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Ethics Training: Views of Tennessee Local Elected Officials.

Kimberly Pearman Arms
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Ethics Training: Views of Tennessee Local Elected Officials

A dissertation
presented to
the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Education

by
Kimberly Pearman Arms
December 2007

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Dr. Kathryn Franklin
Dr. Jasmine Renner
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Keywords: Ethics, Ethical Teaching, Public Officials
ABSTRACT

Ethics Training: Views of Tennessee Local Elected Officials

by

Kimberly Pearman Arms

The purpose of this study was to determine if local elected officials in Tennessee perceive ethics training will affect ethical behavior, and, if so, what format they recommend for ethics training including length of time, delivery methods, and instructors’ qualifications. This study provides information regarding whether ethics training is likely to be efficacious and how officials feel about the training. Specifically, this study informs officials and others who invest with both time and financial resources about the value of training, what to teach if they are going to offer ethics training, and who should teach ethics.

More than 2,000 local elected officials in Tennessee were surveyed asking their perceptions on the format, content, instructor, and length of time necessary for ethics training. In addition, survey participants were asked their personal definition of ethics and were asked to share the unethical behavior they have observed in other elected officials, if any. This study provides rich information for those responsible for designing and delivering ethics training for elected officials as well as for those making financial decisions regarding ethics training. An additional benefit of this study was as a contribution to the body of literature on the subject of ethics training. This study should be useful for those in government or training and development as they consider offering ethics training.
DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the most positive and uplifting person I have ever known, my husband, William Michael Arms. It is because of his belief in continual growth and exploration, as well as a genuine interest in all that I do, that this study is complete. Without him, I would have given up long ago. Thank you for being interested in what I do and for encouraging me all along the way.

This work is also dedicated to my parents, Jim and Juanita Pearman, and to my aunt, Loretta Mynatt. My dad’s interest in my work was a significant encouragement. Rarely did I see him when he did not ask about my progress and express support in this endeavor.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The following are acknowledged for their contribution to this work:

Dr. Hal Knight for his leadership and support as we worked through this process. I am grateful for his attention to detail and especially appreciate the fact that it was clear he had always read each and every word of the work I submitted.

My Committee members, Dr. Karen Tarnoff, Dr. Jasmine Renner, and Dr. Kathy Franklin for taking an interest in this work and committing the time necessary to make it what it is today.

Debbie Teague for her positive attitude as she helped me maneuver the system at ETSU as well as the College of Education. I would have been lost without her.

Betty Ann Proffitt for consistently keeping cohort members on schedule and informed of important upcoming deadlines. Without these reminders, I am sure I would have missed numerous important deadlines. Thank you for always being available.

Marie Jones for her assistance in locating absolutely anything in the ETSU or any library. Thank you for your professionalism and commitment to student success.

Debby Bryan not only for outstanding APA editing, but especially for becoming a great source of support along the way, whether related to APA editing or not.

And last, but definitely most important, thank you to the 756 elected officials in local government in Tennessee who took time out of their very busy schedules to think about and respond to my survey instrument.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

There are as many definitions of ethics as there are articles and books about the topic; however, there is no single, common definition. Stimson (2005) stated, “Ethics has to do with the right and wrong of human conduct” (p. 69). Johnson (2001) defined ethics as “the systematic study of the principles of right or wrong behavior” (p. 7). No matter whose definition is chosen as a baseline, most definitions ultimately focused on actions or behaviors. A leader could consider or think about behavior that might be unethical; however, it is not the thought but the resulting behavior or action that is ethical or unethical.

As community leaders, the behavior of elected officials has been closely scrutinized by the voting and taxpaying public. This is true at all levels of government but especially at the local level (Ross, 2006). For example, an article in the Clarksville (TN) Leaf-Chronicle quoted residents who reported, “. . . they expect leadership results and common sense from their elected city officials and employees” (Ross, ¶ 1). The media help place a strong focus on the behavior of local government officials as well. As de Vries (2002) stated:

. . . at lower governmental levels, and regarding less well-known figures, matters of cheating, fraud, corruption, abuse of power, scandals, and so forth reach the newspapers and tabloids more often than ever before. (¶ 2)

With the help of the media and freedom of information laws, citizens have access to the details of the decisions and behavior of elected officials (“State Needs to Beef up,” 2006; Tennessee Open Meetings Act, 2005). Open records and sunshine laws have allowed access to information about decisions leaders make in meetings that formerly were considered closed to the public (Tennessee Open Meetings Act). Zealous reporters have uncovered information that otherwise would not have been made public. A lawsuit filed by the Knoxville News Sentinel resulted in a jury finding 12 of 19 county commissioners guilty of violating the Tennessee Open Meetings Act (Satterfield, 2007). As a result, eight commissioners and four county-wide officers
were removed from office (Satterfield, 2007). Constituents expect those they elect to represent them to adhere to the highest standards at all times while considering the needs and views of the constituency rather than their own (Ross, 2006). For instance, residents of Clarksville, Tennessee reported they “are looking for leaders who are frugal… perform ethically, honorably, and in the best interest of the city” (Ross, ¶ 5).

Cody and Lynn (1992) listed some basic principles of public officials such as, “Public officials should perform their duties based solely on the public good, rather than what is in their best political interest” (p. 9). Any deviations from this expectation are deemed unacceptable even if the misstep is small, unintentional, and well meaning. “Even where public officials have a zone of privacy, they must be sensitive about the need to avoid the appearance of impropriety (Cody & Lynn, p. 130). This is because governments, especially at the local level, have had a direct impact on the lives of those whom governments represent. Carlee (2004) stressed this point:

In the United States, the level of government that most directly affects people’s lives, day to day, is local government. From the time people get up in the morning and turn on the water, flush the toilet, walk down the sidewalk, drive on the streets…people are dealing with local government. (p. 2)

Thomas Jefferson, in his *Draft of Instructions to the Virginia Delegates in the Continental Congress*, as quoted by the University of Virginia (2006), enlightened the delegates by saying, “The whole art of government consists in the art of being honest” (n. p.). Along with honesty, those in government have been expected to be fair and ethical although this expectation might not be reasonable. Cody and Lynn (1992) concluded, “Americans deserve honest government. Public officials should be honest” (p. xxvii).

Unethical behavior, however, seems to have been increasing in recent years, particularly in government positions. Hardly a day goes by when a new instance of unethical or even illegal behavior by elected or appointed government executives is not reported in the news. For instance, in May of 2005, Tennessee citizens learned of alleged unethical behavior by State Senator Ward Crutchfield and State Representative Chris Newton (“Ward Crutchfield, Chris...
Newton arrested," 2006). The same news report informed Tennessee citizens of similar unethical behavior by a local school board member. One year later, this event has remained in the news, as those involved in this activity were either pleading guilty and being incarcerated or beginning to go through the trial process (Lazenby, 2006). Crutchfield pleaded guilty to accepting $3,000 from an undercover FBI agent (Sher, 2007). Newton pleaded guilty to accepting bribes and was sentenced to 12 months in prison (Baird, 2007). He ultimately served 9 months in prison followed by 3 months in a half-way house (Baird, 2007). In July 2006, the mayor of Coopertown, Tennessee resigned amid scandal accusing him of abuse of power, use of racial and sexual slurs, and the use of speed traps in order to raise revenue for the town (Young, 2006). In November 2006, this same mayor was permitted by the courts to return to his elected office because his alleged crimes were not committed knowingly or willfully (Carey, 2006).

The phenomenon of unethical behavior on the part of leaders has not been unique to government. It also has occurred in private industry and religious organizations. In a study of 1,700 graduate business students, roughly half of those interviewed indicated they thought they would have to make a decision in the future that would "test their values" (Stewart, 2004, p. BU11). According to Sloan (2006), stories about business leaders such as Jeffrey Skilling and Kenneth Lay indicated that unethical behavior permeated private industry as well as government. The large financial agreements between plaintiffs and various archdioceses of the Catholic Church illustrated that ethical issues were present in religion as well as government and the private sector (Cullen & Kurkjian, 2003). As a result of unethical issues such as these, many corporations now have corporate codes of ethics designed to prevent such activities. For instance, SAS, a major software company founded by North Carolina State graduate Jim Goodnight, has an extensive corporate code of ethics (SAS, 2006).

Elected officials who behaved unethically, once caught and exposed, are nearly always required to participate in mandatory ethics training as some part of their punishment or rehabilitation regardless of the level of government in which they worked (Silva, 2005). This mandatory ethics training also applied to the colleagues of those officials who had not behaved
in a questionable or unethical manner (Silva). In a report on ethics “refreshers,” sources cited described this requirement as both “…a day late and a dollar short” and “an encouraging first step” (Silva, ¶5). Often, the rationale for these sessions was that training on the subject of right versus wrong could be effective for adults who should already know the difference.

Yet, local elected county officials in Tennessee who wish to maintain their certification as Certified Public Administrators (as sanctioned by the University of Tennessee County Technical Assistance Service) are required to participate in 2 hours of ethics training annually (B. Schettler, personal communication, July 21, 2006). In some states, such as New York, those who were merely candidates for elected office were required to participate in ethics training even though they had not yet won an election or been sworn into office (Feerick & Kaye, 2006). These two examples speak to the visibility of the issue of ethics training in both government and the private sector.

In relation to unethical behavior on the part of local government officials, Carlee (2004) identified reasons such as “. . . greed, arrogance, stupidity, and sometimes merely bad judgment. Regardless, the conduct is bad, and the people who do it, know it” (p. 3). Carlee stressed that what made this behavior so egregious was that “. . . as heads of government . . . we are responsible for ensuring the ethics of government itself” (p. 3). If one is to accept this statement as truth, it becomes of utmost importance that government leaders behave in an ethical manner and make deliberate, ethical decisions.

If one accepts that ethics should be taught, the next decision is to determine the purpose of ethics instruction. Some considered the purpose of teaching ethics was to begin dialogue and raise awareness on the topic (Quigley, 2004). According to Rossouw (2001), “The quantity of scholarly writing about the teaching of business ethics, however, has not produced consensus about what the purpose of teaching should be” (p. 1). The premise of that model was that discussing issues would raise awareness and, therefore, influence behavior. The practice of making dialogue the primary source of information in training programs has been well documented in business and management programs. Jackson (1993) wrote:
The conclusion to be drawn is that the experience that the participants bring to the subject is essential. This supposition coheres with the general tenets of management training in degree programmes. It is also stressed in mid-career staff development work. (p. 34) The National Business Ethics Survey conducted by the Ethics Resource Center (2005) stressed, “…90% of employees said that ethics training is useful, or somewhat useful to them” (p. 15). According to Hosford (2004), others believed that the content should focus on specifics and not solely on dialogue. Hosford added that ethics expert Cathleen Sullivan designed programs “…dealing with lobbyists, gifts and gratuities, as well as such general organizational concerns as codes of conduct, conflicts of interest, employee harassment . . .” (p. 16). Johnson (2004) wrote, “In the end, understanding and developing ethics matters little if you don’t apply ethics to your personal behaviors and actions” (p. 12).

Regarding group interaction, Green (2000) encouraged trainers of any subject to follow an experiential approach. The experiential approach he recommended included the use of actual experience, observation, reflection, formation of a rule, and deliberate testing. Green pointed out, “Learning is most effective when you present a relevant experience and then, through observation and reflection, use it to broaden or refine existing ideas, methods and behavior” (¶ 25). Ponemon and Felo (1996) supported the use of actual case histories and group interaction. They benchmarked 41 companies in the United States to determine what made their ethics training programs successful. These researchers found, “One of the primary ways to overcome employee skepticism about training is to use actual case histories that impact the organization and its stakeholders” (p. 67). Solberg, Strong, McGuire, and Dordrecht (1995) supported experiential learning as well. They maintained that the success of the program was based on a variety of characteristics including individualization using students' experiences.

This study examined what local elected officials in Tennessee perceive the content and purpose of ethics training should include in order to affect positively ethical behavior. According to Jackson (1993), no matter what the content, the “principal conclusion drawn from experience in ethics training and training is that ethics can be taught” (p. 41). Not only does the research show that ethics can be taught, but it shows that the topic of ethics is one that must be
addressed for all leaders whether in the public or private sector. Delaney and Sockell (1992) suggested that, although costly, ethics programs must be initiated and added, “Top management in firms must decide whether it is committed to ethical behavior” (p. 726).

Statement of the Problem

Training, in general, is a common response to problems, challenges, or poor performance. It has been assumed that training can help change behavior (Mager & Pipe, 1997) and the same might be true of ethics training. There was, however, no evidence that local officials believe that ethics training would remedy the ethical problems existing in local government in Tennessee. The purpose of this study was to determine if local elected officials in Tennessee perceive ethics training will affect ethical behavior, and, if so, what format they recommend for ethics training including length of time, delivery methods, and instructors' qualifications.

Research Questions

The following six questions served as a research guide for this study:

1. What are the perceptions of local elected officials regarding the most effective type of format, time length of training, type of instructor, and the content of ethics training?

2. What are elected officials’ perceptions of ethics training as it relates to: (a) increasing awareness of ethical versus unethical behavior, (b) the importance of ethics as a subject to be taught to elected officials, and (c) the impact of ethics training on changing ethical behavior?

3. Is there a difference between local elected officials who participated in ethics training and those who did not participate based on age, region of the state, population size of the officials’ jurisdictions, and the type of local government (city versus county)?

4. Is there a difference between elected officials who participated in ethics training and those who did not in their perceptions of ethics training as it relates to: (a) increasing awareness of ethical versus unethical behavior, (b) its importance as a subject to be
taught to elected officials, and (c) the impact of training on changing ethical behavior?

5. Among elected officials who participated in ethics training, what content areas of ethics training were perceived as helpful based on their most-recent ethics training experience?

6. Among elected officials who participated in ethics training, are there differences in the types of training formats and the content areas included in the ethics training and the extent to which their training was perceived to be beneficial based on their most-recent ethics training experience?

**Significance of the Study**

When a problem is identified in the public or private sector, the first response to solving the problem often has been training. Even so, according to Mager and Pipe (1997), “The danger in leaping from apparent problem to apparent solution is that large amounts of time and money can be spent in throwing training at a problem that training cannot solve” (p. 2). Mager (1996) added, “Those who continue to see training as the solution to every performance problem are already behind the curve” (p. 51). Too many training programs do not focus on the issue to be solved (Mager). Zemke and Zemke (1995) observed, "The learning experience should be problem-centered. Working adults are likely to be less enthralled by survey courses" (¶ 40). Kutner (as cited in Kerka, 2003, p. 3), stated, “Single workshops may be a useful way to provide information and raise awareness of issues, but changes in behavior and practice require longer-term approaches.”

This study provides information regarding whether ethics training is likely to be efficacious and how officials feel about the training. Specifically, this study informs officials and others who invest both time and money know if ethics training is worthwhile, know what to teach if they are going to offer ethics training, and know who should teach ethics. An additional benefit of this study is its contribution to the body of literature on the subject of ethics training.
Furthermore, this study should prove useful for those in government or training and development as they consider offering ethics training.

**Definitions of Terms**

1. *Ethics* - Callahan (1988) defined ethics as "a formal field of philosophical inquiry…the philosophical study of morality” (p. 7).


3. *Elected official (county government)* – commissioner, mayor (or executive), trustee, county clerk, circuit court clerk, register of deeds, judge, district attorney, sheriff, highway administrative official, or county attorney.

4. *Elected official (municipal government)* – Alderperson, council member, commissioner, city recorder, or mayor.

5. *Ethical behavior* – Behavior that adheres to specific principles or standards of right and wrong (Johnson, 2001)

6. *Officials’ jurisdiction* – The area over which an elected official has power, authority, or influence.

7. *Type of format* – Method of training including traditional classroom setting with an instructor or facilitator; online from a computer at home, work or other location; or self-study where the material is read without the participation of an instructor, video, or other.

**Delimitations and Limitations**

This study was delimited to elected city, county, and metropolitan government officials in Tennessee who are served by either the County Technical Assistance Service (CTAS) or the Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS).
Findings may be generalized to local elected officials in states similar in composition to Tennessee.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 includes an introduction, the statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study, definitions of terms, and delimitations and limitations. Chapter 2 provides a review of literature related to ethics and public service and specifically addresses whether or not the research shows that ethics can be taught to public servants. Chapter 3 describes the methodology and procedures that will be used in completing this study. Chapter 4 includes a discussion about the findings of the study. Chapter 5 provides a summary of the findings based on data analysis, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.
The purpose of a literature review is to clearly articulate the purpose of a study as well as discuss any literature relevant to the study (Rudestam & Newton, 2001). This literature review explored the literature related to ethics training. It addresses this topic from the perspective of an elected official, public administrator, or other local government official. It also includes literature regarding ethics training for state employees, private citizens, public sector employees, and college students.

