



2019 Annual Report

**Bringing Ethics Awareness and
Training to our Communities**

Visit us online at: www.sharedethics.com



2019 Annual Report

January 23, 2020

Dear SEAC Member Community Leader,

Thank you for your membership and commitment in the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission (SEAC).

As a reminder, SEAC represents you, the local government entities of Lake, Porter and LaPorte Counties who have voluntarily committed themselves to the Code of Shared Ethics and Values and who work together to achieve the Commission's primary goals of:

- Heightening awareness of ethical issues within municipal government.
- Assisting municipal employees with the practical tools to make ethical decisions.

We accomplish this mission through regular training sessions, training materials, advocacy articles and an ongoing collaborative effort to enhance ethical behavior within participating governments.

As required by Article 6(c) of our governing Interlocal Agreement, SEAC hereby submits this annual report to our member communities to share more details about our actions during 2019. I have organized the report into the following sections:

1. Structure and organization
2. Membership
3. Funding
4. Ethics Summit
5. Training
6. Candidate Ethics Pledge
7. Outreach and Media Coverage
8. 2019 and 2020 SEAC Goals

Thank you again for your membership and support of SEAC. Please feel free to reach out to me or your SEAC Commissioner with any questions.

Sincerely,

Daniel Klein, President SEAC
president@sharedethics.com
219-746-1445

2019 Annual Report

1. Structure and Organization

SEAC continued its efforts to transition to new leadership and a new committee structure in 2019. The creation of an Executive Committee including SEAC President, Vice President, Training Committee Chair, Communications Committee Chair and President Emeritus proved valuable in ensuring SEAC stayed on track toward meeting our 2019 goals, while also discussing possible future projects and activities.

Since the original committee structure was executed in early 2019, SEAC decided to discontinue both the Membership and Summit Committees as all SEAC members participate in that work.

Finally, SEAC continues to utilize NIRPC for administrative assistance and meeting location.

SEAC Committee Structure

Executive Committee (Chairperson: President, TBD)

- Members include:
 - Vice President (TBD)
 - Training Committee (Jamie Ward)
 - Communications Committee (Julie McElmurry)
 - President Emeritus (Cal Bellamy)
- Focus on overall Commission management
- Strategic Planning

Training Committee (Chairperson: Jamie Ward)

- Focused on Train the Trainer, Trainer Refresh, Board and Commissions and Department Head training
- Conducts Employee Survey at least once every 3 years
- Updates training as needed

Communications Committee (Chairperson: Julie McElmurry)

- Manages the Candidate Ethics Action Pledge processes
- Drafts and manages distribution of Annual Report
- Manages website contractor
- Ensures all key documents are current
- Provides commissioners with communication schedule and materials

January, 2020

Shared Ethics Advisory Commission

2019 Annual Report

2. Membership

During 2019 we saw turnover of valuable, experienced member representatives serving on the Commission and the addition of some exciting new Commission representatives. Below is the most up-to-date list of member communities and their appointed Commissioners. We currently have 6 communities (highlighted below) in the process of finding new Commissioners and we encourage those communities to fill their vacancies quickly. Thank you to all of our past Commissioners for their service! And, thank you to all of our current and new Commissioners for their hard work in meeting our 2019 goals.

SHARED ETHICS ADVISORY COMMISSION	
Community	Commissioner
Burns Harbor	Sarah Oudman
Cedar Lake	Bill Kuhn
Chesterton	
Crown Point	
Dyer	Julie McElmurry
East Chicago	Dick Morrisroe
Gary	
Hebron	Merlin Foresman
Highland	Tim Huizenga
Hobart	Rich Weigel
Lake County	Dan Klein
Lake Station	Karen Curtis
LaPorte County	Samantha Fife
Lowell	LeAnn Angerman
Merrillville	Art Russell
Munster	Michael McIntyre
Ogden Dunes	Dr. Steve Grandfield
Portage	
Porter County	Courtney Smith
Schererville	Lynn Volkmann
St John	
Valparaiso	John Bowker
Westville	
Whiting	Al Spajer
At Large	Cal Bellamy
At Large	Jamie Ward
Advisor	Karen Marben
Advisor	Tom DeGiulio

2019 Annual Report

3. Funding

Member community dues continue to fund SEAC. We also received grants in 2019 to assist with our Summit and administrative needs. NIPSCO again provided \$2,500 to assist with our Summit. And, we continued to use a 2018 grant from the Discovery Alliance (a partnership of the Crown Point Community Foundation, Legacy Foundation, Porter County Community Foundation and Unity Foundation of LaPorte County) to fund our 2019 Summit and help pay for our website improvements.

