

# OHIO COMMON GROUND

## CODE OF CONDUCT

Attorney Review Draft Version 1

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### PREAMBLE

Ohio Common Ground (“OCG”) exists to bring together Ohioans who may disagree on many issues but who share a commitment to constructive civic engagement, organizational integrity, and citizen-led self-government.

This Code of Conduct establishes the behavioral expectations for all participants in OCG.

The purpose of this Code is to:

- Protect members.
- Promote productive participation.
- Preserve organizational credibility.
- Encourage respectful dialogue.
- Reduce internal conflict.
- Prevent organizational capture.
- Support the mission and Constitutional Charter of Ohio Common Ground.

Participation in OCG is voluntary.

Membership and leadership are privileges that carry responsibilities.

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### ARTICLE I

#### APPLICABILITY

This Code applies to:

- Members
- Directors
- Officers

- Committee members
- Chapter officers
- Delegates
- Volunteers
- Employees
- Contractors acting on behalf of OCG
- Participants in official OCG activities

All covered individuals shall comply with this Code.

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## ARTICLE II

### FOUNDATIONAL EXPECTATIONS

Every participant shall:

#### Act With Integrity

Conduct themselves honestly and ethically.

#### Respect Others

Treat fellow participants with dignity and respect.

#### Support Civil Discourse

Engage disagreements without hostility.

#### Protect Organizational Independence

Avoid actions that undermine OCG's mission or credibility.

#### Follow Governing Documents

Comply with:

- Articles of Incorporation
  - Constitutional Charter
  - Bylaws
  - Policies
  - Official procedures
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## ARTICLE III

### CIVILITY STANDARDS

Members are encouraged to engage in vigorous debate.

Disagreement is expected.

Disrespect is not.

Participants shall:

- Listen in good faith.
- Critique ideas rather than individuals.
- Avoid personal attacks.
- Avoid intimidation.
- Avoid harassment.
- Avoid disruptive conduct.

The objective is constructive disagreement rather than ideological conformity.

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## ARTICLE IV

### ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Ohio Common Ground seeks to attract individuals capable of coalition behavior.

Participants should:

- Tolerate differing viewpoints.
- Work with imperfect allies.
- Focus on shared objectives.
- Support evidence-based discussion.
- Prioritize mission over ego.

The organization rejects purity tests and ideological gatekeeping.

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# ARTICLE V

## PROHIBITED CONDUCT

The following conduct is prohibited:

### Harassment

Including:

- Verbal harassment
- Written harassment
- Online harassment
- Repeated unwanted contact

### Threats

Including direct or implied threats.

### Intimidation

Including attempts to coerce participation or silence others.

### Discrimination

Based upon protected characteristics recognized by law.

### Defamation

Knowingly making false statements regarding participants or the organization.

### Fraud

Including misrepresentation of authority, credentials, or organizational positions.

### Retaliation

Against individuals who:

- Report misconduct;
- File complaints;
- Cooperate with investigations.

### Disruption

Deliberate interference with organizational operations.

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## ARTICLE VI

### INFORMATION STANDARDS

Participants acting on behalf of OCG shall:

- Distinguish fact from opinion.
- Avoid knowingly false statements.
- Correct material errors when discovered.
- Respect source integrity.

Reasonable disagreements regarding interpretation shall not constitute misconduct.

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## ARTICLE VII

### CONFIDENTIALITY

Participants shall respect legitimate confidential information.

Confidential information may include:

- Personnel matters;
- Legal matters;
- Security information;
- Private member information;
- Protected financial information.

Confidentiality shall not be used to conceal misconduct.

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## ARTICLE VIII

### CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

All participants shall comply with the Conflict of Interest Policy.

Conflicts shall be disclosed promptly.

Failure to disclose known conflicts may constitute a violation of this Code.

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## ARTICLE IX

### PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Individuals speaking on behalf of OCG shall:

- Accurately represent official positions.
- Avoid unauthorized statements.
- Protect organizational credibility.

Members speaking solely in a personal capacity should avoid implying official organizational endorsement.

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## ARTICLE X

### SOCIAL MEDIA CONDUCT

Participation on social media remains a personal activity.

However, individuals acting in official OCG capacities shall:

- Maintain professionalism.
- Avoid harassment.
- Avoid knowingly false statements.
- Avoid conduct that materially damages the organization.

OCG does not require ideological conformity in personal expression.

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## ARTICLE XI

### LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

Directors, Officers, Delegates, Chapter Officers, Committee Members, and Volunteers with authority shall:

- Lead by example.

- Exercise authority responsibly.
- Encourage participation.
- Avoid favoritism.
- Avoid abuse of authority.

Leadership positions exist to serve the mission rather than personal interests.

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## ARTICLE XII

### ANTI-CAPTURE EXPECTATIONS

Participants shall not use OCG to:

- Advance personal political ambitions.
- Advance party interests.
- Promote factional control.
- Obtain personal financial benefit.
- Circumvent organizational safeguards.

The organization exists to serve members collectively.

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## ARTICLE XIII

### REPORTING CONCERNS

Any participant may report suspected violations.

Reports may be submitted to:

- Chapter leadership;
- The Governance and Integrity Committee;
- The Ombudsman;
- The Board.

Good-faith reporting is encouraged.

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## ARTICLE XIV

### INVESTIGATIONS

Alleged violations shall be reviewed fairly and objectively.

Individuals accused of violations shall:

- Receive notice;
- Have an opportunity to respond;
- Be treated fairly throughout the process.

The severity of procedures should be proportional to the seriousness of the allegation.

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## ARTICLE XV

### CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

Violations may result in:

#### Informal Resolution

Education, coaching, or mediation.

#### Written Warning

Formal documentation of misconduct.

#### Loss of Privileges

Committee assignments, delegate status, or leadership responsibilities.

#### Suspension

Temporary loss of participation rights.

#### Removal

Removal from office, committee service, or membership.

Corrective actions shall be proportionate and consistent.

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## ARTICLE XVI

### APPEALS

Individuals subject to disciplinary action may appeal.

Appeals shall be reviewed according to procedures established by the Board and Governance and Integrity Committee.

The Ombudsman may review procedural fairness concerns.

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## ARTICLE XVII

### WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION

No participant shall be punished for:

- Reporting misconduct;
- Reporting conflicts of interest;
- Reporting financial concerns;
- Reporting governance concerns;

when acting in good faith.

Retaliation constitutes an independent violation of this Code.

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## ARTICLE XVIII

### ANNUAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Directors, Officers, Chapter Officers, Committee Members, Employees, and designated volunteers shall annually acknowledge this Code.

The acknowledgment shall state:

“I have read, understand, and agree to comply with the Ohio Common Ground Code of Conduct.”

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# ARTICLE XIX

## REVIEW AND AMENDMENT

This Code shall be reviewed annually by the Governance and Integrity Committee.

Proposed revisions shall be submitted to the Board.

All revisions shall remain consistent with:

- Articles of Incorporation
- Constitutional Charter
- Bylaws
- Conflict of Interest Policy

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## CERTIFICATION

I have read, understand, and agree to comply with the Ohio Common Ground Code of Conduct.

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_