Worthley (1981) suggested that before ethics training could be attempted or implemented there is a need for a basic understanding of what ethics is, especially as it relates to public service. “What is the ethical environment of public administration? What is ethical behavior in administration? Is it laws and codes…obeying rules and staying out of trouble?” (p. 41). Worthley wrote that one had to answer these questions before moving forward with any ethics-training program.

In addition to the questions offered above, one needs an agreed-upon definition of ethics. For purposes of this literature review, the definition of ethics provided by Johnson (2001) will be used. He defined ethics as “the systematic study of the principles of right or wrong behavior” (p. 7).

Need for Ethics Training

Johnson (2001) presented evidence that “…many unethical business decisions aren’t the product of greed or callousness but stem instead from widespread weaknesses in how people process information and make decisions” (p. 30). He examined decision-making models that resulted in ethical decisions and added, “The particular format you use is not as important as taking a systematic approach to moral reasoning” (p. 144). The importance of a defined
Structured decision making and ethical models could provide a framework for leaders to make choices. Johnson (2001) presented four such ethical models: Kidder’s Ethical Checkpoints, Nash’s 12 Questions, Potter’s Box, and Cooper’s Active Process Model. Each of the models provided steps or checkpoints that could be followed in the decision-making process. Springer (2005) supported the notion of this type of structured ethical model when he stressed the importance of leaders following a structured decision-making process. It was not the specific model that was important but the fact that leaders should consider and consistently use a model for ethical decision making (Springer).

Springer (2005) wrote:

…given the concern of the public regarding transparency and accountability and their concern about ethical dilemmas, there is a greater need to develop relationships based on collaboration and partnerships as well as the organization-wide understanding that there is no single level of responsibility that is right for all choices. (p. 9)

A decision-based focus was supported in the literature regarding training programs as well. Ponemon and Felo (1996) documented components of a successful ethics-training program including live instruction, small class sizes, and a decision-based focus.

Johnson (2001) pointed out that in addition to following a well-defined decision-making process, leaders should be aware of the different philosophical approaches to ethical behavior. These approaches could be incorporated into ethics training. Johnson (2001) identified utilitarianism, Kant’s categorical imperative, communitarianism, altruism, and ethical pluralism as key ethical philosophies. When applied to decision making, leaders who employed a utilitarian approach made decisions based on what they expected the outcome or consequences of their decision to be. Leaders who made decisions based on the philosophy of Kant’s categorical imperative, in contrast, made what they believed to be the best decision regardless of the anticipated consequences. Communitarian leaders made their ethical decisions based on the
needs of or benefits to the community as a whole. Johnson (2001) explained, “Communitarians address the problems posed by competing interests by urging leaders and followers to put the needs of the broader community above the needs of any one individual, group, or organization” (p. 108). Leaders who advocate an altruistic approach to their actions and decisions are focused solely on people and not on the results or other potential impacts of their decisions. People, and the affect the decision has on people, are the core of this decision-making philosophy. Because it is often impossible to consistently employ one single decision-making approach, Johnson (2001) suggested that a blend of approaches, depending on the details of the situation, was often the most reasonable approach. He labeled this approach ethical pluralism. Using an ethical pluralism approach would allow the leader to make decisions on a situation-specific basis while considering all factors including individuals, the community, and the results of the decision. Ethics training has been one method of helping leaders understand these ethical decision-making processes and ethical philosophies.

**Ethical Misconduct in Tennessee**

In Tennessee, four recent events in local and state government have exemplified the need for ethics training for elected local officials. These were (a) the "Tennessee Waltz" sting operation, (b) contracts issues with the Sundquist administration, (c) the indictment of a county judge, and (d) an attempt at ethics reform in Tennessee state government (the result of the aforementioned contracts issues).

**Tennessee Waltz Sting Operation**

In May 2005, a group of five Tennessee state lawmakers suspected of illegal behavior were indicted on a variety of charges including accepting bribes and intimidating potential witnesses. The five were arrested and indicted as a result of a 2-year state and federal investigation named the Tennessee Waltz in reference to the Tennessee state song (Cass, 2005). The operation involved representatives of a fictitious company approaching lawmakers and
offering cash in return for votes that would make it easier for the company to do business in Tennessee (Cass). MacIntyre (1998) compared this to the Athenians’ condemnation of the character of Alcibiades, “…they equate what is morally permissible with what the agent has the power to do” (p. 12). Garofalo and Geuras (1999) supported this comparison when they wrote, related to public servants and ethics, “The common problem is vulnerability, which increases in the public sector because of agency power” (p. 137). When applying MacIntyre’s point to the politicians involved in the Tennessee Waltz, one might surmise that they believed their behavior was permissible simply because they had the power to act.

The Tennessee Waltz sting operation impacted local government and resulted in two resignations as well as several prison sentences (Baird, 2006b). Shelby County Commissioner Michael Hooks, Sr. was indicted and pleaded not guilty to federal charges involving accepting bribes. Hooks, however, accepted full responsibility for the situation when he said, “I have nobody to blame but me” (Baird, 2006a, ¶ 8). In a similar circumstance, Hamilton County Commissioner William Cotton chose to go to trial and was convicted of extortion and bribery and sentenced to 3 years in prison for his involvement (Baird, 2006a). Former State Representative Chris Newton pleaded guilty to bribery and served 9 months in prison (Baird, 2007). Former State Senator John Ford was convicted of bribery and sentenced to 5 ½ years in a federal prison (Baird, 2007). Additionally, Ford is awaiting trial on other charges related to the Tennessee Waltz sting operation. Former State Senator Kathryn Bowers pleaded guilty to bribery and had extortion charges dismissed (Baird, 2007). Charles Love, former member of the Hamilton County Board of Education and most recently a lobbyist, pleaded guilty to handling bribes for state lawmakers and was sentenced to 1 year and 1 day in prison (Baird, 2007). Former top administrator for the Shelby County Commission, Calvin Williams, was convicted of extortion and bribery and sentenced to 33 months in prison (Baird, 2007).
Numerous ethical issues surfaced near the end of former Governor Donald Sundquist’s administration and in the years immediately following his term of office. These issues primarily revolved around the awarding of lucrative labor and workforce-related contracts to friends and political supporters (Burke, 2005). Many of these friends and supporters were not qualified to perform the work specified in the contracts (“Former State Official,” 2005) and none of the contracts was bid through the formal (although poorly enforced) state bidding process. As news of the contract awards became public, an official investigation into these activities was conducted.

The unethical behavior discussed above occurred under the leadership of Governor Sundquist even though he may not have ordered it or even known about it. A leader could influence, perhaps even cause, unethical behavior without directly ordering it. Dobel (2003) described leaders’ influence, “Senior executive officials serve in administrations built around the elected executive. The nature of the principal, his style, interests, and agendas affect the actions and obligations of those who work on his behalf” (p. 18). By not voicing proactively a commitment to ethics and to zero-tolerance for unethical behavior, the leader might encourage followers to act in ways that could be considered unethical. Johnson (2001) presented numerous examples of leaders’ behavior from the public and private sector as well as history for ethicists to consider. The metaphorical theme of his argument, and one to which Johnson (2001) returned repeatedly, was that leaders have the opportunity to cast either light (a positive view) or shadow (negative) upon all opportunities with which they are presented. Johnson’s (2001) main assumption was that “leadership is a powerful force” (p. 3). As such, he suggested that leaders should take a serious look at their ethical practices because their leadership influence does have powerful potential. According to Johnson (2001), “The ultimate goal of developing ethical capacity is to cast light, rather than shadow” (p. 42). By following this model, it would seem that the leadership in Tennessee state government missed the opportunity to cast light and, instead, cast shadow.
As a result of the unethical actions that occurred within the Sundquist administration, the former purchasing director for the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Joanna Ediger, has been serving a 3-year prison term for illegally awarding contracts (“Former State Official,” 2005). The principal, Sundquist, has remained under scrutiny in the media (Burke, 2005). His former commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development is being investigated and yet another close associate involved in the case was scheduled to go to trial in 2006. This unethical behavior and resulting negative effects on these individuals' reputations could have been prevented had the leader taken a proactive stance regarding ethics and clearly and publicly stated nontolerance for even the appearance of unethical behavior.

Austin Indictment

Although not related to the Tennessee Waltz sting operation, another example of misconduct by a locally elected official in Tennessee was the indictment of a former Roane County Judge, Thomas Austin. He was indicted in 2006 on extortion and money laundering charges related to a driving school in which he had a financial interest (Huotari, 2006). Austin allegedly accepted in excess of $100,000 in kickbacks from this driving school (Satterfield, 2006a). He offered excuses such as the extramarital activities of his wife and the resulting stress as an explanation for his illegal activities (Satterfield, 2006a). During his sentencing hearing that resulted in a 42-month prison sentence, Austin was chastised by District Judge Thomas Phillips: “You violated the most sacred charge that is to dispense justice fairly and justly. You violated the trust of the citizens of Roane County” (Satterfield, 2006b, ¶ 2).

Ethics Reform

As a result of the ethics issues in the Sundquist administration, the subject of ethics has continued to be an ongoing topic for the current administration. On his first day in office in 2002, current Governor Phil Bredesen signed into law an executive order establishing an ethics committee (TN Executive Order No. 1, 2003). Following this initial executive order were others
dealing with ethics including TN Executive Order No. 2 (2003) concerning financial and other disclosures by certain executive branch employees; TN Executive Order No. 3 (2003) concerning ethics, conflicts of interest, and acceptance of gifts on the part of executive branch employees; and TN Executive Order No. 24 (2005) establishing the governor’s citizen advisory group on ethics in government. These orders focused primarily on executive service employees and, hence, implied that the problem was with those leaders. Because the message was directed at the top level of leadership and not to all citizens of the state, a negative message has been sent to constituents and it could promote a perception that those in executive service or elected positions are assumed to be unethical. No matter what the reason, this administration has vocally promoted the fact that it will not tolerate unethical behavior on the part of any executive or civil service level employee.

*Ethics and Perceptions of Injustice*

The underlying reasons for unethical behavior are not unique to government. Monastersky (2005) discussed scientific misconduct and found a correlation “between scientists who perceived injustice in the system and those who admitted misbehaving” (p. A11). He developed a list of questionable behaviors in which researchers might have engaged. Using this list, he surveyed 3,247 postdoctoral students and midcareer scientists. Monastersky cited actions such as “overlooking others’ use of flawed data, failing to present data contradicting one’s own work, and circumventing minor aspects of human-subject requirements” (p. A11) as examples of unethical behavior in science. As many as 33% of the respondents indicated that they had engaged in one of more of the unethical behaviors referenced above. Monastersky concluded that there was a relationship between those who believed there was injustice in the system in which they operated and their unethical behavior.

Monastersky’s (2005) conclusion applied to local elected officials as well. For example, elected officials who considered themselves underpaid or otherwise oppressed by their positions might have considered it their given right to behave unethically. Members of the House and
Senate in Tennessee received $16,500 annually in 2005 (“Salaries,” 2004). If the role as lawmaker was their only source of income, one might use the low salary as justification for unethical behavior. However, it should be noted that many of these officials did have other sources of income. De Vries (2002) supported the notion that low salaries might affect behavior when he wrote “Payment lagging behind those in the private sector make the employees in the public sector in extreme cases...more susceptible to bribes” (¶ 5). In addition to financial motives, other personal goals or needs could influence ethical behavior. “Ethical choices are generally influenced by personal needs. Some needs are so powerful that they blur the boundaries about what is acceptable behavior,” concluded Bruhn (2005, ¶ 7). Included in Bruhn’s discussion of the types of personal needs that might influence ethical behavior were “image, power, control, to be right, recognition, and money” (Bruhn, ¶ 7).

Even though often influenced by personal needs, “not all poor ethic decisions are the result of deliberate misbehavior,” said Rice and Dreilinger (1990). They added, “In many cases, people only become aware of a problem’s ethical aspects when they turn up after the fact” (p. 105).

*Training as a Solution*

No matter what the cause of the unethical behavior, once a case has been made for the need for increased ethics awareness or improved ethical behavior, training was often recommended as part of the remedy. Although the role of training is important, it is often the most expensive solution in terms of both actual cost and the time investment of trainers and participants (Mager & Pipe, 1997). Indeed, there was evidence to support the assertion that training was a valuable vehicle for teaching ethics. Delaney and Sockell (1992) provided evidence to support the overall results of corporate training programs on ethics. In a survey of more than 5,000 Columbia Business School graduates, Delaney and Sockell found “systematic evidence that individuals in firms that have ethics training programs are less likely to perceive that they have ‘to do things that are not right’ to get ahead than are employees in firms without
such programs” (¶ 35). Ironically, these data were evident nearly a full decade before ethics became such a glaring issue in both government and industry. As a result, an increasing number of firms have been mandating or offering ethics training programs for their staff.

As a further benefit to ethics training, Williams and Dewett (2005) noted, “Some believe that by the time students enroll in college-level business courses, their values have already been formed, rending ethics training a waste of time” (p. 110). Even when the ethics of a student has already been formed, training was still valuable when individual experience was included.

Other data not only indicated that ethics could be taught but went further to emphasize that proactive ethics training was an important responsibility of organizations (Priest, 1998). "Not teaching ethics," wrote Priest, "should be considered an 'abdication' of our responsibility" (¶ 6). Bowman and Williams (1997) offered supporting evidence from their survey of 750 public administrators who were members of the American Society of Public Administration. In response to the statement, “Ethics is similar to the weather; everyone talks about it but no one does anything about it” (p. 518), only 25% of those responding concurred. Bowman and Williams suggested this response illustrated a readiness to address ethical issues seriously.

Garofalo (2003), in contrast, suggested that mandated ethics training did little but develop ill-will and certainly has not developed new skills or awareness related to ethics. He also discussed the nature of transactional versus transformational leaders as related to ethics training, indicating that there was no evidence to support that this training resulted in positive feelings among those participating (p. 491). In general, he described ethics training as a “meaningless exercise” that did nothing other than “induces cynicism, boredom, and passivity” (p. 491). This same opinion was echoed in an article entitled, “Government-Mandated Ethics Codes do Little to Influence Executive Behavior” (2005). The author cited the downfall of Enron as an example of how ethics codes failed: “Enron’s ethics code was extremely detailed, numbering over 60 pages. However, there is little evidence that this code was internalized into the strategic decision-making process of their executives” (p. 39). Marino (2004) suggested that ethics was not easily taught, if it could be taught at all. He suggested that heightened interest in ethics was merely a
result of the latest fad, “Ethics missionaries are driven by the assumption that improving our moral lives is a matter of developing our conceptual understanding and analytical acumen” (p. B5). Marino continued:

Unless our ethics students learn to examine themselves and what they really value, their command of ethical theories and their ability to think about ethics from diverse perspectives are not likely to bring them any closer to being willing and able to do the right thing. (p. B5)

Content of Ethics Training Programs

Williams and Dewett (2005) regarded teaching ethics to be an important and valuable activity and identified three common concepts to be considered and addressed: (a) awareness, (b) moral development, and (c) handling complex issues. This concept of awareness was not unique to their work and it appeared to have been a common theme throughout the literature. They suggested that ethics could be taught if reasonable expectations were part of the program and participants had an understanding of those expectations. It should be noted that although stakeholders in training identified these three issues as important, Williams and Dewett considered them not well founded.

