



News from: **City of Oakland Public Ethics Commission**

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 15, 2015

**Oakland Public Ethics Commission Investigating Policy, Distribution, and Receipt of Tickets by Oakland Officials**

With new authority granted by the Oakland Government Ethics Act in December 2014, the Public Ethics Commission (Commission) on June 15, 2016, opened an investigation into the use and distribution of Oakland Coliseum and Oracle Arena tickets received by City of Oakland officials. The investigation will include a review of the City's process for the receipt and distribution of tickets to Coliseum events, and whether any ticket recipients have violated the City's ticket distribution policy, the City's gift-limits, or the City's gift disclosure requirements. The Commission also will review related ticket distribution policies to determine whether these policies and procedures are consistent with state and local law.

**Public Ethics Commission**



“Investigating the receipt of Oakland Coliseum and Oracle Arena tickets is within the Commission's new authority provided by the Government Ethics Act, which was proposed by the Commission and passed by City Council unanimously in December 2014,” said Whitney Barazoto, Executive Director to the Public Ethics Commission. “The new authority and staffing enables the Commission to both investigate the distribution and receipt of tickets and review the City's policy. If the Commission finds a violation of law, it can impose penalties up to and including monetary fines. The Commission also can recommend legislative or policy changes to City Council.”

Preliminary review of a Commission investigation must remain confidential pursuant to the City Charter; however, once Commission staff open an investigation, staff will acknowledge the existence of that investigation. Accordingly, the information in this release is provided to the public to confirm the existence of the Commission's investigation in order to keep citizens well-informed to the fullest extent possible. Depending on the complexity of any given case, a Commission investigation can take several months to complete.

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The Public Ethics Commission ([www.oaklandnet.com/pec](http://www.oaklandnet.com/pec)) was created by voters in 1996 and has grown significantly in recent years due to the new Government Ethics Act and City Charter amendment passed in 2014. The Commission is an independent City agency, governed by a seven-member citizen board, responsible for ensuring compliance with the City's new Government Ethics Act, as well as Oakland's Campaign Reform Act, Lobbyist Registration Act, Limited Public Financing Act, False Endorsement in Campaign Literature Act, and Sunshine Ordinance. The Commission's activities include leadership, education, ethics and campaign finance disclosure, investigations, and administrative prosecution.

In November 2014, City Council passed and Oakland voters approved an amendment to the City Charter to strengthen the Commission by expanding its authority, staffing, and independence so that it can better achieve its mission to ensure fairness, openness, honesty, and integrity in City Government. The Commission received the added funding and positions in July 2015 and has hired three new staff in the past six months, bolstering the Commission's enforcement, legislative/policy leadership, and education and advice.

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