



2022 Annual Report



Bringing Ethics Awareness and Training to our Communities

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2022 Annual Report

January 18, 2023

Dear SEAC Member Community Leader,

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

As a reminder, SEAC represents 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 2022. 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. 2022 and 2023 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,

John Bowker, President SEAC
president@sharedethics.com

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1. Structure and Organization

SEAC is working effectively and efficiently with the current structure established in 2019 including the following committees: Executive, Training, Communications and Summit. This structure along with regular Commission and committee meetings have proven valuable in ensuring SEAC stays on track toward meeting our goals, while also discussing possible future projects and activities.

SEAC continued to utilize NIRPC for administrative assistance in 2022. We will continue to utilize the NIRPC location for in-person meetings and SEAC material storage in 2023.

2022 SEAC Committee Structure

Executive Committee (Chair: President, John Bowker)

- Members include:
 - Vice President (Art Russell)
 - Training Committee (Paula Carey)
 - Communications Committee (Julie McElmurry)
 - President Emeritus (Cal Bellamy)
- Focus on overall Commission management
- Strategic Planning

Training Committee (Chair: Paula Carey)

- Focuses on Train the Trainer, Training Refresh, Board and Commissions and Managers training
- Conducts Employee Survey every few years
- Updates training as needed

Communications Committee (Chair: Julie McElmurry)

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

Summit

- Plans and hosts the Summit
- All Commissioners assist with Summit work

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2. Membership


During 2022 we saw several changes to our Commissioners and Board of Delegates. We had some long time Commissioners leaving including Dan Klein, Lynn Volkmann and Rich Weigel as well as some shorter-term Commissioners leaving including Rob Horning and April Daly. We thank them all for their service and support of ethics! Below is the most up-to-date list of member communities and their appointed Commissioners and Delegates. We currently have six communities in the process of finding new Commissioners and one community in the process of finding a new Board of Delegate member.

SEAC Commissioners and Joint Board of Delegates - JAN 5, 2023			
#	Community	SEAC Commissioner	Joint Board of Delegates Member
1	Burns Harbor		Jane Jordan
2	Cedar Lake	Bill Kuhn	Randy Niemeyer
3	Chesterton	Todd Elliott	James Ton
4	Crown Point		Andrew Kyres
5	Dyer	Julie McElmurry	Alan Brooks
6	East Chicago	Dick Morrisroe	Gilda Orange
7	Gary	Burgess Peoples	Darren Washington
8	Hebron	Merlin Foresman	Don Ensign
9	Highland	Tim Huizenga	Thomas Black
10	Hobart		Deborah Longer
11	Lake County	Cecile LaCombe Petro	Jerry Tippy
12	Lake Station		Bill Carroll
13	LaPorte County		Joie Winski
14	Lowell	Manny Frausto	John Yelkich
15	Merrillville	Art Russell, Vice President	Richard Hardaway
16	Munster	Michael McIntyre	Wendy Mis
17	Ogden Dunes	Kathy Kniola	Steve Grandfield
18	Portage	Releisa Parker	Sue Lynch, Vice President
19	Porter County	Courtney Smith	Laura Shur Blaney
20	Schererville	Sandra Davis	Janice Malinowski, President
21	St John		
22	Valparaiso	John Bowker, President	Peter Anderson
23	Whiting	Brian Lowry	Steve Spebar
	President Emeritus, At Large	Cal Bellamy	--
	At Large	Michael Suggs	--
	Advisor	Karen Marben	--
	Advisor	Tom DeGiulio	--

*Peach highlighted rows are members currently with no Commissioners or Board of Delegate members

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We encourage those communities to fill their vacancies quickly. Below we have included information regarding the duties of these roles for reference.



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Commissioners

Qualifications:

1. Not an employee of the appointing entity.
2. "... persons who live, work in or hold property in Lake, Porter or LaPorte Counties, Indiana." *
3. "These members should be persons of good character" *
4. Past and current members have included private citizens active in their community, such as retired officials or judges, lawyers, educators, and clergy.


Appointment:

<u>Cities</u>	<u>Town</u>
Nominated by Mayor Approved by City Council	Nominated and approved by Town Council

Duties:

1. Faithfully attend regular Commission meetings (every other month) and also special meetings and Commission events as needed.
2. Actively participate in the discussion, planning and execution of the Commission's work.
 - Ethics Summit
 - Training activities
 - Ethics Pledge
 - Communication activities
3. Regularly update and maintain contact with community leadership and trainers serving your community.
4. Advocate and promote ethics in local government.
5. Committed to setting a strong example of integrity and high moral conduct.

*Interlocal Agreement



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Board of Delegates Members

Qualifications: Preferably an elected official from the member community, but a senior staff member is acceptable.

Appointment:

<u>Cities</u>	<u>Town</u>
Nominated by Mayor Approved by City Council	Nominated and approved by Town Council

Duties:

1. Faithfully attend Board of Delegate meetings (two to four meetings a year, called by the chairperson)
2. Elect a chairperson and determine which member community's clerk-treasurer will serve as fiscal administrator
3. Receive reports from the Commission on SEAC activities and programs
4. Review and set member community dues for the coming year
5. Review and approve SEAC's budget for the coming year
6. Advocate and promote ethics in local government.
7. Committed to setting a strong example of integrity and high moral conduct.

3. Funding

Member community dues continue to fund SEAC. During 2022 we were able to spend most of our budget with the major expenditures being our Ethics Summit, and the final payments for the new training videos. We expect 2023 to also be a full year!

Michael Griffin and then Mark Herak, the Clerk-Treasurers of Highland act as our fiscal agent to manage fee invoices and issue all SEAC checks. We thank Michael and Mark for all their service and advice.

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4. Ethics Summit

SEAC held its 11th Ethics Summit on October 27th. This free of charge event was open to the public and well attended with just over 140 attendees. We had an Ethics Panel this year instead of a keynote speaker and it was very well received. The Ethics Panel was moderated by Jose Padilla, President of Valparaiso University and the panel included David Cook, State of Indiana Inspector General, Laura Shurr Blaney, Porter County Commissioner and Michael Tolbert, Past President of the Indiana State Bar Association. Attendees also participated in engaging conversation about various ethics dilemmas. Overall, a successful event! We expect the 2023 Ethics Summit to be held sometime in the Fall of 2023.


2022
ETHICS SUMMIT

<p>WHEN THURSDAY OCTOBER 27, 2022 8:00 a.m. Registration / Breakfast 8:30 a.m. Presentation</p> <p>WHERE AVALON MANOR 3555 U.S. 30 Merrillville, Indiana</p> <p>Ethics Panel Moderator: Jose Padilla, President Valparaiso University Laura Shurr Blaney, Porter Co. Commissioner David Cook, State of IN Inspector General Michael Tolbert, IN State Bar Past President</p>	<p>EVENT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC</p> <p>Pre-Register Online at: www.sharedethics.com</p> <p>RSVP: By Friday, October 14, 2022 Free event Registration required!</p> <p>Supported by </p>
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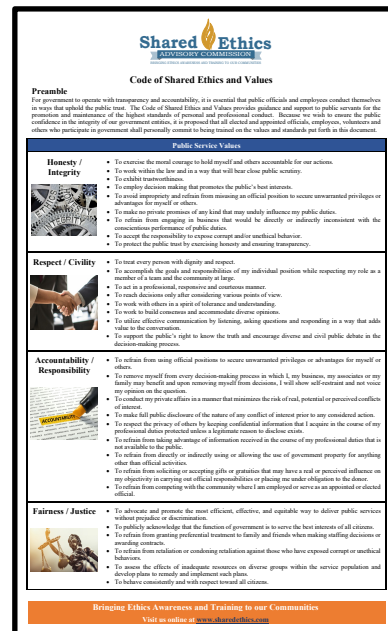
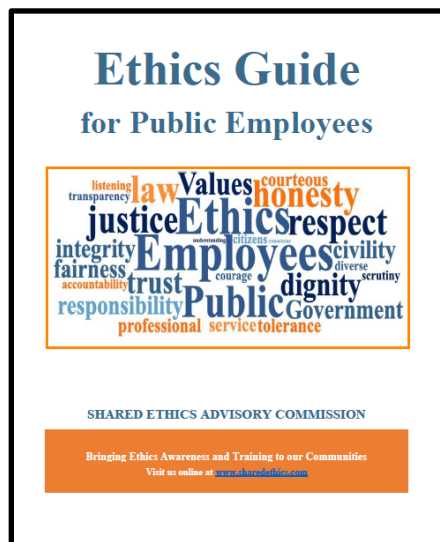
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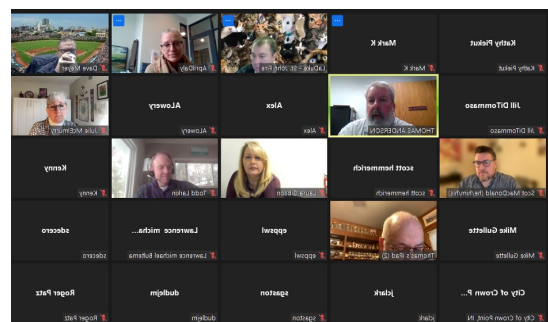
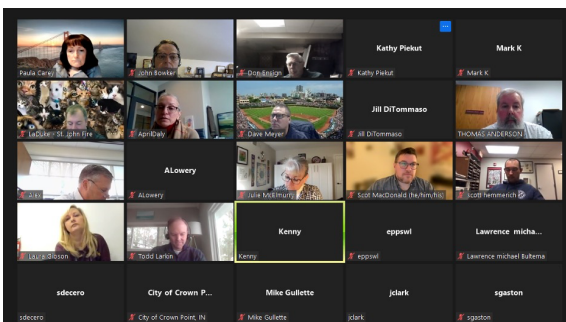
5. Training