Awareness

The concept of awareness of complicated ethical issues or potential ethical decisions was consistent throughout the literature. West, Berman, Bonczek, and Keller (1998) maintained this was one thing that should be emphasized in ethics training. They used the term “booster shot” (p. 6) when discussing ethics training. Kernaghan (1993) suggested that even though training might increase awareness, it did not offer anything to support that it categorically changed behavior. Chapman (1993) also suggested, “There is increasing evidence to support the view that moral development can be effectively promoted through formal training as opposed to short training courses” (p. 26).
The literature on the subject of teaching ethics supported Williams and Dewett's (2005) and Delaney and Sockell's (1992) findings that training could be useful. The literature supported that it was not specific skills or behaviors that should be the focus of training but, instead, an initial or renewed awareness about ethical issues. Kernaghan (1993) recommended:

Public service executives and managers can also demonstrate their commitment to high ethical performance by ensuring that public servants at all levels of the hierarchy are sensitized to ethical and value issues – and to the means of dealing with them – through formal staff development courses. (p. 25)

In keeping with this notion, West et al. (1998) found that training could help those in an organization understand what behavior was expected of them. West et al. cited that training conducted by the International City Management Association and American Society of Public Administration was an initiative designed for teaching ethics to public officials. They also identified several goals of ethics training including increased awareness of ethical issues. Rossouw (2001) wrote that the key to teaching ethics from a cognitive perspective was to focus on specific experiences. Regarding learning experiences and participants, Rossouw recommended, “They should learn how the acquired concepts, theories, and tools can help them in gaining a better understanding of ethical matters in business and also how it can assist them in making their own moral judgments about these matters” (p. 426). Bok (1990) advised that the goal of a course was not to dictate the right or wrong answers but to stimulate interest and increase the perception abilities of student when faced with ethical dilemmas. Ponemon and Felo (1996) reinforced the importance of the decision-making component of ethics training when they wrote, “In general, the best programs are aimed at improving decision making and reasoning skills rather than preaching” (p. 66). Williams and Dewett (2005) supported the notion of moral judgment. They added two additional key goals for ethics training: awareness and decision making. Worthley (1981) also suggested that increasing awareness of ethics and ethical issues was paramount in training programs. Marturano (2005) supported this notion of decision making for leaders when he said, “A more productive approach is to help them develop their ability to think ethically” (¶ 1).
Clearly, opinions on the specifics of ethics training programs varied. In support of richer content for such sessions was a survey conducted by the International Association of City Managers (West et al., 1998) that showed the most frequently cited objectives of training programs on ethics were:

…to heighten familiarity with key legal requirements, to communicate and discuss ethical standards and expectations, to learn from reality-based examples (cases, scenarios, role-play exercises), to provide frameworks that can be used to resolve dilemmas, to encourage critical thinking about ethics and to offer practical guidance for decision making on ethical issues. (p. 4)

Although suggestions for content were different, there was clear support for ethics training programs for elected officials.

**Moral Development**

The research showed there was inherent value in providing ethics training. Rossouw (2001) supported the value of ethics training, or moral development, when he wrote:

Finally, teachers should cater to learning experiences that could stimulate visionary moral leadership in students. Although it could be argued that such learning experiences are not needed as it depends on prior personal moral development, it is equally true that moral development on its own does not prepare one to translate personal moral standards into organizational moral visions. (p. 430)

Regarding teaching ethics, Priest (1998) encouraged practitioners to use every vehicle possible not only for reinforcing but also for learning new ethical principles. He encouraged those teaching ethics to explore a variety of opportunities for teaching the subject including books and articles.

Regarding future research on the topic of ethics training, Williams and Dewett (2005) proposed:

Ethical training and training are positively associated with perceptions of being well equipped to handle decisions with ethical implications in the workplace, such that employees who have received ethics training during higher training and ethics training on the job will perceive themselves to be better equipped versus employees receiving one but not both forms of ethical instruction, and those receiving at least one form of ethical instruction will perceive themselves to be better equipped than employees having received no ethical instruction (p. 116).
Handling Complex Issues

The primary benefit of ethics training appeared to result from discussion of specific issues. West et al. (1998) summarized, “In general, managers have deliberately decided to avoid extensive philosophical discussion in training sessions and to focus instead on pragmatic problems that have been (or may be) encountered, along with potential solutions” (p. 6). They stressed the importance of role-play and situations that heighten ethical awareness.

One example of a government ethics program has been that of the consolidated government of Wyandotte County, Kansas and Kansas City, Kansas (Manske & Frederickson, 2004). This group discovered the value of discussion and dialogue regarding specific, complex issues when they instituted a government-wide ethics reform program that included ethics training. The program, designed for everyone in the consolidated government from the mayor to departmental employees, was 2 hours in length and included specifics on policies and codes as well as discussion of specific ethical issues where “rules of conduct are tested, validated, and given practical meaning and effect” (Manske & Frederickson, p. 20). These specific issues were real-world, complex issues that had been brought forth or discussed (often without resolution) in the past. This initial training was followed, 1 year later, with 1 hour of discussion on a series of actual ethical dilemmas faced by the consolidated government. After this follow-up session, employees (both elected and nonelected) were required to participate in another follow up program 3 years later.

Ultimately, the literature supported, for the most part, that ethics training was worthwhile. Delaney and Sockell (1992) found that "individuals exposed to ethics programs were more likely to have refused to take an unethical action when confronted with their most serious ethical dilemma than were other respondents” (p. 725).
Training Processes

Approaches to Training

The example of the Wyandotte County, Kansas City training program presented by Manske and Frederickson (2004) fits into an approach to training that Kramlinger and Huberty (1990) identified as the humanist approach. In addition to the humanist approach, Kramlinger and Huberty presented two other approaches to training adults: the behaviorist approach and the cognitive approach.

The humanist approach has been especially useful when educating adults because many adults have life experiences that can benefit their learning. According to Kramlinger and Huberty (1990), “The humanist approach is founded on the theory that learning occurs primarily through reflection on personal experience” (p. 42). Using this model, the concept of reflection has been one that must be incorporated in order for dialogue about ethics to be meaningful. The educator known as the father of adult training, Knowles (1970), included experience in his andragogical model. Knowles encouraged anyone involved in training adults on any subject to include the learner’s experience in the entire learning experience. Knowles encouraged those involved in training adults to capitalize on the wealth of experience of the adult learner.

Kramlinger and Huberty as well as Knowles illustrated the well-accepted concept that experience (and discussion of the experience) was a key component of any learning experience for adults. As such, participants in an ethics-training program must first reflect on their ethical experiences and then engage in dialogue in order for the learning activity to be successful.

The behaviorist approach to training was founded on the theory that desired behavior could be achieved through reinforcement (Kramlinger & Huberty, 1990). This reinforcement could be positive or negative. For example, when employees have been given promotions or other rewards for attending training this was a behaviorist approach. In contrast, when employees who did not participate in training were denied opportunities for advancement, this too was a behaviorist approach.
The cognitive approach to learning has been academic and more traditional whereby an expert or teacher told the learners what they needed to know (Kramlinger & Huberty, 1990). In the cognitive approach to learning, the learners did not bring their own experiences or expectations into the learning situation but instead followed the lead of the teacher. Neither the behaviorist nor cognitive models, when applied to teaching ethics, were considered ideal; the humanist approach, however, was deemed best as it both considered and incorporated the life experiences of the learners into the ethics learning experience (Kramlinger & Huberty).

**Reinforcement**

Follow-up training on the subject of ethics was an important detail in the Wyandotte County, Kansas City's program and has been supported by other authors. Dwivedi and Engelbert (1981) recommended follow-up training when they told those responsible for training public officials, “Training for values and ethics must be programmed not as a one-time event but as a continuous activity” (p. 144). Rice and Dreilinger (1990) also emphasized the use of “periodic reinforcement…using such methods as follow-up training and statements from top executives stressing the importance of paying attention to ethical issues” (p. 106). The training program of the Wyandotte County, Kansas City government resulted in provocative and indepth discussion of actual issues being faced by members of the consolidated government. The length of the training program and follow-up training has been important with recommendations for anywhere from 2 hours to 5 days of instruction (Ponemon & Felo, 1996, p. 67).

**Who to Train**

According to West et al. (1998), training offered to employees that is not relevant or timely was often not learned or absorbed; therefore, no matter when the training is offered it must be relevant whether offered to new employees or long-term employees. As recommended by West et al., “Ethics training must be tied to the legal, behavioral, and policy needs of organizations and their members” (p. 6).
New employees are commonly participants in ethics training as the subject is a required component of many new employee orientation programs. West et al. (1998) noted that this group (new employees) often received special attention by receiving more training opportunities. This training could also be made available to veteran employees in the form of new training or as a refresher course.

In addition to teaching ethics in the private sector and to elected officials, the practice of teaching ethics to college students has become increasingly popular (Peppas & Diskin, 2001). As pointed out by Kennedy and Lawton (1998), “Virtually all undergraduate and graduate business programs in the United States teach business ethics in some form” (p. 165). The literature regarding teaching ethics in an academic setting supported the notion that ethics could be taught, however, professors estimated that it might take a long as 3 years to develop and deliver an ethics curriculum (Hindo, 2002). This amount of time might be perceived as unreasonable in the private sector because it is not responsive to the needs of the audience. The rationale for this seemingly long period was that professors had other responsibilities, namely teaching their core material (Hindo). Hindo suggested that if departments or leaders in institutions made teaching ethics a priority, the notion would trickle down. He added, “If schools don’t lead the way, the chances are small that students will eat their vegetables, so to speak” (¶ 18).

Peppas and Diskin’s (2001) conclusions were not as positive towards ethics training. They surveyed college sophomores, juniors, and seniors who had participated in and who had not participated in ethics training. Their findings suggested there was “no significant difference between students who had taken an ethics course and those who had not” (p. 351). Though the subject of this particular study regarding ethics and local officials is not in an academic setting it is important to note that ethics training is being conducted in higher training as well as the public and private sectors.

A case can easily be made that it is the process of the course, not its venue or content that makes a difference in outcomes. Peppas and Diskin (2001) recommended that future initiatives
regarding ethics training (or teaching in the case of a university experience) should focus on the process or type of training methods used and not on the content. This recommendation supported the work of Quigley (2004) who recommended that dialogue should be an important part of ethics training.

Cody and Lynn (1992) cited legislation in the state of California requiring those in public service and lobbyists to participate in ethics training. However, according to Finn (1993), this training might not have had much effect as it was "compared to traffic school, in effect" (p. 136), but the training did serve the purpose of affecting culture of those in government.

In summary, there has been no definitive conclusion regarding a specific group that should be included in ethics training. The literature on who should be included specified everyone from students of higher education to new and seasoned employees in both the public and private sector. The common theme was that ethics should be taught and there was not one particular audience who should receive ethics training.

The Trainer

The background of the person conducting ethics training for public officials has been important. Ponemon and Felo (1996) identified 12 components of successful ethics training:

1. live instruction,
2. small class sizes,
3. a decision-based focus,
4. the use of a professional trainer,
5. a powerful message from the manager,
6. realistic case materials,
7. significant group interaction,
8. at least 4 hours of training,
9. comprehensive involvement of employees,
10. separate courses for compliance areas,
11. follow-up communications, and
12. new employee programs. (p. 8)

The use of a professional trainer, as recommended by West et al. (1998), was also
recommended by Ponemon and Felo (1996). Ponemon and Felo noted, “The majority of
successful programs employed experienced training consultants or university (business school)
educators in the design and implementation of ethics programs” (p. 66). Ponemon and Felo in
addition to West et al. recommended a professional trainer; however, they did not provide a
definition of what, exactly, qualified a person to be a professional trainer. Dwivedi and
Engelbert (1981) said the instructor was important and only those who were well trained and
who had a commitment to ethics should be permitted to teach ethics courses.

As pointed out in the article "Who Can Train the Trainers?" (2005), the use of
professional trainers could sometimes complicate the issue. It was stated in the article, “Trainers
have a habit of making simple concepts too complicated” (¶ 1). The article continued, “When
you can’t solve the challenges fully, that’s where a good trainer should fill in the gaps” (¶ 1).

Summary

This literature review has established the need for effective ethics training through
examples of unethical behavior in Tennessee and has traced the literature related to ethics
training and its efficacy and recommended processes and content. Although the literature
supported conflicting premises--that ethics could and could not be taught--the predominant
perception was that ethics could be taught, especially from an awareness level. Skill
development should not be an expectation of ethics training; however, awareness of new laws or
general ethics issues has been a reasonable expectation along with awareness of ethics decision-
making models or philosophies, especially when accompanied by dialogue or incorporation of
actual experience of the participants. Knouse and Giacalone (1997) advocated using a holistic
approach to ethical decision making through ethics training.

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Carlee (2004) offered a summary that seemed fitting for the study of ethics in government:

We are obligated to behave with high personal standards, and we are obligated to ensure the high personal ethics of individuals in our organizations. But this is not enough. We are entrusted with ensuring that the very institution of government is ethical. (p. 5)

Writing in support of ethics training, Lewis (1991) maintained, “Ethics must not be reserved for experts or philosophers. If practitioners do not practice it and if decision makers ignore it, then public service and the public are in real trouble” (p. 101). These recommendations supported the need for ethics training for public servants.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the research design used in the study. This study was a quantitative study designed to determine if local elected officials in Tennessee perceive ethics training will affect ethical behavior, and, if so, what format they recommend for ethics training including length of time, delivery methods, and instructors' qualifications.

Population

The target population of this study was elected officials in city and county government in Tennessee. According to data provided by CTAS and MTAS as of September 7, 2006, there were 2,643 elected county officials and 1,967 elected city officials for a total of 4,610 in the population that were targeted for this research. Because of the work I conduct for the University of Tennessee, I have access to contact information for city and county officials in the state. These data are considered public records and accessing them for this study was a legitimate use. Databases were obtained from the County Technical Assistance Agency (CTAS) and the Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS); both are agencies of the University of Tennessee Institute for Public Service. CTAS provided the 2,643 names and contact information for county officials and MTAS provided 1,967 names and contact information for city officials.

Sample

A stratified random cluster sample of 2,142 was selected to receive the survey instrument. In order to ensure a 95% confidence level (or a 5% error rate), a stratified random sample of 2,142 persons from the population was chosen with the expectation of a 22% response rate, or 469 responses (Creative Research Systems, 2007). The sample was stratified by type of
local government (city, county, or metropolitan) and region (east, middle, or west) to ensure the sample was representative of the population.

**Development of Survey Instrument**

A survey was used (see Appendix A) to gather information directly from elected local officials in Tennessee. There were a variety of benefits to the researcher in using a survey including fast turnaround and the economical nature of gathering data (Creswell, 2002). The survey used was one designed specifically for this study. In order to ensure that plausible and measurable responses were obtained via the survey instrument, the researcher used findings from the literature as a basis to draft initial questions to be included on the survey along with potential responses.

In order to validate the questions asked on the survey, the survey was pilot tested using eight members of the target group. Each person was asked to critique the survey in terms of clarity as well as to provide possible responses to each of the 35 questions. After each person had time to review the instrument, the researcher discussed the instrument with him or her individually. According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003), getting feedback of this nature is a good resource because normally the sources chosen are those who have the most information about a topic. As a result of the pilot test, minor changes were made to the survey instrument. Among the recommendations from the pilot group were the addition of clergy-minister as an option for question #12, addition of case study format as an option for question #14, and the addition of state or national conference as an option for question #23. The participants in the pilot test of the survey did not recommend that any questions be added or deleted but only added additional options for responses.
Data Collection

The revised survey was mailed to participants. Even though it initially seemed economical to administer the survey via electronic mail, email addresses were available for less than 10% of the population thus rendering administration via electronic mail unrealistic.

Elected officials included in the sample received a post card notifying them that they would be receiving a survey within 2 weeks. The post card was followed 2 weeks later with a copy of the survey instrument (see Appendix A), a letter of introduction explaining the research (see Appendix B), and a self-addressed return envelope. The letter of introduction included with the survey explained the purpose of the survey as well as guaranteed confidentiality of responses.

A period of 2 weeks was provided for the purpose of survey response and return mailing. Ten days after the initial mailing a reminder card was sent to those who had not returned the survey. An extended 10-day period was allowed for return of additional surveys. Ultimately, a 35.3% response rate was realized from this survey.

Data Analysis

The following strategies were used to answer the stated research questions:

Research Question #1: What are the perceptions of local elected officials regarding the most effective type of format, time length of training, type of instructor, and the content of ethics training?

To answer this research question, frequency counts and percentages were calculated for survey items related to the type of format (survey question # 14), time length of ethics training (survey question # 15), best type of ethics training instructor (survey question #12), and the content of ethics training (survey question # 13).

Research Question #2: What are elected officials' perceptions of ethics training as it relates to: (a) increasing awareness of ethical versus unethical behavior, (b) the importance of
ethics as a subject to be taught to elected officials, and (c) the impact of training on changing ethical behavior?

To answer this research question, survey questions #16 through #18 were used. Frequency counts and percentages for the agreement response categories were calculated.

Research Question #3: Is there a difference between local elected officials who participated in ethics training and those who did not participate based on age, region of the state, population size of the officials’ jurisdictions, and the type of local government (city versus county)?

