

[https://nwitimes.com/opinion/article\\_6d876b6b-e2db-49a5-80e6-7ecda0723924.html](https://nwitimes.com/opinion/article_6d876b6b-e2db-49a5-80e6-7ecda0723924.html)

SPOTLIGHT

## COMMENTARY: Why do they say no to ethics training?

**Calvin Bellamy**

Mar 22, 2026



Cal Bellamy  
Provided

---

Calvin Bellamy

**A**lmost everyone wants to do the right thing and avoid the wrong thing. Often, we just casually assume we will know which is which when the time comes. After all, throughout our whole lives we have been guided by our families, during our school years, at places of worship and through the good example of others.

And yet, we still make mistakes, sometimes because of self-interest. Other times just by acting without thinking of the consequences. Acting ethically means considering how what we do might affect others.

It's not always easy to know what is ethical. It's a learned skill. But it is made much easier when specific guidance has been given. That's where the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission (SEAC) comes in. SEAC's mission is to help local government employees with practical, down-to-earth ethics training.

---

## **People are also reading...**

- 1 USW workers to start picketing after being locked out of BP Whiting Refinery**
- 2 BP locks out union workers at Whiting refinery after contract talks stall**
- 3 Crown Point punches ticket to first-ever state basketball final**
- 4 Speed cameras begin issuing warnings, fines on I-65 worksite**

---

Twenty-three Lake, LaPorte and Porter county communities have decided it is beneficial for their employees to receive ethics training geared to the specific challenges they might encounter. These 23 communities represent all three county governments and most but not all of the Northwest Indiana towns and cities.

Why do some communities decide not to join SEAC? Over the years a variety of reasons have been shared. Here are some of those reasons:

**Cost.** Tight budgets are a fact of life for all units of local government, but SEAC membership is very affordable. Besides a one-time modest enrollment fee, member communities pay an even more modest annual membership fee ranging from \$2,250 for the largest communities down as low as \$188 for small communities. Every dollar SEAC collects is used for promoting local government ethics. SEAC is all-volunteer and has no overhead.

**Bragging/apologizing.** Some community leaders incredibly say they aren't joining because it will seem like they are bragging about how good they are. Why isn't that something worth bragging about? Maybe more understandable, but still not correct, are those communities who fail to join because they feel like they are admitting that something is wrong in their workforce. Couldn't the same thing be said about the safety training they routinely provide? Whether it be ethics or safety training, the purpose of training is to ensure a good, safe work environment, not point fingers.

**Common sense.** One council president asserted her town only hires people with common sense and therefore, does not need to offer ethics training. Wouldn't it be nice if life were so simple? Common sense has to come from someplace; it's not automatic. Furthermore, common sense does not seem to be all that common these days.

**Do it yourself.** Some communities argue they do not need SEAC because they provide ethics training on their own. If that is true, SEAC commends their efforts. But we wonder where those communities obtain their course material and the quality of their training. These communities also generally speak in the past tense, "we already did that," as if ethics training is once and done.

These are some of the considerations communities have shared with SEAC over the years. We respect that each community must determine what works best for it needs. SEAC remains open to future conversations, and, in some cases, continued dialogue has led communities joining at a later time. SEAC remains committed to supporting local governments in strengthening and sustaining ethics education.



Please urge your community — whether a SEAC member or not — to firmly commit to an ongoing program of ethics training.

AdChoices 



CEDARHURST OF CROWN POINT

ASSISTED LIVING · MEMORY CARE

To learn more, call **219-212-0899** or visit **CedarhurstCrownPoint.com**  

[Skip](#)

Calvin Bellamy, a lifelong resident of Northwest Indiana, has been involved with SEAC since its beginning. The opinions are the writer's.