The Training Committee continued to be very busy in 2022:

- They coordinated the distribution of the Employee Ethics Guide along with copies/posters of the reformatted “Code of Shared Ethics and Values” to all current member community employees along with elected officials and other appointed board and commission members.



- They completed the work, with Traliant (training video vendor), to create an updated and relevant training video, and to update the training tools for our municipal employee training curriculum.
- They led a rollout of that updated training curriculum on November 18, 2022, via Zoom. This “Train the Trainer” training was attended by 30 trainers from 11 of our member communities.



We’re very excited to encourage all member communities to make 2023 the “Year of Ethics Training” utilizing this new and improved curriculum.

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6. Candidates Ethics Pledge

The Shared Ethics Advisory Commission invited candidates for all county, town, city, and township offices in Lake, LaPorte and Porter Counties to sign our Candidate Ethics Action Pledge for the Primary election and nominees for all county, town, and city offices for the General election. The Pledge is very straight-forward: it asks candidates to commit to providing ethics training for all employees for whom they are responsible, to support a comprehensive ethics policy with vigorous enforcement, and to support whistleblower protection for employees filing ethics complaints.

The Primary election pledge response rates varied from county to county with 45% of Lake County candidates signing the pledge, 26% of LaPorte County candidates and 47% of Porter County candidates signing. Overall, the response rate was a disappointing 38% (compared to 37% in 2020 and 43% in 2019). However, looking at just county-wide races, the candidate response rate was much higher at 65%. While we were hopeful for a greater response from township candidates, we were pleased that a significant number of candidates for county-wide offices indicate a commitment to ethics education.

2022 PRIMARY ELECTION - SEAC CANDIDATE ETHICS PLEDGE STATISTICS

ALL PRIMARY CANDIDATES - INCLUDING TOWNSHIPS

County	Total # of Candidates	# of Candidates who signed the Pledge	% of Candidates who signed the Pledge
Lake County	131	59	45%
LaPorte County	136	35	26%
Porter County	93	44	47%
TOTAL	360	138	38%

ONLY COUNTY PRIMARY CANDIDATES

County	Total # of Candidates	# of Candidates who signed the Pledge	% of Candidates who signed the Pledge
Lake County	32	19	59%
LaPorte County	22	14	64%
Porter County	23	17	74%
TOTAL	77	50	65%

2022 GENERAL ELECTION - SEAC CANDIDATE ETHICS PLEDGE STATISTICS

ALL GENERAL CANDIDATES

County	Total # of Candidates	# of Candidates who signed the Pledge	% of Candidates who signed the Pledge
Lake County	38	25	66%
LaPorte County	16	10	63%
Porter County	25	17	68%
TOTAL	79	52	66%

For the General election cycle response rates were consistent, but lower than we'd like to see across the counties with 66% of Lake County candidates signing the pledge, 63% of LaPorte County candidates and 68% of Porter County candidates signing. Overall, the response rate was 66% (compared to 67% in 2020 and 56% in 2019).

SEAC has been asking candidates to sign the Pledge for the last 8 years and we are committed to challenging all local candidates to support the Pledge, recognizing that it represents a commonsense approach that leads to an obvious community benefit. SEAC ethics training helps prepare public employees to apply ethical decision-making in circumstances encountered in the course of their day-to-day duties

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7. Outreach & Media Coverage

The work of the Commission has received widespread media coverage in 2022. 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.