To answer this research question, a $t$ test for independent samples was used to determine if there was a difference in age between those who participated in ethics training and those who did not participate. For the remaining variables, four crosstabulated tables were created, one for each of the following independent variables: (a) region of the state (east, middle, and west); (b) population of the municipal jurisdiction; (c) population of the size of the county jurisdiction; and (d) the type of local government of the elected official (city versus county officials). The dependent variable was whether the officials participated in ethics training. The following null hypotheses were tested with the chi-square test with alpha set at .05:

Ho3$_1$: There is no difference in age between those who participated in ethics training and those who did not.

Ho3$_2$: There is no difference among the regions of the state and officials’ participation in ethics training.

Ho3$_3$: There is no difference among the municipal population sizes of the officials’ jurisdiction and officials’ participation in ethics training.

Ho3$_4$: There is no difference among the county population sizes of the officials’ jurisdiction and officials’ participation in ethics training.

Ho3$_5$: There is no difference between city and county elected officials and participation in ethics training.
Research Question #4: Is there a difference between elected officials who participated in ethics training and those who did not in their perceptions of ethics training as it relates to: (a) increasing awareness of ethical versus unethical behavior, (b) its importance as a subject to be taught to elected officials, and (c) the impact of training on changing ethical behavior?

Three crosstabulated tables were used to answer this research question. In each table, the independent variable was participation in ethics training. A chi-square test was used to answer the research question.

Ho4₁: There is no difference between elected officials who participated in ethics training and those who did not in terms of their perception that ethics training can increase awareness of ethical versus unethical behavior.

Ho4₂: There is no difference between elected officials who participated in ethics training and those who did not and their perception that ethics is an important subject to be taught to elected officials in Tennessee.

Ho4₃: There is no difference between elected officials who participated in ethics training and those who did not and their perception that behavior can be changed by participation in ethics training.

Research Question #5: Among elected officials who participated in ethics training, what content areas of ethics training were perceived as helpful based on their most recent ethics training experience?

This research question was restricted to elected officials who have participated in ethics training. To answer this research question, survey items related to specific content areas of ethics training were used (survey questions #28 through #34). For this research question, the response category “Not Addressed” was defined as missing. Frequency counts and percentages were used to analyze each content area.

Research Question #6: Among elected officials who participated in ethics training, are there differences in the types of training formats and the content areas included in the ethics
training and the extent to which their training was perceived to be beneficial based on their most recent ethics training experience?

The analysis of this research question was limited to elected officials who have participated in ethics training. To answer this research question, seven crosstabulated tables were created. The independent variable in each crosstabulated table was the type of format of the ethics training (survey question #26). The dependent variables were whether specific content areas were addressed in their ethics training (survey questions #28 through #34) and the extent to which ethics training was perceived to be beneficial (survey question #35). The response categories for survey questions #28 through #34 were collapsed into two categories: (a) the content area was not addressed in the ethics training and (b) the content area was addressed. The following null hypotheses were tested using the chi-square test with alpha set at .05.

Ho61: There is no difference among the types of ethics training formats and whether or not definitions of ethics were addressed in ethics training.

Ho62: There is no difference among the types of ethics training formats and whether or not ethical issues related specifically to elected officials were addressed in ethics training.

Ho63: There is no difference among the types of ethics training formats and whether or not ethical issues related to recent ethics violations in Tennessee elected officials were addressed in ethics training.

Ho64: There is no difference among the types of ethics training formats and whether or not ethical issues related to ethics violation in other states were addressed in ethics training.

Ho65: There is no difference among the types of ethics training formats and whether or not ethical issues related to how ethics violations could be prevented were addressed in ethics training.
Ho6\(_6\): There is no difference among the types of ethics training formats and whether or not ethical issues related to resolving ethical dilemmas were addressed in ethics training.

Ho6\(_7\): There is no difference among the types of ethics training formats and whether or not practical applications of ethics in the working environment were addressed in ethics training.

Ho6\(_8\): There is no difference among the types of ethics training formats and elected officials’ perceptions of how beneficial their ethics training was.

**Summary**

Chapter 3 consisted of the description of the population, sampling technique, instrumentation, data collection, and a list of research questions and null hypotheses that were used for this study. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the data analysis.
The purpose of this study was to determine if local elected officials in Tennessee perceived ethics training had an affect on ethical behavior and if so, what format they recommend for ethics training including length of time, delivery methods, and instructors' qualifications. The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the data gathered from the distributed survey.

The population examined in this study consisted of local elected officials in city, county, and metro governments in Tennessee. Using data obtained from CTAS and MTAS as of September 7, 2006, there were 2,643 elected county officials and 1,967 elected city officials for a total of 4,610 in the population that was targeted for the research. After using a sample size calculator (Creative Research Systems, 2007), examining a crosstabulated table for positions comparing city and county, and then comparing the east, middle, and west regions of the state, it was determined that 2,142 members of the population would need to be surveyed to ensure a confidence level of 95% certainty in the survey results. The sample size for this study by region and government type is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

*Sample Surveyed by Region*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>City Population</th>
<th>County or Metro Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>914</td>
<td>1,228</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the sample, 756 (35.3%) local elected officials returned the survey. Of this total, 234 (31%) reported representing city government. The remaining 522 (69%) reported representing county or metro government.

As shown in Table 2, 657 (73.6%) of the respondents indicated they had been in office more than 6 months with 429 (65.3%) not yet participating in ethics training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2</th>
<th>Ethics Training and Length of Time in Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt; 3 Months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had Ethics Training?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Goodness of Fit**

In order to determine whether or not the observed sample was representative of the population, two single-sample chi-square tests were conducted to compare the proportions of elected officials from the east, middle, and west regions of the state in the observed sample to the proportions in the population.

For city officials, there was no significant difference between the observed sample and the population from the east, middle, and west regions of the state ($\chi^2 (2) = 2.96, p = .23$). As shown in Table 3, there was less than a 5-percentage point difference between the observed
sample and the population for both the east and middle regions and virtually no difference in the percentages of the observed sample and population for the west region.

Table 3

*Comparison of the Observed Sample and Population Frequency Counts and Percentages for City Officials by Region*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Observed Sample</th>
<th></th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>234*</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>1,967</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*2 pieces of missing data

Likewise, there was no difference between the proportions of county officials from the east, middle, and west regions of the state in the observed sample and population ($\chi^2 (2) = 2.25$, $p = .33$). As shown in Table 4, there was little difference between the observed sample and the population.
The observed sample for this study included 237 officials (31.3%) from East Tennessee, 299 (39.6%) from Middle Tennessee, and 220 (29.1%) from West Tennessee.

Regarding type of elected officials responding to the instrument, county and metro government officials were the primary respondents with 518 (68.9%) of the respondents coming from this group. Two hundred thirty four (31.1%) were elected officials serving in city governments.

In comparing the number of city and county respondents with their respective samples, the number of city officials responding (234) was 25.6% of the total sample of city officials (914) whereas the number of county officials responding (518) was 42.2% of the total sample of county officials (1,228).

**Description of Respondents**

This section presents a general description of respondents including level of education, age, previous government experience, and whether or not they have witnessed unethical behavior on the part of local elected officials.
Level of Education

It should be noted that there are no education requirements for city or county officials in the state of Tennessee. In June 2007, House Bill 0666/Senate Bill 1105 that would have required a high school diploma to run for city or county office in Tennessee failed ("Losers of the 2007 General Assembly," 2007). Nine (1.2%) of the elected officials had not yet earned a high school diploma and 209 (27.9%) were high school graduates. One hundred fifty-six (20.8%) had attended college but not earned a degree, 24 (3.2%) were community college graduates, and 44 (5.9%) had earned a technician's certificate or degree. Three hundred eight officials (41.1%) held at least a bachelor’s or higher college degree with 4.9% holding an earned doctorate.

Age

The mean age of the elected officials was 57.3 years (SD = 11.7). The youngest official was 19 years old and the oldest was 86.

Previous Government Experience

One hundred eighty-four (24.3%) of the respondents had previously held at least one other elected position, 28 (3.7%) had previously held at least two other elected positions, and 6 (0.8%) had held previously at least three elected positions. Survey question #9 asked respondents if they had held other elected positions prior to the current position. Of the respondents, 71% did not list having previously held an elected position. The average number of years held in a local government office was 10.3 (SD = 8.9). One respondent had served in local government for 51 years.

Witnessed Unethical Behavior

Just over one fourth (27.9%, n = 211) indicated they had witnessed what they believed to be unethical behavior in their current elected position. When asked to comment on the behavior they had witnessed, those who responded included comments (see Appendix D) that
predominantly fit into the following six categories: nepotism, misuse of taxpayer money, illegal activities, conflict of interest-personal gain-favoritism, sunshine law-open meetings violations, and moral issues-abuse of power. These categories were identified by printing the individual comments and then sorting them into like or similar groups. An analysis of the groups was conducted in order to identify a theme for the grouping. Slightly more than 70% \((n = 531)\) indicated they had not witnessed what they believed to be unethical behavior on the job.

**Analysis of the Research Questions**

Surveys were administered to gather the data presented in the study. When appropriate, inferential statistics were used to interpret and analyze the data. This section is organized based on the order of the research questions as presented in Chapters 1 and 3.

**Research Question #1**

What are the perceptions of local elected officials regarding the most effective type of format, time length of training, type of instructor, and the content of ethics training?

To answer this research question, frequency counts and percentages were calculated for survey items related to the type of format (survey question # 14), time length of ethics training (survey question # 15), best type of ethics training instructor (survey question #12), and the content of ethics training (survey question # 13).

Of the 745 respondents, 420 (55.6%) reported the most effective format for teaching ethics was in a traditional classroom with an instructor (see Table 5). Using a case study format was the next most reported format for teaching ethics with 198 (26.2%) making this choice. Significantly, fewer officials reported the remaining formats to be the most effective for teaching ethics with only 17 (2.2%) reporting use of an online format.
Table 5

*Local Officials’ Perceptions of the Most Effective Format for Teaching Ethics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Effective Format for Teaching Ethics</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In a traditional classroom setting with instructor</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using an online format on my computer</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a self-study format</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a video format that I can watch</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a case study format</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing data</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the 744 respondents reported a preferred length of time necessary for ethics training between 1 and 4 hours with 222 (29.4%) officials reporting that 1 to 2 hours was necessary, 135 (17.9%) reporting 2 to 3 hours, and 164 (21.7%) reporting 3 to 4 hours (see Table 6). Twenty-seven (3.6%) of the local elected officials reported a preferred time of less than 1 hour. A small group of respondents (8.1%) reported preference for an "other" length of time, indicating none of the options on the survey was preferable.
Table 6

*Local Officials’ Perceptions of the Time Length of Ethics Training*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Length</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 hour</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2 hours</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 to 3 hours</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 4 hours</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 5 hours</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 6 hours</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing data</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>756</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 751 local officials who responded to this item, 380 (50.3%) reported that the best type of ethics training instructor would be a representative from CTAS or MTAS (see Table 7). The remaining findings show that 118 (15.6%) reported a person who has previously held elected office as the best type of ethics training instructor, 51 (6.7%) reported clergy or minister, 48 (6.3%) reported a private practice attorney licensed in the state, 43 (5.7%) preferred a person currently in elected office, 42 (5.6%) reported consultant from the private sector, 37 (4.9%) indicated another option, and 32 (4.2%) reported a university professor.
Table 7

Local Officials’ Perceptions of the Best Type of Ethics Training Instructor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best Type of Ethics Training Instructor</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Person currently in elected office</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person who has previously held elected office</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant from the private sector</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University professor</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private practice attorney licensed in the state</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative from CTAS or MTAS</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>50.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy or minister</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing data</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Including a definition of ethics in ethics training was reported by 604 (81.1%) of the local elected officials with 597 (80.1%) reporting that ethical issues related specifically to elected officials should be included in ethics training (see Table 8). Penalties or sanctions for those who break ethical rules or laws was reported by 500 (67.1%) of local elected officials as a topic that should be included in ethics training and 474 (63.6%) of respondents reported that ethical issues related to recent ethics violations in Tennessee was a topic that should be included. Four hundred fifty one (60.5%) reported issues related to how recent violations could have been prevented should be included in ethics training and 432 (58%) respondents reported issues related to resolving ethical dilemmas should be included in ethics training. Ethical decision-making models was reported as a topic to be included in ethics training by 418 (56.1%) local elected officials; models of moral development as they relate to ethical decisions was reported by 393 (52.8%) of the local elected officials; ethical issues related to recent ethics violations in other
states was reported by 241 (32.3%) participants; and 19 (2.6%) local elected officials reported other topics to be included in ethics training.

Table 8

*Multiple Response Table for Elected Officials’ Perceptions of Topics That Should be Included in Ethics Training Course*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics That Should be Included:</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition of ethics</td>
<td>604</td>
<td>81.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical issues related specifically to elected officials</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>80.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penalties or sanctions for those who break ethical rules or laws</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>67.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical issues related to recent ethics violations in Tennessee</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues related to how recent violations could have been prevented</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>60.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues related to resolving ethical dilemmas</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>58.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical decision-making models</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>56.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Models of moral development as they relate to ethical decisions</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>52.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical issues related to recent ethics violations in other states</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Research Question #2*

What are elected officials' perceptions of ethics training as it relates to: (a) increasing awareness of ethical versus unethical behavior, (b) the importance of ethics as a subject to be taught to elected officials, and (c) the impact of training on changing ethical behavior?

When asked if ethics training can increase awareness of ethical versus unethical issues, 89.2% either agreed or strongly agreed that ethics training can increase awareness of ethical or unethical issues whereas only 3.4% either disagreed or strongly disagreed that ethics training can increase awareness of ethical issues (see Table 9).
Table 9

**Elected Officials’ Perceptions That Ethics Training Can Increase Awareness of Ethical Versus Unethical Behavior**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethics Training Can Increase Awareness:</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>46.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing data</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 746 who responded to the question regarding the importance of teaching ethics, more than 87.4% agreed or strongly agreed that ethics training is important (see Table 10).

Table 10

**Elected Officials’ Perceptions That the Subject of Ethics is Important**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Subject of Ethics is Important:</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When asked to consider if behavior can be changed by participating in ethics training, 400 (52.9%) of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that behavior can be changed by participating in ethics training (see Table 11). Only 110 (14.5%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that behavior can be changed by participating in ethics training.

Table 11

_Elected Officials’ Perceptions That Behavior Can be Changed by Ethics Training_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Can Be Changed by Participation in Training:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>40.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing data</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question #3

Is there a difference between local elected officials who participated in ethics training and those who did not participate based on age, region of the state, population size of the officials’ jurisdictions, and the type of local government (city versus county)?

To answer this research question, a $t$ test for independent samples was used to determine if there was a difference in age between those who participated in ethics training and those who did not participate. For the remaining variables, four crosstabulated tables were created, one for each of the following independent variables: (a) region of the state (east, middle, and west); (b) population of the municipal jurisdiction; (c) population size of the county jurisdiction; and (d) the type of local government of the elected official (city versus county official). The dependent variable in each of the four crosstabulated tables was whether or not the officials participated in ethics training. The following null hypotheses were tested with alpha set at .05:

$H_{03,1}$: There is no difference in age between those who participated in ethics training and those who did not.

$H_{03,2}$: There is no difference among the regions of the state and officials’ participation in ethics training.

$H_{03,3}$: There is no difference among the municipal population sizes of the officials’ jurisdiction and officials’ participation in ethics training.

$H_{03,4}$: There is no difference among the county population sizes of the officials’ jurisdiction and officials’ participation in ethics training.

$H_{03,5}$: There is no difference between city and county elected officials and participation in ethics training.

A $t$ test for independent samples was used to determine if there was a difference in age between those who participated in ethics training and those who did not participate. There was no difference in age between those who participated in ethics training and those who did not, $t(737) = 1.63, p = .10$; therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The effect size, as measured by $\eta^2$ was small ($< .01$). The mean age for elected officials who participated in ethics training ($M$
was only slightly lower than the mean age for those who had not participated in ethics training ($M = 57.77, SD = 11.94$).

