speaking with your supervisor or you are not satisfied with your supervisor's response, you are encouraged to speak with the Personnel Director. Supervisors and department heads are required to report complaints or concerns about suspected ethical and legal violations in writing to the Cortland County Attorney, who has the responsibility to investigate all reported complaints. Employees with concerns or complaints may also submit their concerns in writing directly to their supervisor, department head or the Personnel Director.

Compliance Officer

The Cortland County Attorney shall act as the Compliance Officer. The Compliance Officer is responsible for ensuring that all complaints about unethical or illegal conduct are investigated and resolved. The Compliance Officer will advise the Personnel Director and the Legislative Chair of all complaints and their resolution and will report at least annually to the Budget & Finance Committee of the Legislature on reported compliance activity relating to accounting or alleged financial improprieties.

In the event that the County Attorney is unable to act as the Compliance Officer, whether based on conflict, unavailability or other circumstance, the Assistant County Attorney will assume the role as Compliance Officer.

Accounting and Auditing Matters

Cortland County's Compliance Officer shall immediately notify the Budget & Finance Committee of any concerns or complaint regarding municipal accounting practices, internal controls or auditing and work with the committee until the matter is resolved.

Acting in Good Faith

Anyone filing a written complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense.

Confidentiality

Violations or suspected violations may be submitted on a confidential basis by the complainant. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

Handling of Reported Violations

Cortland County's Compliance Officer will notify the person who submitted a complaint and acknowledge receipt of the reported violation or suspected violation. All reports will be promptly investigated and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation.