

# THE PUBLIC SERVICE PUZZLER

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## A NOT-SO-SECRET MESSAGE



Hey you — buddy! Are *you* the contact? The codebreaker? See, I've got my hands on this rare bit of data: supposedly, on the other end of this encrypted message, is the **be-all, end-all solution to \*any\* municipal ethics problem**. Seems too good to be true, right? But my sources are reliable. If only we could break that code...such a resource would be invaluable!

OK, Step One: we're gonna use COIB's [Plain Language Guide](#) to build a database of ethics-related codewords. Fill in each blank to discover the words you'll need for Step Two.

- 1) It is a misuse of position to obtain a private benefit for oneself or an \_\_\_\_\_ party.
- 2) Public servants should not use City resources for a non-City purpose, especially when that purpose is a business or \_\_\_\_\_ one.
- 3) Public servants may not accept anything valued at \$50 or more from any person or firm that they know or should know is doing, or seeking to do, \_\_\_\_\_ with the City.
- 4) When a City employee accepts compensation from anyone other than the City for performing their official duties, this is a violation of the prohibition on \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5) If a City employee is moonlighting at a firm that has business with the City, they will need a \_\_\_\_\_ from the Board to continue to hold that outside job.
- 6) Public servants may not own any part of a business they know or should know does business with the City. Nor may their \_\_\_\_\_, domestic partner, or unemancipated children.
- 7) Public servants may not disclose \_\_\_\_\_ City information or use it to obtain a private benefit, even after they leave City service.
- 8) Public servants may not act as a \_\_\_\_\_, either paid or unpaid, or paid expert witness against the City's interests in any lawsuit brought by or against the City.
- 9) Public servants may not, for \_\_\_\_\_, communicate with any City agency or appear in matters involving the City.
- 10) Public servants may not enter into any \_\_\_\_\_ relationship with their superiors or subordinates.
- 11) After leaving City service, former public servants may never work on a \_\_\_\_\_ matter they personally and substantially worked on for the City.
- 12) Causing, trying to cause, or even helping another public servant violate the Conflicts of Interest Law is a violation of the prohibition on the \_\_\_\_\_ of others.

# NYC CONFLICTS OF INTEREST BOARD



Now that we've got our bank of COIB-related words, it's time to take on the main cypher — it's a reverse word search, which means we'll have to find and circle **ALL TWELVE WORDS** from Step One inside the puzzle. Once all the words are found, the remaining, unused letters should spell out some sort of message. Allegedly, this message is related to some sort of secret superweapon that City employees can use to resolve their conflicts of interest. But what could it be...?

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| L | C | P | A | A | L | G | B | L | L | F | O | I |
| A | C | O | S | R | A | R | U | A | D | V | I | N |
| I | O | L | S | C | W | A | S | E | N | E | R | D |
| C | M | I | O | U | Y | T | I | P | U | U | N | U |
| N | P | T | C | W | E | U | N | Z | O | T | E | C |
| A | E | I | I | W | R | I | E | W | Y | U | Y | E |
| N | N | C | A | U | A | T | S | M | J | P | S | M |
| I | S | A | T | G | I | I | S | A | B | B | D | E |
| F | A | L | E | Q | O | E | V | Z | X | O | P | N |
| E | T | H | D | L | I | S | Z | E | Y | M | S | T |
| D | I | I | V | V | M | X | A | H | R | B | E | B |
| C | O | N | F | I | D | E | N | T | I | A | L | T |
| S | N | P | A | R | T | I | C | U | L | A | R | X |

# NYC CONFLICTS OF INTEREST BOARD

So did you decipher the message? Apparently it's of the highest importance to public servants — especially those engaging in conduct where there might be a conflict of interest. If we just look through the letters we didn't use, they should fit this pattern...

“ \_\_\_\_\_ !”



Wait a second: did that tree just move? Doesn't that woman seem to be reading that tabloid *suspiciously*? Does that man's comically oversized Texas-style hat have a *secret camera* in it? **I think we've been compromised!** I've got to exfiltrate immediately! If you don't hear from me again: email the passphrase to [Contest@coib.nyc.gov](mailto:Contest@coib.nyc.gov) by December 15th! It's your only chance of escaping this mess as a *Public Service Puzzler* winner!

## LAST ISSUE'S BIG WINNER: KELLAN STANNER



**So, what do you do for the City?**

I am a Project Development Coordinator for NYC Parks GreenThumb.

**What's that like?**

I oversee a range of property management issues in community gardens across the five boroughs. I coordinate with other agencies and contractors working on our infrastructure (sidewalks, fences, water main connections) and also externally, with private property owners who need Parks construction permits to access our gardens.

**Cool! How long have you been with the City?**

I just had my one-year anniversary with the City in November!

**Congratulations! OK, public service is great, but what's something you do in your free time?**

I've been training in Brazilian jiu-jitsu for the last few months, and aside from being a fantastic exercise, it's really helped me learn to manage stress and doubt in difficult situations.

**That's awesome! May your guard be as strong and unbreakable as your commitment to government ethics!**



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