There was no difference among the regions of the state and whether or not officials participated in ethics training, $X^2 (2) = 4.07, p = .13$. The null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship as measured by Cramer’s $V$ was weak (.07). As illustrated in Table 12, 38.3% of elected officials in the east participated in ethics training, 32.7% of those in the middle region participated, and 29.5% of those in the west region participated in ethics training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 12</th>
<th>Crosstabulated Table for Participation in Ethics Training by Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Region of State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$n$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in Ethics Training:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>235*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*4 pieces of missing data

There was a significant difference among the municipal population sizes of the officials’ jurisdiction and officials’ participation in ethics training, $X^2 (3) = 13.95, p < .01$. The null hypothesis was rejected. The smaller the municipal population the fewer officials had participated in ethics training. The strength of the relationship as measured by Cramer’s $V$ showed a weak but definite relationship between municipal population size and participation in ethics training (.25). As shown in Table 13, 17.4% of those in a municipality with a population of 5,000 or less had participated in ethics training as had 38.5% from a population between 5,000
– 10,000, 34.8% from a population of 10,000 – 25,000, and 42.4% from a population of 25,000 or more.

Table 13
Crosstabulated Table for Participation in Ethics Training by Population Size of Municipal Government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population of Municipal Government</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5,000 or less</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>82.6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>57.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000-10,000</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000-25,000</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25,000 or more</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*11 pieces of missing data

There was a significant difference among the county population sizes of the officials’ jurisdiction and officials’ participation in ethics training, \(\chi^2 (2) = 16.46, p = .13 < .01\). The null hypothesis was rejected. The smaller the county population the fewer officials had participated in ethics training. The strength of the relationship as measured by Cramer’s \(V\) showed a weak, but definite relationship between county population size and participation in ethics training (.18). In counties with a population of 50,000 or more, 49.9% of county officials reported they had participated in ethics training. By contrast, 26.2% of officials from counties with a population of 20,000 or fewer reported they had participated in ethics training, while 35.6% of the officials from counties with populations of 20,000 to 50,000 reported they had participated in ethics training (see Table 14).
Table 14
*Crosstabulated Table for Participation in Ethics Training by Population of County Government*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population of County Government</th>
<th>Less than 20,000</th>
<th>20,000 to 50,000</th>
<th>50,000 or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in Ethics Training:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>130*</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*4 pieces of missing data

There was a significant difference among the city and county officials and participation in ethics training, $X^2 (1) = 11.72, p < .01$. The null hypothesis was rejected. More county officials reported participating in ethics training than municipal officials. Fifty-eight city officials (24.9%) reported they had participated in ethics training and 194 county officials (37.7%) reported they had participated in ethics training (see Table 15). The strength of the relationship as measured by Cramer’s $V$ showed a weak relationship (.13).
Table 15

*Crosstabulated Table for Participation in Ethics Training by Type of Elected Official*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Elected Official</th>
<th>City Officials</th>
<th>County Officials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participated in Ethics Training:</td>
<td>n %</td>
<td>n %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>175 75.1</td>
<td>321 62.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>58 24.9</td>
<td>194 37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>233*100.0</td>
<td>515 100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*8 pieces of missing data

Research Question #4

Is there a difference between elected officials who participated in ethics training and those who did not in their perceptions of ethics training as it relates to: (a) increasing awareness of ethical versus unethical behavior, (b) its importance as a subject to be taught to elected officials, and (c) the impact of training on changing ethical behavior?

To answer this research question, survey questions # 16 through 18 were used. Perceptions of elected officials were measured as the extent to which the officials agreed with each of three statements. Crosstabulated tables and the chi-square test with alpha set at .05 were used to test the null hypotheses.

Ho4\textsubscript{1}: There is no difference between elected officials who participated in ethics training and those who did not in terms of their perception that ethics training can increase awareness of ethical versus unethical behavior.

Ho4\textsubscript{2}: There is no difference between elected officials who participated in ethics training and those who did not and their perception that ethics is an important subject to be taught to elected officials in Tennessee.
Ho4$_3$: There is no difference between elected officials who participated in ethics training and those who did not and their perception that behavior can be changed by participation in ethics training.

The original plan for the analysis of this research question was to use the Mann-Whitney $U$ test to test the null hypotheses. However, the frequency distributions of the dependent variables showed that all three variables were skewed with two of the variables being highly skewed. Bar graphs showing the distributions of the three dependent variables are shown in Figures 1, 2, and 3. Based on the distributions of these variables, the researcher made the decision to use crosstabulated tables and the chi-square test instead of Mann-Whitney $U$ to answer this research question.

![Figure 1](image-url.png)

*Figure 1. Training Can Increase Awareness of Ethical and Unethical Behavior*
The Subject of Ethics Is Important

Figure 2. The Subject of Ethics Is Important

Behavior Can Be Changed by Participation in Ethics Training

Figure 3. Behavior Can be Changed by Participation in Ethics Training
The preliminary analysis of the three 2 x 5 crosstabulated tables using all five categories of agreement in crosstabulated tables showed one of the three tables had a violation of the assumption of chi-square. When all three dependent variables were recoded into the four categories (the strongly disagree and disagree categories were combined), none of the three crosstabulated tables had violations of the assumptions of chi-square. The 2 x 4 crosstabulated tables were used in the analysis of the research question.

The results of the chi-square test showed there was no difference between officials who participated in ethics training and those who did not and their perception that ethics training can increase awareness of ethical versus unethical behavior, $\chi^2 (3) = 3.55, p = .31$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. Table 16 shows there was very little difference between the perceptions of those who had not participated in ethics training and those who had, and that a substantial majority of both groups (88.9% of those who had not participated in training and 92.4% of those who had participated) either agreed or strongly agreed that ethics training can increase awareness of ethical versus unethical behavior.

Table 16

*Crosstabulated Table for Perception That Ethics Training Can Increase Awareness of Ethical Versus Unethical Behavior by Participation in Ethics Training*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participated in Ethics Training</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree or Disagree</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>45.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>495*</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*10 pieces of missing data*
The chi-square test showed there was no difference between officials who had not participated in ethics training and those who had and their perceptions that the subject of ethics is important, $X^2 (3) = 4.98, p = .17$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Of the 251 respondents who had participated in ethics training, an overwhelming majority of 228 (90.83%) reported that they either agreed or strongly agreed that the subject of ethics is an important one (see Table 17). Of the 493 local elected officials who had not participated in ethics training, 422 (85.6%) reported that they either agreed or strongly agreed that the subject of ethics is an important one.

Table 17
*Crosstabulated Table for the Perception That the Subject of Ethics Is Important by Participation in Ethics Training*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participated in Ethics Training</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Subject of Ethics is Important:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree or disagree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>40.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>50.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>493*</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*12 pieces of missing data

The chi-square test showed there was no difference between those who had not participated in ethics training and those who had and their perception that behavior can be
changed by participation in training, $X^2 (3) = 3.05, \ p = .38$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Of the 250 local elected officials who had participated in ethics training, 144 (57.6%) reported that it is their perception that behavior can be changed by participation in ethics training. Of the 493 local elected officials who had not participated in ethics training, 255 (51.8%) reported that it is their perception that behavior can be changed by participating in ethics training.

Table 18
*Crosstabulated Table for the Perception That Behavior Can be Changed by Participation in Ethics Training*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior Can be Changed by Participation in Ethics Training:</th>
<th>Participated in Ethics Training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree or disagree</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>493*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*13 pieces of missing data*
Research Question #5

Among elected officials who participated in ethics training, what content areas of ethics training were perceived as helpful based on their most recent ethics training experience?

This research question was restricted to elected officials who had participated in ethics training. To answer this research question survey items related to specific content areas of ethics training were used (questions # 28 through #34). For this research question, the response category “Not Addressed” was defined as missing. Frequency counts and percentages were used to analyze each content area.

Two topics were rated as very helpful by more than a fourth of the respondents (see Table 19). The topic of issues specifically related to elected officials was considered very helpful by 28.3% of respondents and the topic practical application of ethics in a work environment was considered very helpful by 25.8% of the respondents. When combining helpful and very helpful responses, three topics received responses more than 70%. These topics were issues specifically related to elected officials (84.0%), definition of ethics (75.1%), and practical application of ethics in a work environment (73.4%). The topic that respondents considered the least helpful was clearly issues related to recent ethical violations in other states with 24.6% of the respondents considering the topic not helpful and 40.6% considering it only somewhat helpful.

Table 19

Topics to be Included in Ethics Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics Covered:</th>
<th>Not Helpful</th>
<th>Somewhat Helpful</th>
<th>Helpful</th>
<th>Very Helpful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition of ethics</td>
<td>N: 225</td>
<td>n: 4</td>
<td>%: 1.8</td>
<td>N: 124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues specifically related to elected officials</td>
<td>N: 230</td>
<td>n: 3</td>
<td>%: 1.3</td>
<td>N: 128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 19 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Not Helpful</th>
<th>Somewhat Helpful</th>
<th>Helpful</th>
<th>Very Helpful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues related to recent violations in TN</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues related to recent violations in other states</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues related to how ethics violations could have been prevented</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>48.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues related to resolving ethical dilemmas</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical application of ethics in work environment</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question #6

Among elected officials who participated in ethics training, are there differences in the types of training formats and the content areas included in the ethics training and the extent to which their training was perceived to be beneficial based on their most recent ethics training experience?

The analysis of this research question was limited to elected officials who had participated in ethics training. As such, there are different numbers of responses per category depending on the type of training format (live, online, etc.). To answer this research question, eight crosstabulated tables were created. The independent variable in each crosstabulated table was the type of format of the ethics training (survey question #26). The dependent variables were whether or not specific content areas were addressed in their ethics training (survey questions #28 through #34) and the extent to which ethics training was perceived to be beneficial (survey question #35). The response categories for questions #28 through #34 were collapsed into two categories: (a) the content area was not addressed in the ethics training and (b) the
content area was addressed. Each of the eight crosstabulated tables had violations of the assumptions of chi-square. Consequently, null hypotheses $6_1$ through $6_8$ were not tested.

$Ho6_1$: There is no difference among the types of ethics training formats and whether or not definitions of ethics were addressed in ethics training.

$Ho6_2$: There is no difference among the types of ethics training formats and whether or not ethical issues related specifically to elected officials were addressed in ethics training.

$Ho6_3$: There is no difference among the types of ethics training formats and whether or not ethical issues related to recent ethics violations in Tennessee elected officials were addressed in ethics training.

$Ho6_4$: There is no difference among the types of ethics training formats and whether or not ethical issues related to ethics violation in other states were addressed in ethics training.

$Ho6_5$: There is no difference among the types of ethics training formats and whether or not ethical issues related to how ethics violations could be prevented were addressed in ethics training.

$Ho6_6$: There is no difference among the types of ethics training formats and whether or not ethical issues related to resolving ethical dilemmas were addressed in ethics training.

$Ho6_7$: There is no difference among the types of ethics training formats and whether or not practical applications of ethics in the working environment were addressed in ethics training.

$Ho6_8$: There is no difference among the types of ethics training formats and elected officials’ perceptions of how beneficial their ethics training was.

Although the eight null hypotheses could not be tested, there was value in comparing ethics training format and the topics addressed in each format. Table 20 illustrates strong trends in topics covered in training from multiple formats.
As shown in Table 20, of the 208 respondents who had participated in ethics training in a traditional classroom setting, 200 (96.2%) reported that the definition of ethics was addressed as a topic in their ethics training. Two officials reported having this topic addressed in a video format, although those two represent 100% of the population who used a video format. Overall, of the 233 officials who participated in ethics training, the overwhelming majority (96.6%) reported that the definition of ethics was addressed in their training.

As shown in Table 20, of the 211 officials who reported they had participated in ethics training in a traditional classroom setting with an instructor, 205 (97.2%) indicated the topic of ethical issues related to elected officials was included in their training. All 15 (100%) who used an online format stated this topic was included as did all 5 (100%) who participated in a self-study format. Overall, 97.5% of officials trained reported the training included ethical issues related specifically to elected officials.

Of those who reported participating in ethics training in a traditional classroom setting with an instructor, 179 (85.6%) responded that the topic of ethical issues related to violations in Tennessee was addressed. Of those who participated in ethics training using an online format, 11 (78.6%) reported that ethical issues related to violations in Tennessee were addressed. Overall, of the 232 respondents included in the analysis of this question, 196 (84.5%) stated ethical issues related to violations in Tennessee were included in their training.

Of those who reported they participated in ethics training in a traditional classroom setting, 123 (59.7%) reported their class included ethical issues related to violations in other states. Of the two survey respondents who reported that they participated in ethics training using a video format, one (50%) reported that an ethical issue related to violations in other states was addressed. Overall, of the 230 officials included in the analysis of this question, 138 (60.0%) had training that included ethical issues related to violations in other states.
Table 20

*Ethics Training Format and Content Areas*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>In a traditional classroom setting with an instructor</th>
<th>Using an online format</th>
<th>Using a self study format</th>
<th>Using a video format that I can watch</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of ethics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressed</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>96.2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not addressed</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues specifically related to elected officials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressed</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>97.2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not addressed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues related to recent violations in TN</td>
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Of the 210 officials who reported participating in ethics training in a traditional classroom setting with an instructor, 167 (79.5%) reported issues related to how ethics violations could be prevented was addressed. Of those who reported participating in ethics training using
an online format, 12 (85.7%) reported issues related to how ethics violations could be prevented was addressed. Overall, of the 234 officials who responded to this question, 186 (79.5%) said the topic of issues related to how ethics violations could be prevented had been addressed in some format.

Of the 209 officials who participated in ethics training in a traditional classroom setting with an instructor, 188 (90%) reported that issues related to resolving ethical dilemmas were addressed. All 15 (100%) of the officials who had ethics training using an online format reported that issues related to resolving ethical dilemmas were included in the program. Overall, of the 234 elected officials who had participated in ethics training, 212 (90.6%) reported that issues related to resolving ethical dilemmas were addressed in their training.

Of the 211 respondents who had participated in ethics training in a traditional classroom setting, 200 (94.8%) reported the practical application of ethics in a working environment was addressed in their training. All 15 (100%) of the officials who had ethics training using an online format reported the practical application of ethics in a working environment was addressed as did 5 (100%) officials who received training using a self-study format. Of the 236 officials who participated in ethics training, 225 (95.3%) reported the practical application of ethics in a working environment was included in their training.

In considering if elected officials perceived that their most recent training was beneficial, 204 (94.4%) officials who participated in ethics training in a traditional classroom setting with an instructor reported the training was beneficial or very beneficial and a similar 94.2% of the 228 officials who received training in any format reported the training was beneficial or very beneficial.
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine if local elected officials in Tennessee perceive ethics training will affect ethical behavior, and, if so, what format they recommend for ethics training including length of time, delivery methods, and instructors' qualifications.

The results of this study could be used by local governments and organizations that prepare or deliver training in Tennessee to determine what topics should be offered in their ethics training as well as how long the training should be and who should lead the training. The results of this study could also be used by state-level policy makers if they decide to move toward required ethics training for local government officials. This section presents a review of the results of the data and interpretation of the statistical results of the survey located in Appendix A. The survey statements were analyzed using quantitative methods using descriptive and inferential statistics. Six research questions were analyzed for the purpose of this study.

Research Questions

Research Question #1

Research question #1 focused on the perceptions of local elected officials regarding the most effective type of format, time length of training, type of instructor, and the content of ethics training.

Regarding the format of ethics training, Ponemon and Felo (1996) reported that successful ethics programs should include live instruction, small class sizes, and a decision-based focus. The responses on the survey instrument showed the majority preferred training by either CTAS or MTAS. Both of these organizations have taken a traditional approach to their training including the three criteria referenced above for successful ethics programs. In addition, they include case studies that place a decision-based focus on their programs.
The survey results showed that elected local officials in Tennessee prefer the use of trainers from CTAS or MTAS. These trainers are often attorneys licensed by the state of Tennessee and, at least, have both academic and professional experience. This finding is directly in line with that of West et al. (1998) who recommended the use of professional trainers for ethics training.

Research Question #2

Research question #2 focused on determining elected officials' perceptions of ethics training as it relates to: (a) increasing awareness of ethical versus unethical behavior, (b) its importance of ethics as a subject to be taught to elected officials, and (c) the impact of training on changing ethical behavior.

The work of Delaney and Sockell (1992) supported the notion that training programs do positively impact ethics. The survey results showed that elected local officials in Tennessee said they believe that ethics awareness can be improved by participation in ethics training. Indeed, 90% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that ethics training can increase awareness of ethical versus unethical behavior. In addition, 87.4% agreed or strongly agreed that it is important that ethics be taught to elected officials. The respondents, however, were not as strong in their belief that behavior can be changed by ethics training with 40.7% agreeing that behavior could be changed with ethics training and 31.5% responding that they were neutral on the question.