Michael Griffin, Clerk-Treasurer of Highland, continues to support SEAC as the fiscal agent to manage fee invoices and issue all SEAC checks. We thank Michael for all of his service and advice.

4. Ethics Summit

Our 2019 Summit was the best attended ever with around 300 attendees and extremely positive feedback.

As usual, it was free of charge (with assistance from the NIPSCO and Discovery Alliance grants noted above) and open to the public. Thomas Kirsch, US Attorney for the Northern District of Indiana was the keynote speaker and Daniel Lowery, former President and Professor of Calumet College was our master of ceremonies and case study facilitator.

Please join us at our 2020 Summit on April 9, 2020 at Avalon Manor where Violet Sistovaris, NIPSCO President will deliver the keynote address. This will be our 10th Summit!



The poster for the 2019 Shared Ethics Advisory Commission Summit features the organization's logo at the top. The main title '2019 ETHICS SUMMIT' is prominently displayed in large blue letters. Below this, the event details are listed: 'WHEN Thursday, April 4, 2019' with a schedule of '8:00 a.m. Breakfast/Registration' and '8:30 Presentation'. The location is specified as 'WHERE Avalon Manor, 3555 U.S. 30, Merrillville, Indiana'. The keynote speaker is 'THOMAS KIRSCH, US ATTORNEY FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA'. A sidebar on the right contains additional information: 'EVENT OPEN TO PUBLIC', 'PRE-REGISTER ONLINE' with a link to the Eventbrite page, 'RSVP: By Friday, March 29, 2019' with a note that 'Free event Registration required!', and 'SPONSORS' including NIPSCO and Discovery Alliance. The website 'www.SHAREDETHICS.COM' is listed at the bottom.

Shared Ethics
ADVISORY COMMISSION
Bringing Ethics Awareness and Training to our Communities

2019 ETHICS SUMMIT

WHEN
Thursday, April 4, 2019
8:00 a.m. Breakfast/Registration
8:30 Presentation

WHERE
Avalon Manor
3555 U.S. 30, Merrillville, Indiana

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:
THOMAS KIRSCH, US ATTORNEY FOR
THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA

EVENT OPEN TO PUBLIC

PRE-REGISTER ONLINE
Eventbrite:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/shared-ethics-advisory-commission-2019-ethics-summit-tickets-57205704093>

RSVP:
By Friday, March 29, 2019
Free event
Registration required!

SPONSORS
NIPSCO
Discovery Alliance

www.SHAREDETHICS.COM

2019 Annual Report

5. Training

Our main focus in 2019 was preparing for and executing the once-every-three-year employee survey. This survey is the fourth time (2009, 2012, 2015 and 2019) SEAC has polled local government employees on their feelings about ethics training, workplace issues and their knowledge of what to do if they witness unethical behavior. The survey is also one way to measure if SEAC-sponsored ethics training is effective, relevant and valued.

Member communities' municipal employees received this survey in early April and nearly 1,400 completed the 13-question survey. We contracted with Purdue Northwest Department of History and Philosophy (Institute for Social and Policy Research) to administer the survey, tabulate the results, and provide analysis and reporting. The final reports were completed in August including community specific reports where statistically possible and a composite report with interesting highlights.

First, and very importantly, public employees say ethics training is worthwhile. In this survey, 78 percent of the respondents reported that they valued or highly valued ethics training. The usefulness of SEAC training is indicated by the responses of ethics-trained employees compared to the untrained. To a statistically significant degree, trained employees are more likely to know how to report unethical behavior, more willing to report such behavior and more confident that their superiors will respond appropriately.

The survey also asked about workplace issues – favoritism, conflicts of interest, misuse of public property, harassment and bullying – with favoritism, followed by conflicts of interest being the most frequently cited. SEAC training will increasingly focus on these areas of concern.

On balance, the results of the current survey are encouraging because of the value employees place on ethics training, the indications that SEAC training is producing positive results and the willingness of public employees to express their feelings about issues that need attention.

The continuing challenge is to keep SEAC ethics training interesting and relevant. Therefore, in 2020 we will be kicking off an effort to research the updating of our SEAC employee ethics training curriculum to work toward that improvement.



