



INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

State Ethics Training Requirements for Local Officials: Frequently Asked Questions

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Overview of Requirement

1. **What requirements does AB 1234 create regarding ethics training for local officials?**

The basic thrust of AB 1234 is to require covered officials (see next question) to take two hours of training in ethics principles and laws every two years.¹

Who's Covered

2. **Who must receive mandatory ethics training?**

Basically the requirement applies to those elected or appointed officials who are compensated for their service or reimbursed for their expenses.² The specific trigger for this requirement is whether the agency either compensates or reimburses expenses for members of any of its Brown Act covered bodies; if it does, then all elected and appointed "local agency officials" (as defined) must receive this training.³ "Local agency official" means any member of a legislative

¹ Cal. Gov't Code § 53235(a), (b).

² The language is potentially confusing on this point. The new law says that if a local agency provides any type of compensation or reimbursement for members of its legislative bodies, then all "local agency officials" must receive training. See Cal. Gov't Code § 53235(a). But the definition of "local agency official" means "any member of a local agency legislative body or any elected official who receives any type of compensation . . . or reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of official duties." See Cal. Gov't Code § 53234(c)(1).

³ Cal. Gov't Code § 53235(a) ("If a local agency provides any type of compensation, salary, or stipend to a member of a legislative body, or provides reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses incurred by a member of a legislative body in the performance of official duties, then all local agency officials shall receive training in ethics pursuant to this article"); § 53234(a) (defining legislative body by reference to the Brown Act, Government Code section 54952).