The literature revealed that a common cause of ethical dilemmas for elected officials was the issue of power. Bruhn (2005) said, “Ethical choices are generally influenced by personal needs. Some needs are so powerful they blur the boundaries about what is acceptable behavior” (p. 191). Although this study did not specifically address power as a motivator for unethical behavior, open-ended responses to survey item # 11 (see Appendix C) indicated that power might indeed be a motivating factor for unethical behavior. When asked if they had witnessed unethical behavior in their elected positions, comments from the study's participants that support
this notion included: “I have seen it all in 24 years…County attorneys and commissioners abusing power for personal gain,” “Mayor abusing power,” and “A situation occurred when a magistrate tried to use his power to encourage a young girl to participate in sexual related activities.” These comments support Bruhn’s suggestion that choices are influenced by powerful personal needs.

The results inform officials and others that ethics training could increase awareness. Specifically, ethics training can increase awareness about ethical issues. In addition, the data revealed that ethics training could help one in determining what is ethical versus unethical behavior as 92.4% agreed or strongly agreed that ethics training can increase awareness of ethical versus unethical behavior.

Regarding awareness, 90% of elected officials agreed or strongly agreed that ethics training increases awareness with 87.4% reporting they agreed or strongly agreed that the subject of ethics is important. Those overwhelmingly high numbers should bring about a conclusion that ethics training has high value for elected officials. When combining this information with the fact that 53.7% of local elected officials said they agreed or strongly agreed that ethics training can change behavior, one could conclude that state legislators, public service institutions, and state officials should look for ways to make ethics training readily available and greatly encourage local officials to be trained in ethics. The disconnect with these data, however, is that 64.2% of local elected officials reported that after a year or more in office, they themselves have not received ethics training. One could conclude that although elected officials believe that ethics training is important, they are not participating themselves. This lack of participation could be because they have not had the opportunity or it could be that they have not proactively sought out the opportunity. Likewise, the data presented in chapter 4 also show that local elected officials reported they believed training could change behavior; yet, they were not being trained themselves.
Research Question #3

Research question #3 was designed to examine a difference, if any, between elected officials who participated in ethics training and those who did not in their perceptions of ethics training as it relates to: (a) increasing awareness of ethical versus unethical behavior, (b) its importance as a subject to be taught to elected officials, and (c) the impact of training on changing ethical behavior.

To answer this research question, survey questions #16 through #18 were used. A chi-square test was used instead of a Mann-Whitney $U$ to answer the research question. The chi-square test showed there was no difference between officials who had participated in ethics training and those who had not as it relates to any of the three areas addressed (increasing awareness of ethical versus unethical behavior, importance of ethics as a subject to be taught to elected officials, and the impact of training on changing behavior).

It is important to note, however, that among local elected officials who had not participated in ethics training, 88.9% agreed or strongly agreed that ethics training could increase awareness of ethical versus unethical behavior; 85.6% agreed or strongly agreed that the subject of ethics was important as a subject to be taught; and 51.8% agreed or strongly agreed that ethics training had an impact on changing behavior. These findings for elected officials who had not been trained further emphasized the conclusion presented in research question #2 that elected officials stated the importance and value of ethics training yet they were not participating themselves.

Research Question #4

Research question #4 concerned the possible differences between local elected officials who participated in ethics training and those who did not participate based on age, region of the state, population size of the officials’ jurisdictions, and the type of local government (city versus county) the elected official serves.
To answer this research question, a $t$ test for independent samples was used to determine if there was a difference in age between those who participated in ethics training and those who did not participate. For the remaining variables, four crosstabulated tables were created, one for each of the following independent variables: (a) region of the state (east, middle, and west); (b) population of the municipal jurisdiction; (c) population size of the county jurisdiction; and (d) the type of elected official (city versus county). The dependent variable in each of the four crosstabulated tables was whether or not the officials participated in ethics training. The null hypotheses were tested with alpha set at .05.

As presented in chapter 4, there was no statistical difference in age between those who participated in ethics training and those who did not. Likewise, there was no statistical difference among the regions of the state and whether or not officials participated in ethics training. However, there were differences among the municipal population size of the officials’ jurisdiction and officials’ participation in ethics training. In addition, there were differences among the county population sizes of the officials’ jurisdiction and officials’ participation in ethics training. In addition to the population size differentials, there were differences between the type of elected official and participation in ethics training.

Regarding population, the percentage of local elected officials from a municipal government with a population of 5,000 or less who have received ethics training is 17.4%. In municipal governments with populations between 5,000 and 10,000, 38.5% of local elected officials have received ethics training; 34.8% of officials in communities with a population of 10,000 – 25,000 have received ethics training; and 42.4% in communities of 25,000 or more have received ethics training. It can be concluded, therefore, that the larger the municipal government, the more local elected officials have received ethics training.

The trend was similar for county government. When considering the population of local county governments in Tennessee, it was found that the larger the county, the more local elected officials reported receiving ethics training. In the smallest counties (20,000 or fewer), 26.2% of local elected officials reported having participated in ethics training. In counties with residents
between 20,000 and 50,000, 35.6% of local elected officials reported having received ethics training. Following a similar trend, 49.9% of local elected officials from counties with populations of 50,000 or more reported that they have received ethics training compared to the mid-sized counties (20,000 – 50,000). Moreover, in comparing the smallest population category (20,000 or fewer) to the largest population category (50,000 or more), the 26.2% figure versus the 49.9% figure of local officials reporting participation in ethics training shows an expanding trend in this training differential as the county population size increases. An area for future research is to determine why, as population size increases in both municipal and county governments, the participation in ethics training by local elected officials increases.

In comparing city officials who participated in ethics training with county officials who participated, 24.9% of city officials reported participating in ethics training compared to 37.7% of county officials. This significant difference among city officials’ and county officials’ participation in ethics training is a recommended area of future study.

Research Question #5

Research question #5 addressed what content areas of ethics training were perceived as helpful based on the participants' most recent ethics training experience.

This research question was restricted to elected officials who have participated in ethics training. To answer this research question, survey items related to specific content areas of ethics training were used (survey questions #28 through #34). For this research question, the response category “Not Addressed” was defined as missing. Frequency counts and percentages were used to analyze each content area.

In considering topics perceived as helpful for inclusion in ethics training, the data revealed that training on issues specifically related to elected officials was clearly the most helpful topic with 84% of the respondents rating the topic as helpful or very helpful. The next two topic areas receiving similar ratings that should be considered important for inclusion in ethics training are the definition of ethics with 75.1% of the respondents rating it helpful or very
helpful and practical application of ethics in the work environment with 73.4% of the respondents rating the topic as helpful or very helpful. The fourth highest-rated topic was issues related to recent ethics violations in the state of Tennessee with 63.4% rating this topic helpful or very helpful. The lowest rated topic area was issues related to recent ethics violations in other states with only 34.8% reporting this topic as helpful or very helpful. From these data, it can be concluded that several topics are considered helpful or very helpful by elected officials for inclusion in ethics training. In addition, data indicate whereas some interest by elected officials exists in Tennessee ethics violations, little interest exists in learning about ethics issues in other states.

Research Question #6

Research question #6 focused on differences in the types of training formats and the content areas included in the ethics training and the extent to which the participants' training was perceived to be beneficial based on their most recent ethics training experience.

The analysis of this research question was limited to elected officials who have participated in ethics training. To answer this research question, seven crosstabulated tables were created. The independent variable in each crosstabulated table was the type of format of the ethics training (survey question #26). The dependent variables were whether specific content areas were addressed in their ethics training (survey questions #28 through #34) and the extent to which ethics training was perceived to be beneficial (survey question #35). The response categories for survey questions #28 through #34 were collapsed into two categories: (a) the content area was not addressed in the ethics training and (b) the content area was addressed. The null hypotheses were not tested because of violations of the assumptions of the chi-square test.

However, the data showed some interesting trends and verified that some of the topics or content areas that elected officials reported as being helpful or very helpful to them in ethics training were, in fact, being covered in ethic training in almost all presentation formats. These topics include issues specifically related to elected officials, the definition of ethics, and practical
application of ethics in the work environment. In addition, the elected officials who reported on their most recent ethics training indicated a high level of benefit from the training received from all presentation formats.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were made based on the analysis of the study’s findings:

1. Local elected officials prefer a traditional approach to ethics training with live classroom instruction. This study’s findings indicate more than half of the respondents (56.4%) considered a traditional classroom setting with an instructor as the most effective teaching format. The next preferred format for effective teaching of ethics was the case study method (26.6%) that can be incorporated readily into classroom instruction. The research indicates more than half (50.6%) of the respondents reported that CTAS and MTAS representatives were their preferred instructors for ethics training. CTAS and MTAS traditionally use the live classroom approach to instruction often incorporating case studies in their curriculum. This conclusion indicates that ethics training for elected officials should be offered in this live classroom format.

2. Local elected officials stated that ethics training could increase awareness of ethical versus unethical behavior, that ethics training for local elected officials is important, and that ethics training can influence behavior. This conclusion is true for both local elected officials who have and who have not participated in ethics training. The findings indicated that elected officials overwhelmingly agree that ethics training can increase awareness of ethical versus non-ethical behavior and that such training is important. Officials who have received training and those who have not received training both responded in the 85% to 92% range in agreement or strong agreement to these perceptions. Such results should mean that elected officials would be receptive
to ethics training. However, this study’s findings show that low numbers of officials, in fact, have participated in training.

3. The age of elected officials and the region of the state that the elected officials represent did not impact ethics training participation. The study’s findings show that age and regional location do not impact ethics training participation. Therefore, these factors should not be considered in marketing ethics training statewide to elected officials.

4. The larger the population size of the local government, the more local elected officials have received ethics training. This conclusion was true for both city and county government. The study’s findings indicated a significant difference in population size and training participation by elected officials. This fact indicates that efforts should be made to determine why the smaller populated cities and counties are not participating in ethics training at the same level as are larger cities and counties. Marketing initiatives for ethics training should be focused on the smaller-sized government entities.

5. More county local officials in Tennessee received ethics training than did city local officials. The findings indicated county officials’ participation was 37.7% whereas city officials’ participation was 24.9%. This indicates that county officials' participation rate in ethics training is more than 50% higher than is city elected officials' participation rate. Research is needed to determine why this participation level among county officials is higher and efforts should be made to increase participation by city officials in ethics training.

Recommendations for Practice

1. When offering ethics training, professional trainers or those with experience in local government should be used. The use of university professors should be a last option because only 4.3% of the respondents in this study considered a university professor
as the best type of ethics training instructor. This rating was the lowest among eight options offered in the study. MTAS and CTAS officials appear to be excellent options for ethics training because they traditionally have offered a classroom approach; this was the overwhelmingly preferred option selected by respondents.

2. The curriculum for ethics training for local elected officials should include a decision-based approach where actual ethical issues specifically related to elected officials are discussed. The findings indicated that more than 80% of the respondents perceived ethical issues related specifically to elected officials should be included in ethics training.

3. A definition of ethics should be provided and discussed to support a common understanding of the definition prior to the training session. The findings indicated that more than 80% of the respondents perceived a definition of ethics should be included in ethics training.

4. Practical application of ethics in the work environment should be included in ethics training. The findings indicated that several topic areas related to practical application of ethics in the work environment were at a 60% level or higher on respondent surveys when asked if these topics should be included in ethics training.

5. The length of ethics training should be in the range of 1 to 4 hours. More than 70% of the local officials surveyed preferred that the length of time for ethics training should be in this range of hours.

6. Given the disproportionate participation in ethics training by governments with small populations, there is an opportunity for the state to support such training through financial support of travel, compensation for the deliverers of training, and provision of training in lesser served areas of the state.
Recommendations for Further Research

The findings revealed that the larger the population of county or city local government, the more likely the local officials of that county or city are to be trained in ethics. Further study is recommended as to why this differential occurs. Further study should also be conducted to determine how to engage more elected officials from smaller local government entities in ethics training.

The data support the conclusion that local elected officials perceive ethics training is important. However, according to findings, local officials are not participating in ethics training in large numbers. Further study should be conducted to examine why the espoused beliefs and behavior are not congruent. This area of further study is especially critical. Clearly, the findings show that elected officials state ethics training is important, that it increases awareness of ethical issues, and that it can influence behavior. The low levels of training participation by elected officials in both city and county is a major area of concern.

The Tennessee General Assembly has required school board members to meet certain requirements to be on the school board (Tennessee School Boards Association, 2007). Among these requirements are filing a petition, evidence of completion of high school, and a variety of training. Elected officials in the study said that ethics training is important, increases awareness of ethical versus non-ethical behavior, and can influence behavior. Because certain requirements are in place for local school board members and ethics training has such highly perceived importance by local elected officials, a further study is recommended to examine why ethics training should not be required in order for local elected officials to hold office in Tennessee. This area of further study is directly linked to the previously recommended area of further study. Obviously, voluntary participation in ethics training is preferred over mandatory participation. Some action is needed to increase the level of participation in ethics training by local elected officials whether through voluntary or mandatory processes.

The data confirm that there are clear areas where elected officials report they have seen ethical violations committed by elected officials (see Appendix D, question #11). These areas
include nepotism, misuse of taxpayer funds, violation of the open meetings act, and favoritism. Because there are definite areas where there is a lack of clarity regarding decision making, an area for further research would be consideration of whether a specific decision-making model would be useful as officials make decisions in these areas. For example, would use of a proven model such as Potter’s Box (Johnson, 2001) aid officials in making decisions regarding ethical violations such as misuse of taxpayer funds?

When considering the most effective formats for teaching ethics the least preferred format was an online method. An area for further study would be to explore the relationship between these data and the data indicating the mean age of the elected officials (57.3 years). Specifically, does the age of the average elected official negatively influence the use of computers and online training?

The areas for further research are focused on both the low level of participation in ethics training by elected officials as well as ways to increase the participation level. Other areas for further study should focus on ways to support elected officials in dealing with ethical issues and ethics related to decision making.
REFERENCES


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APPENDIX A

Survey Instrument

*Ethics: Local Officials’ Perceptions*

For questions or comments about this study contact Kim Arms at zkpa1@imail.etsu.edu

**Section A: General Information**

1. In which region of the state do you serve as an elected official?
   _____ 1. East Tennessee  _____ 2. Middle Tennessee  _____ 3. West Tennessee

2. What is the form of local government in which you are serving?

3. What is the approximate population size of the local government you represent?
   **If MUNICIPAL government:**
   _____ 1. less than 2,000  _____ 4. 10,000 - 25,000  _____ 7. 100,000 or more
   _____ 2. 2,000 – 5,000  _____ 5. 25,000 - 50,000
   _____ 3. 5,000 - 10,000  _____ 6. 5,000 - 100,000
   
   **If COUNTY or METRO government:**
   _____ 1. less than 20,000  _____ 2. 20,000 - 50,000  _____ 3. 50,000 or more

4. What level of education have you achieved?
   _____ 1. not yet a high school graduate  _____ 5. earned a technician certificate or degree
   _____ 2. high school graduate  _____ 6. earned B.A., B.S., or other bachelors degree
   _____ 3. attended college but have not yet earned a degree  _____ 7. earned M.A., M.S., or other masters level degree
   _____ 4. community college graduate  _____ 8. earned doctorate level degree

5. What was your age on your last birthday? ______________
6. When were you sworn into office for your current position or office?
   ____ 1. Less than 3 months ago
   ____ 2. 3 to 6 months ago
   ____ 3. Longer than 6 months but less than one year
   ____ 4. A year or more ago

7. Including this year, how many total years have you held a local government office?
   _____ (total years in elected office)

8. Considering your current position, are you elected to a full-time or part-time position?
   ____ 1. full time
   ____ 2. part time

9. If you have previously held an elected position(s) PRIOR TO YOUR CURRENT POSITION, please indicate below which elected position(s) you have held.