2019 Annual Report

In addition, the Training Committee hosted our biennial Management Ethics Training for our member community department heads, supervisors and managers in September. Just over 100 people attended with positive feedback for the training provided by David Limardi of Limardi Consulting.

2019

Management Ethics Training

WHEN
Wednesday, September 25, 2019
9:30 a.m. Registration
10:00 a.m. Presentation
12:00 p.m. Box Lunch

WHERE
Avalon Manor
3555 U.S. 30, Merrillville, Indiana

KEYNOTE SPEAKER
David Limardi
Limardi Consulting, LLC

Free event for SEAC Member Community

- Department Heads
- Supervisors
- Managers

Pre-Register Online at
www.sharedethics.com

RSVP:
By Friday, Sept. 20, 2019
Registration required!

Lunch will be served


Visit us online at: www.sharedethics.com

2019 Annual Report

6. Candidates Ethics Pledge

SEAC continued its practice of inviting candidates for all county, city, town and township offices in Lake, LaPorte and Porter Counties to sign its Candidate Ethics Action Pledge for both the 2019 primary in May and the 2019 general election in November. This included offering an online pledge process that was introduced to all 2019 general election candidates who provided their email addresses to their election boards. Below is a copy of the letter and pledge sent to all candidates and the statistics of those who signed the pledge.

- Primary: 177 candidates signed the pledge; 43% of all candidates
- General Election: 185 candidates signed the pledge; 56% of all candidates


Shared Ethics
ADVISORY COMMISSION
BRINGING ETHICS AWARENESS AND TRAINING TO OUR COMMUNITIES

March 20, 2019

Re: Candidate Ethics Pledge

Dear Candidate:

In the name of good government and desiring to promote an ethics culture throughout Northwest Indiana, we invite you to sign and return the enclosed Ethics Pledge. This invitation is being extended to all candidates for local offices in Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties.


The pledge asks you to personally support actions and policies to promote ethical behavior among your community's public employees. Specifically we are asking you to:


- Provide formal ethics training for your employees.
- Enact or continue to support a strong public employee Ethics Code in your community.
- Develop or support personnel policies that enable employees to file an ethics grievance without fear of retribution (whistleblower protection).

We hope you will acknowledge your support for ethical decision-making by signing and returning the enclosed Pledge. This pledge is one of the projects of the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission. If you wish to learn more about the Commission, please visit our website (www.sharedethics.com).


Please respond by April 12th. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Daniel M. Klein
Commission President


Courtney C. Smith
Commission Vice President

Visit us online at www.sharedethics.com
6100 Southport Road Portage, Indiana 46368 (219) 706-9018


Shared Ethics
ADVISORY COMMISSION
BRINGING ETHICS AWARENESS AND TRAINING TO OUR COMMUNITIES

2019
Candidate Ethics Action Pledge

If elected to the office I seek, I commit myself to being an advocate for ethical practices within my realm of responsibility. Specifically, I pledge to support in my unit of government to the extent of my authority and ability:

- Ethics training for all employees.
- A comprehensive ethics policy and vigorous enforcement.
- Whistleblower protection for employees filing ethics complaints.

Dated: _____

_____ Community	_____ Signature
_____ Office Sought	_____ Printed Name

Return by: April 12, 2019
Return to: Pledge, Shared Ethics Advisory Commission, 6100 Southport Rd., Portage, IN 46368
KD_10029554_1.DOCX

Shared Ethics

ADVISORY COMMISSION

BRINGING ETHICS AWARENESS AND TRAINING TO OUR COMMUNITIES

2019 Annual Report

2019 PRIMARY - SEAC CANDIDATE ETHICS PLEDGE STATISTICS

County	Total # of Candidates	# of Candidates who signed the Pledge	% of Candidates who signed the Pledge
Lake County	264	115	44%
LaPorte County	65	15	23%
Porter County	83	47	57%
TOTAL	412	177	43%

LAKE COUNTY	Total # of Candidates	# of Candidates who signed the Pledge	% of Candidates who signed the Pledge
Cedar Lake	6	5	83%
Crown Point	31	16	52%
Dyer	7	5	71%
East Chicago	34	9	26%
Gary	49	15	31%
Griffith	9	2	22%
Hammond	17	7	41%
Highland	10	7	70%
Hobart	16	9	56%
Lake Station	20	7	35%
Lowell	10	4	40%
Merrillville	14	3	21%
Munster	11	8	73%
Schererville	8	5	63%
St John	13	9	69%
Whiting	8	3	38%
Winfield	1	1	100%
TOTAL	264	115	44%