SEAC Media Coverage in 2022	
Date	Coverage
March 30, 2022	NWI TIMES article by Dan Carden titled, “Deadline nearing for local candidates to sign ethics pledge” https://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/deadline-nearing-for-local-candidates-to-sign-ethics-pledge/article_86fef505-cc0d-5b1a-9f27-5b8968965c60.html
April 5, 2022	Interview with Dan Klein and Julie McElmurry about SEAC and the Candidate Ethics Pledge on Regionally Speaking Radio Show on Lake Shore Public Radio, https://www.lakeshorepublicradio.org/show/regionally-speaking/2022-04-05/regionally-speaking-april-5-2022
April 28, 2022	The Regional News and Westville Indicator article titled, “2022 Primary Election Candidates Sign Ethics Pledge” (LaPorte County newspapers available through Kiel Media).
August 21, 2022	NWI TIMES guest commentary by Cal Bellamy titled, “Ethics commission at work” https://www.nwitimes.com/opinion/columnists/guest-commentary/ethics-commission-at-work/article_f57047ee-288c-5028-a403-cfded8a7e744.html
September 8, 2022	The Regional News and Westville Indicator article titled, “Ethics Commission at Work” by Calvin Bellamy, Guest Contributor (LaPorte County newspapers available through Kiel Media).
September 26, 2022	NWI TIMES article by Times Staff titled, “Shared Ethics Advisory Commission plans summit” https://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/shared-ethics-advisory-commission-plans-summit/article_4ec230de-76b4-5e6c-b59a-06d31dfc8db2.html
November 3, 2022	The Regional News and Westville Indicator article titled, “Ethics Summit Discusses Local Government Issues” (LaPorte County newspapers available through Kiel Media).
November 3, 2022	The Regional News and Westville Indicator article titled, “2022 Candidates Sign Ethics Pledge” (LaPorte County newspapers available through Kiel Media).
November 22, 2022	The Chesterton Tribune, audio news brief titled, “SEAC meetings set for 2023” https://www.chestertontribune.com/audio-articles/player/audio-article-8340
December 4, 2022	NWI TIMES guest commentary by Cal Bellamy titled, “Preparing for an ethical future” https://www.nwitimes.com/opinion/columnists/guest-commentary/preparing-for-an-ethical-future/article_20266099-571c-5444-ae3d-f4ada95cab77.html
December 20, 2022	The Post Tribune article titled, “Community News: SEAC releases 2023 schedule”

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8. 2022 and 2023 SEAC Goals

SEAC is happy to share that we were able to complete most of our 2022 goals. We agreed as a Commission to move the Manager Training to 2023 so we could focus the Training Committee's efforts on the updated training rollout. We are pleased that we were able to provide training to the public via our annual Summit. Great progress was made in our training with the Ethics Guide being distributed, and the training video and curriculum being updated. And, most excitedly the new training being rolled out to our trainers! This along with the continued work on the Candidate Ethics Pledge made for a busy and productive year for SEAC!

SEAC – 2022 Goals

1. Host Ethics Summit **COMPLETED**
2. Host Manager Training. **MOVED TO 2023**
3. Solicit signatures of the Candidate Ethics Action Pledge from primary and general election candidates and publicize the results. **COMPLETED**
4. Finalize the refreshing of the municipal employee ethics training curriculum and rollout to member community trainers. **COMPLETED**
5. Provide regular updates via the media on Commission activities and goals. **ONGOING**
6. Continue the focus on filling Commission vacancies and expanding Commission membership to municipalities who have yet to join, especially in LaPorte County. **ONGOING**



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SEAC approved the 2023 Goals as listed below at our January 2023 meeting. We plan to continue our hosting of the Ethics Summit and Manager Training presentation in 2023, and we will also again ask Primary and General election candidates to sign the Candidate Ethics Pledge. Finally, 2023 will be the “Year of Ethics Training” for our member communities, so we will be doing all we can to support that goal.

SEAC – 2023 Goals

1. Host Ethics Summit
2. Host Manager Training
3. Solicit signatures of the Candidate Ethics Action Pledge from primary and general election candidates and publicize the results.
4. Support our member communities in getting Ethics Training completed for all their municipal employees.
5. Provide regular updates via the media on Commission activities and goals.
6. Continue the focus on filling Commission vacancies and expanding Commission membership to municipalities who have yet to join, especially in LaPorte County.