10. Please briefly provide your definition of ethics.

11. Have you witnessed what you consider to be unethical behavior in your current elected position?
    ____ 1. No
    ____ 2. Yes (Please briefly describe below)
12. In general, who do you think would be the best type of classroom instructor to teach ethics training? (Check only one.).
   ____ 1. Person currently in elected office
   ____ 2. Person who has previously held elected office but is no longer in office
   ____ 3. Consultant from the private sector
   ____ 4. University professor
   ____ 5. Private practice attorney licensed in the state of Tennessee
   ____ 6. Representative from CTAS (County Technical Assistance Service) or MTAS (Municipal Technical Advisory Service)
   ____ 7. Clergy/minister
   ____ 8. Other (please specify) __________________________

13. Which of the following topics do you think should be included in an ethics training course for elected officials? (Check all that apply.)
   ____ 1. Definition of ethics
   ____ 2. Ethical decision-making models (with explanation/discussion of each model)
   ____ 3. Models of moral development as they relate to ethical decision making
   ____ 4. Ethical issues related specifically to elected government officials
   ____ 5. Ethical issues related to recent ethics violations in Tennessee
   ____ 6. Ethical issues related to recent ethics violations in other states
   ____ 7. Issues related to how recent ethics violations could have been prevented
   ____ 8. Issues related to resolving ethical dilemmas
   ____ 9. Penalties or sanctions for those who break ethical rules/laws
   ____ 10. Other (please specify) __________________________

14. In your opinion, what is the most effective format for teaching ethics? (Check only one.)
   ____ 1. In a traditional classroom setting with an instructor/facilitator
   ____ 2. Using an online format on my computer from home or work
   ____ 3. Using a self-study format where I read the material
   ____ 4. Using a video format that I can watch at home or at work
   ____ 5. Using a case study format where realistic issues are addressed
   ____ 6. Other (please specify) __________________________

15. How long do you think an ethics training course be? (Check one.)
   ____ 1. less than 1 hour
   ____ 2. 1 to 2 hours
   ____ 3. 2 to 3 hours
   ____ 4. 3 to 4 hours
   ____ 5. 4 to 5 hours
   ____ 6. 5 to 6 hours
   ____ 7. Other (please specify) __________________________
Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements by circling the appropriate number.

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<tr>
<td>17. The subject of ethics is an important one to be taught to elected officials in the state of Tennessee.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Behavior of elected officials can be changed by participating in an ethics training course.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. My local government (has) encouraged me to participate in ethics training.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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</table>

20. Have you participated in ethics training as an elected official?
   ___ 1. No ___ 2. Yes

21. How often do you believe ethics training should be required of local elected officials?
   ___ 1. Every 6 months ___ 3. Every other year
   ___ 2. Every year ___ 4. Other (please specify) ________________________________

If you have participated in ethics training, please continue to the next section.

If you have not participated in ethics training, you are finished with this survey. Thank you for your participation!
Section B: Most Recent Ethics Training

This section should be answered only by those who have participated in ethics training. Please consider only your MOST RECENT ethics training as you respond to questions 22 to 34.

22. How long ago did you participate in your most recent ethics training?

   ____ 1. within the last 6 months
   ____ 2. longer than 6 months but less than one year
   ____ 3. more than one year ago

23. Who provided your most recent ethics training? (Check one.)

   ____ 1. my local government
   ____ 2. CTAS (county technical assistance service) or MTAS (municipal technical advisory service)
   ____ 3. local higher education institution (not CTAS or MTAS)
   ____ 4. private provider/consultant
   ____ 5. local Chamber of Commerce
   ____ 6. State or National Conference Meeting
   ____ 7. Online web site training provider
   ____ 8. Video training provider
   ____ 9. Other (please specify) __________________________________________

24. How long was the most recent ethics training course in which you participated?

   ____ 1. 1 to 2 hours
   ____ 2. 3 to 4 hours
   ____ 3. 5 to 6 hours
   ____ 4. One day
   ____ 5. Two days
   ____ 6. Other (please specify) __________________________________________

25. How would you describe the length of time of the most recent ethics training course in which you have participated?

   ____ 1. Too long
   ____ 2. Right amount of time
   ____ 3. Too short

26. How was the most recent ethics training in which you participated taught?

   ____ 1. In a traditional classroom setting with an instructor/facilitator
   ____ 2. Using an online format on my computer from home or work
   ____ 3. Using a self-study format where I read the material
   ____ 4. Using a video format that I can watch at home or at work
   ____ 5. Other (please specify) __________________________________________
27. If your most recent ethics training was in a traditional classroom setting with an instructor, who taught the ethics training in which you participated? (Check one.)

____ 1. Person currently in elected office
____ 2. Person who has previously held elected office but is no longer in office
____ 3. Professional trainer/consultant from the private sector
____ 4. University professor
____ 5. Attorney licensed in the state of Tennessee
____ 6. Representative from CTAS or MTAS
____ 7. Other (please specify) __________________________________________

Regarding the material covered in your **most recent ethics training**, please indicate the extent to which you found the following content areas helpful by circling the appropriate number. If a given content area was not included in your ethics training, circle 1 for “Not Addressed.”

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<tr>
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<th>Not Addressed</th>
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<th>Somewhat Helpful</th>
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<th>Very Helpful</th>
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<tr>
<td>28. Definition of ethics</td>
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<td>29. Ethical issues specifically related to elected officials</td>
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<td>30. Ethical issues related to recent ethics violations in Tennessee</td>
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<td>31. Ethical issues related to recent ethics violations in other states</td>
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<td>32. Issues related to how recent ethics violations could have been prevented</td>
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<td>33. Issues related to resolving ethical dilemmas</td>
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<tr>
<td>34. Practical application of ethics in working environment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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35. Overall, how beneficial was the most recent ethics training you received? (Check one.)

____ 1. Not beneficial _______ 2. Beneficial _______ 3. Very beneficial

Thank you for your participation.
APPENDIX B
Letter Accompanying Survey

Date: _____________
To : _____________

Greetings!

My name is Kim Arms. As you may know, I work within the University of Tennessee Institute for Public Service. I have been here more than 11 years during which time I have worked with many of you. What you may not know is that, in addition to my work with local officials, I am a doctoral candidate at East Tennessee State University in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis.

I am now at the point in my program where my coursework is complete and I am beginning my dissertation. In trying to select a topic of study, I considered many issues that would be applicable to you, our customers and elected officials. After much thought, I decided to study the issue of mandatory ethics training. I am interested in your perceptions of the effectiveness of ethics training, as well as who might teach such courses and what the content should be.

In order to answer these questions, I need for you to devote a few minutes of time to completing the enclosed survey. Your feedback is critical to my work.

Your responses are confidential and will be reported anonymously with all other responses. The number written on the reply envelope will be used to track who has not responded and will not be used for any other form of identification. Upon receipt of any response, the survey will be separated from the envelope thereby making it impossible to connect responses with a particular person. Those who have not responded will be mailed a second survey.

I hope you will take a few minutes to complete this survey. Your feedback is critical to this study. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions. You can contact me by telephone at XXX-xxx-xxxx or by email at zkpa1@imail.etsu.edu
APPENDIX C

Comments From Participants

Question #10:

Please briefly provide your definition of ethics:

Narrative responses were analyzed and determined to apply to the following categories:

Categories:
- Legal issues (following laws)
- Code of conduct or standards, honesty, morality, right vs. wrong
- Golden rule/religious-based actions
- Decision making, accountability, responsibility
- Personal gain, favoritism and conflict of interest

1. Moral values
3. Moral principles
4. Making sure we follow proper and lawful procedures.
5. Doing what you know is right.
6. A set of principles by which people should conduct themselves.
7. Ethical behavior requires that you act in the best interest of the county, regardless of how that action affects an individual or subgroup within the county. An official’s very last consideration should be how an action will affect him or her.
8. Complying with all laws. Doing the right thing.
9. Rules as standards of conduct relating to a position held, or a profession of which one is a member--“My personal code of conduct” is sworn to upon taking office or a position to which I have been appointed.
10. Keeping the trust of the public as you would your own trust.
11. Doing the right thing all the time, every time.
12. To do what is right even when no one else is looking.
13. Doing the right thing always.
14. Ethics is the concept of morality in a personal and professional behavior.
15. The study of right and wrong.
16. Doing the right things in everything you do.
17. Ethics is a type of behavior meant to act for the greater good versus personal gain. Ethical actions should be absent of personal motivation; however, some times hard decisions cause others personal harm. i.e.: school board rezoning, tax increases, hiring personnel and expanding government versus reducing and outsourcing. The absence of compromise in today’s world causes people to be inflexible and to reach out to the other side or viewpoint.
As a result, each side attempts to convince, sway, others to EXERT favorable responses from third parties in order to pressure the other side. Some consider this unethical; others call it the way politics works. Both sides get their feelings hurt.

18. The difference between right and wrong to do as an elected official. As an elected official, good common sense will get you a long way. Elected officials should know the difference and use good judgment.

19. Making decisions, conducting business, and doing what I absolutely believe is currently, and for the future, the right decision regardless of who is involved.

20. Honesty and integrity – strong values of right and wrong – love and consideration for people.

21. Doing the right thing--lawfully, honorably, and morally.

22. An open government with elected officials doing what is best for their citizens, in an honest way without thought of what is in it for them.

23. Good morals. Grace and honesty. Fairness to the people whom elected him/her.

24. Acting in the best interest of all the people, regardless of criticism, and seeking no personal benefit.

25. Doing things right.


28. Staying within the law.

29. Ethics is the method in which every man or woman makes decisions from their own socioeconomic moral compass.

30. Doing the “right thing.”

31. It is the study of values and customs of a person or group. It covers the analysis and employment of concepts such as right and wrong, good and evil, and responsibility.

32. Behaving in a professional and moral manner.

33. Doing the right thing when no one is Looking!

34. No conflict of interest. Honesty and no perks from anyone. No gratuities of any kind. Always do things right where there is no question as to our behavior.

35. Doing what is legal, what best serves the people whom I’ve been elected to represent, and what is honorable and righteous as a Christian.

36. Doing the right thing so that you would never be embarrassed or ashamed of yourself and neither would anyone else.

37. The knowledge of doing what is right and fair.

38. Being able to separate good and bad, right and wrong, and honesty and dishonesty. High morals. I personally believe ethics should be taught by parents and teachers at a young age.

39. The conduct we use to deal with the public, our co-workers, and all who use this office in a moral and ethical manner.
40. A code to honor. To hold yourself not only accountable for your actions but at a higher standard. To not engage or give the appearance of engaging in any activity that seems unethical.

41. Not showing favoritism or granting your vote or influence for money or favors in an open meeting where others (i.e.: press, citizens) are present.

42. Running any type or form of political practice honestly and fairly to everyone involved.

43. Being honest and not showing favoritism. Being upfront with anything and everybody.

44. A standard of conduct that an elected official should convey to his or her constituents by being honest and trustworthy.

45. Honesty.

46. Using good moral duty and obligations. A guiding philosophy when serving the public. Most especially, an elected official is held to a higher standard.

47. Moral values a person upholds in their life.

48. Do unto others.

49. Do the right thing.

50. Putting the wishes of the people first. Elected officials are agents and trustees for the citizens and must govern in that manner.

51. To base one’s decisions on what is right according to the laws, guidelines, etc., as set forth by local, state, and federal laws and the laws of doing what is right.

52. Trustworthiness

53. To honestly conduct oneself in a truthful nature in dealing with all things related to one’s job in public or in private sector.

54. Discipline of good and bad with morals.

55. Ethics involves being honest, open, and committed to doing the right things all the time.

56. Honest and fair to each member and to the government.

57. One who abides by the law.

58. Following T.C.A.


60. Commonly held standard of beliefs based on rules of proper conduct and influenced by religious training and family or community environment.

61. All decisions and thought processes should be done in moral correctness, being void of conflicts of interest or favoritism.

62. Being honest and above the table in all of one’s actions.

63. Fair and honest.

64. Being honest!

65. Moral leadership--open leadership. Stewardship of taxpayers’ money without personal gain. No conflict-of-interest decisions or vote. A person knows you don’t have to explain if it is wrong or right--They know.

66. Unpraised neutral conduct with disclosure of personal, business, or other interests which may create a conflict.

67. The practice of good behavior, good values, and morals.
68. Doing the right thing even when no one is watching.
69. Upholding the highest quality of morality.
70. Conducting the business of a government agency with honesty, integrity, and openness to the public.
71. The study of the right way to act in any given situation. Ethics is based on certain principles that guide behavior.
72. To do right.
73. Dealing with everything and everyone in a truthful manner and without a conflict of interest.
74. The moral code of political behavior regarding money and gifts.
75. Do right.
77. Making decisions and/or voting on issues with no regard for personal gain or favor.
78. A code of conduct to protect the public and the tax dollar. In a broader sense, right and wrong conduct in human relationships.
79. Doing the right thing. Conducting all things with honesty. A personal code of conduct that will not allow for conflict of interest in business.
81. Knowing and doing right by the law. The moral laws of the land.
82. The exhibition of behavior which is morally proper and lawful.
83. Doing what you know is right/legal, even when you don’t have to (when there is no danger of getting caught.).
84. Using sound moral judgment to make decisions as they relate to governmental policies and procedures.
85. A principle of right or good conduct. Dealing fairly with everyone. Using principles of right and wrong that govern the conduct of a professional.
86. Doing the right thing, making good decisions, being professional, and using good moral conduct. Not taking bribes or making promises.
87. Doing the right thing based upon my Judeo-Christian teachings.
88. Rules or standards governing the conduct of a person. The principle of right or wrong. The general nature of good morals.
89. When holding a public office, adhering to a value system without favoritism or partiality.
90. The moral and legal principles by which one operates.
91. The morals that you use to do your duties and obligations.
92. Credibility, honesty, and fairness.
93. To me, ethics are the rules of conduct and the moral principles by which we conduct and/or make decisions.
94. How a person conducts themselves—whether a person has any morals.
95. Following the laws and being someone to look up to in the county and doing the best of your ability.
96. A code of conduct or behavior that is your guide for decision-making and allows you to render decisions that are equitable, just, and without discrimination.

97. Being a morally sound person.

98. A standard of conduct combined with moral judgment.

99. Avoiding conflicts of interest between elected position responsibilities and personal affairs. Also avoiding even the appearance of conflicts of interest. When a potential for conflict exists, declare these conditions.

100. Obeying all rules of ethics legislation, both in the letter and the spirit of the law. Also, not doing anything that you would not want to become public knowledge.

101. Honesty and integrity.

102. Correctness, fairness, and honesty in all decisions.

103. Doing only the correct thing for the people that you represent and nothing to feather your own nest.

104. The understanding of right from wrong. Choosing the values and standards you live by. You can have high standards to do what you know is right no matter what.

105. To be above reproach in dealing with matters that pertain to the public trust.

106. Honesty. Looking at yourself the way the public sees you.

107. Acting in an honest manner.

108. Simply doing and conducting oneself in a manner that is morally correct.

109. Honesty, fairness, openness, following the rules, doing what is right, and treating all equally.

110. Not mishandling government funds.

111. Performing your duty as if your mother had to defend every action to her garden club.

112. To maintain the highest standard of conduct and behavior in both your personal and professional life.

113. Abiding by laws and also morals.

114. Conduct.

115. Doing what is correct. Being honest. Your decisions should be for all concerned.

116. The knowledge of doing what is the right thing to do.

117. Doing the right thing always, as though you are being watched 100% of the time—because you are. Our creator, God, misses nothing. His eyes see it all, and you and I will answer for everything we do!

118. Ethics is appropriate behavior that does not bring personal gain by using the government office that I’m elected to.

119. A principle of right and good behavior. Moral principles or values. Having sound rules and standards of conduct in order to be able to govern the members of the city commission as well as all employees of the municipality. Ethics should cover personal interest, campaign finance, conflict of interest, and crimes involving a public official and any employee. It must have a system in place to cover all of the above.

120. Ethics is being honest in all phases of your life, including personal and business. Ethics is applying Christian ethics and values in all aspects of life.
The morals and principles governing one’s work and life.

The principal of right or good conduct. Conforming to right principals of conduct as accepted by a specific profession.

Doing what is right and moral.

Trying to give service to others and treat them with respect. Being honest, dependable, and helpful to others in the work place as well as family members.

Doing the right thing, even when no one is watching.

Working to best serve the people of your county and receiving no financial gain other than your salary.

Living life and carrying out responsibilities in personal life, work life, and public life in an honest, forthright, and reliable manner. Obeying laws of our nation and, foremost, God’s laws.

Voicing and voting the constituents’ concerns. No conflict of interest.

Being honest and truthful with everyone. Do not conduct government business with relatives or friends. Do not take gifts or kickbacks for favors for doing my job.

The difference between right and wrong. I will neither lie, cheat, steal, nor tolerate those who do.

Doing what is right.

Honesty and fairness. Upholding the oath of office.