LAPORTE COUNTY	Total # of Candidates	# of Candidates who signed the Pledge	% of Candidates who signed the Pledge
Kingsford Heights	17	2	12%
LaPorte	21	5	24%
Michigan City	27	8	30%
TOTAL	65	15	23%

PORTER COUNTY	Total # of Candidates	# of Candidates who signed the Pledge	% of Candidates who signed the Pledge
Beverly Shores	4	0	0%
Burns Harbor	6	4	67%
Chesterton	9	5	56%
Hebron	10	6	60%
Kouts	4	1	25%
Portage	22	14	64%
Porter	6	2	33%
Valparaiso	22	15	68%
TOTAL	83	47	57%

Disclaimer: The stats by city/town are based on candidate address, so could be slightly off as a few candidates live in different towns.

2019 GENERAL ELECTION - SEAC CANDIDATE ETHICS PLEDGE STATISTICS

County	Total # of Candidates	# of Candidates who signed the Pledge	% of Candidates who signed the Pledge
Lake County	188	106	56%
LaPorte County	56	16	29%
Porter County	84	63	75%
TOTAL	328	185	56%

LAKE COUNTY	Total # of Candidates	# of Candidates who signed the Pledge	% of Candidates who signed the Pledge
Cedar Lake	7	7	100%
Crown Point	18	15	83%
Dyer	6	6	100%
East Chicago	13	3	23%
Gary	13	5	38%
Griffith	7	1	14%
Hammond	13	6	46%
Highland	9	9	100%
Hobart	12	9	75%
Lake Station	14	5	36%
Lowell	8	5	63%
Merrillville	11	4	36%
Munster	9	8	89%
New Chicago	10	3	30%
Schererville	9	9	100%
Schneider	7	1	14%
St John	7	6	86%
Whiting	7	2	29%
Winfield	8	2	25%
TOTAL	188	106	56%

LAPORTE COUNTY	Total # of Candidates	# of Candidates who signed the Pledge	% of Candidates who signed the Pledge
LaPorte	15	4	27%
Long Beach	11	5	45%
Michiana Shores	10	0	0%
Michigan City	20	7	35%
TOTAL	56	16	29%

PORTER COUNTY	Total # of Candidates	# of Candidates who signed the Pledge	% of Candidates who signed the Pledge
Beverly Shores	8	4	50%
Burns Harbor	8	7	88%
Chesterton	8	6	75%
Dune Acres	4	0	0%
Hebron	9	8	89%
Kouts	4	1	25%
Portage	17	15	88%
Porter	7	4	57%
Valparaiso	19	18	95%
TOTAL	84	63	75%

2019 Annual Report

7. Outreach & Media Coverage

The work of the Commission has received widespread media coverage. Thanks are owed to local media for their strong support of our efforts to promote ethical decision making. *Articles in print and other citations of media coverage are listed below.* Please note that the print articles and the same articles from the Internet, where links are provided, may have slightly different titles, and some online articles may only be provided for a limited period of time.

SEAC Media Coverage in 2019	
Date	Coverage
January 25, 2019	NWI TIMES article, titled, “Angry residents tell St. John leaders they expect transparency, ethical decision-making.” https://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/lake/angry-residents-tell-st-john-leaders-they-expect-transparency-ethical/article_3216644c-a2e9-52f6-a76a-2e90adc2e085.html?mode=nowapp
January 26, 2019	NWI TIMES article titled, “New ethics commission president takes ‘the bull by the horns’.” https://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/lake/new-ethics-commission-president-takes-the-bull-by-the-horns/article_240dcaa0-9906-5498-ba71-9a7fffd472cc.html?mode=nowapp
April 5, 2019	NWI TIMES article titled, “Ethics training a ‘first line of defense’ against Region’s public corruption, U.S. Attorney Kirsch says.” https://www.nwitimes.com/news/ethics-training-a-first-line-of-defense-against-region-s/article_711311ee-e0e0-5674-86a5-1c21a976349c.html?mode=nowapp
April 11, 2019	The Regional News article by Cal Bellamy, titled, “Ethics in Government: A Work in Progress.” (LaPorte County newspapers available through Kiel Media).
April 18, 2019	NWI TIMES article by Cal Bellamy, titled, “GUEST COMMENTARY: Ethics in government is a work in progress.” https://www.nwitimes.com/opinion/columnists/guest-commentary/guest-commentary-ethics-in-government-is-a-work-in-progress/article_d9ce063c-53cc-5c6a-a890-0d33122f72db.html
May 5, 2019	NWI TIMES article by SEAC, titled, “Which NWI candidates commit to ethics in government?” https://www.nwitimes.com/news/opinion/forum/which-nwi-candidates-commit-to-ethics-in-government/article_5d250b27-1423-5e0e-9080-c62ba81588e6.html
May 7, 2019	NWI TIMES article titled, “Crown Point Mayor signs ethics pledge.” https://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/crown-point-mayor-signs-ethics-pledge/article_c040a4c5-06e6-5a6a-8f2c-2df289c4e2e6.html
October, 2019	Midwest Social Sciences Journal Volume 22 article by Calvin Bellamy titled, “Citizen Initiative to Improve Local Government Ethics: Northwest Indiana Experience”
October 31, 2019	Westville Indicator and The Regional News article titled, “2019 Candidates Sign Ethics Pledge” (LaPorte County newspapers available through Kiel Media).
November 5, 2019	NWI TIMES Editorial by The Times Editorial Board, titled “Demand real ethics, not just lip service, from candidates” https://www.nwitimes.com/opinion/editorial/editorial-demand-real-ethics-not-just-lip-service-from-candidates/article_c2da48fc-6f06-5a23-b810-2b44738c54a2.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share

2019 Annual Report

SEAC Media Coverage in 2019	
Date	Coverage
November 10, 2019	NWI TIMES Guest Commentary by Cal Bellamy and Dan Klein, titled, “Public employees speak out on local government ethics” https://www.nwitemes.com/opinion/columnists/guest-commentary/guest-commentary-public-employees-speak-out-on-local-government-ethics/article_6688555f-cd86-5d9f-b947-d2142de6f67b.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share
November 30, 2019	NWI TIMES article by Times Staff, titled, “Shared Ethics Advisory Comm. Sets 2020 meeting dates” https://www.nwitemes.com/news/local/porter/portage/shared-ethics-advisory-commission-sets-meeting-dates/article_1b2f27a7-0219-5bef-855b-91bbf1c95aaf.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share
December 16, 2019	POST TRIBUNE article by Alexandra Kukulka titled, “When elected officials do not show up for work, there are few options to remove them from office” https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/post-tribune/ct-ptb-public-office-attendance-st-1215-20191213-bhcmvmvs3zalblgl5g2wodvp6a-story.html

8. 2019 and 2020 SEAC Goals

SEAC achieved all of the 2019 goals including the every-three-year Employee Ethics Survey and upgrading the website. We continue to be challenged by the filling of Commission vacancies but are encouraged by the increase engagement of all Commission members.

SEAC 2019 Goals

1. Finish leadership transition, moving from the formation/growth stage to a broader management structure emphasizing efficient operation, effective delivery of services all done in a sustainable manner (Strategic Planning)
2. Host the Ethics Summit
3. Solicit signatures on the Candidate Ethics Action Pledge from primary and general election candidates and publicize the results
4. Refine and electronically administer the Employee Ethics Survey and publish the results
5. Host Train the Trainer training as needed
6. Host Department Head Training
7. Continued focus on filling Commission vacancies and increased engagement of all Commission members with the community leadership they represent
8. Continue to upgrade the SEAC website to effectively tell the SEAC story



2019 Annual Report

SEAC approved the 2020 Goals as listed below in our January, 2020 meeting. While continuing our hosting of the Summit and training, in 2020 we expect to research and begin to update our municipal employee ethics training.

SEAC 2020 Goals

1. Host the Ethics Summit
2. Solicit signatures on the Candidate Ethics Action Pledge from primary and general election candidates and publicize the results
3. Provide quarterly updates via the media on Commission activities and goals
4. Initiate actions to reenergize our current member community trainers and host Train the Trainer training as needed
5. Host Board & Commission Training
6. Research and begin the process to update our municipal employee ethics training curriculum
7. Reconnect with members communities with newly elected leadership to encourage participation
8. Focus on filling Commission vacancies and expanding Commission membership to municipalities who have yet to join, especially in LaPorte County

January, 2019

Shared Ethics Advisory Commission