Obeying all laws. Doing my job. Serving my district (#5). Doing the will of my constituents as fair and impartial as I can.

Business should be conducted with high moral codes.

Being trustworthy.

The principles of doing what is morally right.

Doing what is right and good for all at all times.

Doing the right thing, even when no one else will know, and when it may put you at odds with the popular thought and may cause personal loss.

Acting and performing the job in which one is doing with high standards, good morals, and unquestionable character.

Moral principles. Honesty.

Truthfulness.

Doing what is right for the right reasons--avoiding conflicts of interest and maintaining the public’s trust.

Honesty and integrity.

To go by the rules of the laws.

Set of rules explaining what is good and bad and the obligation one has with these rules.

Knowing right from wrong; your own morals or standards set by society.

Honesty

Honesty with no conflict of interest. Doing something without expecting something in return.
149. Honesty. Being able to make decisions with an open mind and disregarding your own thoughts or benefits.
150. Doing what is right but also keeping in mind what is legal and unlawful.
152. Honesty. Not doing anything that would violate the public’s trust.
153. Behavior that is fair and unbiased. Following the laws of the state and the rules of court. Not manipulating the system to one’s own personal advantage, whether monetary or a privilege.
154. Doing the right thing, even if no one ever knows.
155. Doing the right thing for the right reason.
156. Treat people with the respect you expect from them. Honesty.
157. The Golden Rule!!
158. Avoiding the appearance of impropriety, even if allowable under the letter of the law.
159. The study of conduct and moral judgment.
160. Don’t use your family for hire except in bidding. Don’t accept monies for favors.
161. Acting as if your mother was watching.
162. The way you conduct yourself.
163. The art of reacting in a moral, responsible way on all issues.
164. Doing what is morally right in all things you do, from your personal life to your job.
165. Doing what you know to be right and what the best thing is for the county and its citizens. Doing your best to follow the ethics policy that your county has adopted.
166. Abiding by the laws of ethics regardless of whether a person agrees with it or not.
167. Treating other people the way you would like to be treated. Spend OPM (other people’s money) with caution and diligence and deliberation.
168. To make the right decision regardless of personal feelings.
169. Living by our religious beliefs, our moral beliefs, and following the law and our oath of office.
170. Nothing takes the place of doing something right.
171. Honesty
172. Actions which are carried out with sufficient knowledge and choice.
173. Standard of morals to which every action is measured.
174. To be honest and truthful in all decisions that come before me.
175. How you would act if you were constantly on camera!
176. Being completely honest and showing integrity in conducting our daily personal lives and our business lives within basic, good moral boundaries.
177. Anything you do is honest, above board, and open to the public.
178. Doing the right thing.
179. A system of moral principles that governs appropriate conduct.
180. Moral behavior. Knowing right and wrong.
181. Doing the right thing all the time. I do not think you can legislate morals or ethics.
Having a set of moral standards to know right from wrong.

To be of good character and to, in a right manner, handle yourself or conduct yourself in a manner that does not harm or construe something of a bad nature or present an appearance of doing something bad or immoral.

Doing what is morally right without any outside input.

A quality trait in a person that correlates to honesty. It verifies that in dealings with other people that nothing is left unsaid. Ethical people do not get personal gain when they may be in the business but still are in a position to vote or influence a decision that may result in a direct benefit to themselves or their family.

Honesty and integrity in all you say and do. Serving rather than seeking to be served.


Decision-making based on facts rather than personal gain or monetary gain.

Doing what is right without gain for yourself or friends!

Human behavior based on morally correct principles.

Doing what is right. Not using position for self-gain. Honest behavior at all times.

Ethics is doing the right thing even when no one is watching.

Fraud, theft, and embezzlement have always been a fact of life, but computing and, in particular E-business, has created many new ways to commit fraud.

The moral conduct of a person’s actions.

The ability to recognize and put into action moral principles and beliefs.

Doing the right thing. Using the standards of good behavior. Morally and lawfully correct.

To do the right thing all the time.

I believe ethics is basically treating people fair and not taking advantage of your position as an elected official.

Playing by the spirit and intent of the rules.

Ethics is the obligation to abide by a strict code of conduct, character, and behavior, regardless of the contrary presence from society to conform to the erosion of such behavior. The practice of ethics is learned at a very early age and, in my opinion, is not a moral code that can be “taught” in later years. Ethical code is a way of life or not, and it is very difficult to change.

To do what is morally right. Not to let your elected position be a financial asset for an unethical decision or vote.

Ethics is doing the right thing when no one is looking.

Ethics is adherence to a higher standard of values by virtue of holding an elected position of trust.

Not using your position for personal gain. I have serious problems with many state and most elected officials in Washington. Unfortunately, I feel most congressmen, senators, and higher officials are taking advantage of their positions and, therefore, me as John Q. Citizen.
205. Doing the “right thing” and avoiding conflicts of interest, regardless of my personal views/involvement.

206. Ethics is a basic philosophy of honest behavior of a person. Persons with moral standards of conduct of how they conduct their lives, whether in their private lives or in their jobs. Ethics is a standard to live by and teach to those around you.

207. Doing everything by the law.

208. Twofold: (a) Do what you are supposed to do and (b) Don’t do what you ain’t supposed to do.

209. Having to do with moral standards—doing the thing that is right and good for all. Also, conforming to the standards of conduct of a given profession, such as judge, doctor, etc.

210. Doing what is right and legal no matter what the outcome is.

211. Ethics is what teaches a person about right and wrong and makes you aware of the things that are unethical. A person might not mean to be unethical, but without the proper training they really might not be aware that it is unethical.

212. Holding an office elected by the people without being swayed by the influence of others or financial promises. Upholding the law to the best of my ability without regard to race, creed, religion, sex, or any other thing.

213. Someone that will be completely honest. Someone that will come to work every day and perform the duties as elected to do.

214. Religion. Right or wrong. Law requirements.

215. Recognizing all decisions, actions, etc., should be made/taken with complete disregard for personal gain. The majority should, in effect, “rule.”

216. Morals and personal standards.

217. Racial and cultural moral principles.

218. Knowing the difference between what is right and what is wrong, morally or otherwise.

219. To do what is best for the county without allowing personal preferences or outside influences to interfere.

220. To do right. To follow the law.

221. Should not accept money for campaign or bribes.

222. The principles (or philosophy) used and applied by individuals to determine right and wrong conduct.

223. One’s own character, moral standards, and standards for living one’s life.

224. Doing what is right when no one is looking or when no one would even know.

225. Ethics, to me, is taking a stand to make the right decision regardless of the situation I am facing. Ethics is a moral obligation facing us in our daily walk in life.

226. Doing the right thing. Being honest no matter the cost of friendship or the worries of not being elected again.

227. Doing the right thing.

228. The difference in right and wrong involving state laws.

229. State and federal ethics provisions and or laws. Conflicts of interest.
230. Providing honest information about my investments and expenditures and how I handle the City’s affairs. Being sure not to disobey Open Meetings Law and being above board and open with all decisions concerning work with city government.

231. We voted in our April meeting to adopt the ethics policy as outlined by the State of Tennessee. Our county attorney has discussed this in three prior workshops.

232. Being truthful and honest with yourself and others.

233. Knowing in your heart and mind that the things you do every day are an honest effort to represent the people that elected you.

234. The standards which govern an individual’s behavior as it affects those within his or her sphere of influence.

235. Adhering to the laws of God and mankind.

236. Set of moral/legal standards.


238. An inward knowledge of truth, honor, dedication, and morality.

239. Doing not only what the law says, but doing what I know is right by God’s law.

240. Morals

241. Doing the right thing when you think no one is watching.

242. Doing no harm to anyone.

243. Doing the right thing for the right reason within the parameters of the law.

244. Doing things that are morally right. Not being ashamed of one’s actions. Doing things in an open manner and not compromising values at the expense of others.

245. A system of moral values that guide your life in making decisions. The ethics will govern how you react to money, situations, and life.

246. Ethics are moral principles. I feel that ethics are a set of rules that people should live by in every aspect of their lives. Let your yes be yes and your no be no. Do not seek gray areas.

247. Your moral standards on which you live. Respect, knowing wrong is wrong, and always doing the right thing. To me, your ethics are taught all during your life. We, as elected officials, are held to a higher standard and should live this way.

248. Doing what is right and at the right time.

249. The standard of character that is set up. The principals that are for morals. To be professional.

250. Making decisions that are both morally and legally right. Living and acting in a way that reflects honesty and morality.

251. Moral values that follow God’s laws.

252. Ethics is the moral behavior in both public and private life. All actions should be able to withstand all questions from all sectors.

253. Truthful

254. Honest and fair dealings. No family involvement.

255. Ideas of right and wrong.

256. Decisions made based on morals and that benefit all people.
The morals that were taught to me by my mother that cause me to make the right (as opposed to wrong) decision when she is not physically present.

Ethics to me as related to serving the commission: Every vote or decision I make is without question with no hint of impropriety.

What is right or wrong. Moral duty and obligation.

Acting according to the moral standards of living.

Knowing the principles of good moral character; the difference of right and wrong; and not accepting payment, gift, or favor for doing what you were elected to do, provide public service. Being honest and setting an example for subordinate staff.

Moral values

Not only avoiding impropriety, but avoiding the appearance of impropriety; never to engage in self-dealing or using influence and power to the detriment of the public’s trust.

The moral principles that direct an individual’s behavior, specifically with respect to the right or wrong of an action and the good or bad of the motives.

Doing the “right thing” when no one else is looking or will ever know what you did.

No conflict of interest.

The order of the Golden Rule.

Following the rules with no personal agenda.

Ethics would concern the manner in which government officials conduct business and their ability to clearly recognize and deal with their own potential conflicts of interest.

Ethics is an inward quality of character that people cultivate by acquiring wisdom and understanding through life experiences.

Ethics is a moral set of principles or values that each person or elected official applies to their personal life as well as public office. Doing what is right for mankind.

Prohibit city officials from accepting any gift or thing of value that could be interpreted as an attempt to influence the officers actions with respect to city business and prohibit officials from using their positions for personal gain.

Honesty and integrity. Doing the right things always to the best of one’s ability.

Webster says it best: A code of morals. A study of standards of conduct and moral judgment.

Moral philosophy of defending and recommending concepts of right and wrong behavior.

Doing what is right and legal.

A system of behavior that defines either appropriate or inappropriate actions in relation to the business being performed. For example, it is not ethical to kill an opponent in the political process, but it is ethical to kill an opponent in war! The question is: Who or what sets the boundaries of the system? Prime example: Exemptions from current ethics laws in Tennessee and reporting to the State Ethics Committee. Why is anyone exempt?

Moral principles of an individual or group.

Honest and fair leadership.

Good, moral, and right conduct as to self and relationship with other people.

Fair representation to all people without self-gain or gain for friends or associates.
E-Cycle--Memphis government. Very unethical.

Ethics is very important. I think every government needs training.

The ability to make a decision without being swayed by money or favors. Making the best decision for the county and the taxpayers.

Ethics covers a broad range of issues. The main one is dealing with county money and county business honestly and fairly, making sure that everyone is treated equally and that a person does not allow anyone to sway them because of money or power. This also includes conflicts of interest.

Doing what is proper and right morally.

Being honest in all affairs.

Honesty

Doing what you know in your heart is the honest, fair, and compassionate thing. Always respecting others. Accepting responsibility for your decisions and actions.

Trying to do what is right in my heart and being fair to the people who instilled me to hold this very important office in city government to the very best of my ability.

Choices a person makes when relating to others or his profession.

Being fair and honest in dealings you are involved in at work and home.

Honesty.

Drug free. Sex free. Profanity free.

Honesty and fairness.

Standard of conduct by and among county officials in the performance of their public duties.

Honest and open.

The practice of doing what is moral or right.

A set of moral principles dealing with what is good and bad or discipline dealing with moral duties and obligations.

To me, ethics is doing the right thing in every situation, even in the smallest of matters. My perception of what is right and wrong comes from the Bible; this is the standard for me. All of our civil laws came from Scripture, and this is the foundation.

Honesty. High moral standards.

Honest. Fair.

Working to provide honest, educated, and forthright governing without conflicting interests, personal agendas, and cronyism.

Standard of conduct.

Making honest, good, moral, and fair judgments on all issues.

Transparency

The application of honesty and fairness without regard to any return financially or political motivation.

Honesty and integrity. Informed.

Conducting yourself and your business in an honorable and lawful manner.
310. Doing what is right.
311. Our responsibility as elected officials to make decisions based solely on the merits of issues.
312. Accepted moral way of doing things.
313. Do the right thing and do things right.
314. You have to elaborate on the word “honesty” to define “ethics.” A person must be fair and honest in dealing with the public, accepting no gratuities with the intent of receiving favoritism in return.
315. I took an oath to uphold the laws of the city charter, and I will do that! I truly believe that honesty is always the best policy. You are known for your character and honesty. There was recently a campaign for honesty in city government! End result, to do the right thing in every decision!!
316. Honesty with yourself and the people that elected you.
317. The base is not to **** in any wrong doing and operate on moral conduct and not give in to any wrongdoing.
318. Honesty and fairness.
319. Actions that are legal, moral, and benefiting to the duties of the office.
320. Any activity that you would have no problem performing in public. Any decision you would have no problem sharing with the public. Leadership through a servant's mindset.
321. The ability to known and do what is right morally and legally.
322. Doing what is right, moral principles and practice, and a professional standard of conduct.
323. Doing the “right” thing. My definition of “right” is based on my religious faith and sense of “fair play.”
324. A person should conduct him/herself in a role model way. They were voted in by the people to serve in the office that they were elected for, not to be taking and doing things that would cause a person to wind up in court.
325. Proper conduct while in office. Honesty.
326. Ethics is the behavior we have in our relationship with other officials and constituents.
327. To do the most honest job possible, since I am elected by votes. To do what is best for my town and to be a hands-on person. Also, someone who can be seen other than just at the city hall.
328. To hold accountability for the person that was elected by the people. If one cannot respect themselves, then they sure will not respect their office that they serve.
329. That set of standards and values that I set for myself that govern my moral obligations and behavior toward others. My responsibility to do that which is right, both morally and legally.
330. Knowing and doing the “right” things.
331. Making decisions with the public welfare in mind.
332. Having the ability to perform duties, make decisions, and cast votes based on research and facts without bias and in the best interest of all that will be affected by that decision.
333. Ethics concerns right or wrong conduct.
334. Good morals and being honest.
335. To disclose any personal or family interest in any business conducted by our city, and if a principal (owner, associate, etc.) of any company that we do business with, to abstain from voting.
336. Being able to fulfill your obligation in a professional, honest, and legal way.
337. C.S. Lewis’ The Tao
338. Being honest in all situations.
339. To have morals about you that would set an example for the people that you are representing so that you will not hurt, steal, or place distrust in the people or government.
341. A higher standard.
342. Serving the voters that elected you and also the city government. Being honest to the people.
343. Moral and value principles.
344. Knowing the law and abiding by it.
345. Ethics is that set of rules, policies, and internal moral standards that regulate the behavior and actions of those in positions of authority. i.e.: elected officials
346. The moral character and ethic standards or lack thereof by individuals, groups, officials, agencies, etc.
347. As a public official, to perform my duties in an open and honest manner without bias or prejudice to the best of my ability.
348. Good moral principles and values.
349. Doing what is right and treating everyone equal.
350. Honesty and truthfulness. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
351. I consider myself to be a full-blooded, patriotic, God-fearing, American Caucasian.
352. Doing the right thing that is fair to all concerned.
353. Moral and decent. Only doing things you are not ashamed to tell your mother about.
354. Ethical behavior is according to my Christian beliefs, doing the right thing based on Christian values. Sound, solid “moral” values.
355. Being a responsible adult. Knowing right from wrong.
356. The science which treats of nature and grounded in moral obligation.
357. Doing what you know is right. Not doing what you know is wrong and not doing anything that would appear to be wrong.
358. Doing what is right and upholding your moral duty and obligations to the people you represent.
359. Knowing and doing the right thing.
360. Doing what is legally and morally correct without bias or undo influence from special interest.
361. Proper conduct.
362. Doing the right thing when it comes to ethics. Leading by example and having a clear conscience when dealing with ethics.

363. A level of **High** integrity, honesty, and trustworthiness. Always open to the people that elected you.

364. It is illegal to take money under the table.

365. To be honest in everything that you do, even when no one else is looking.

366. Right and wrong in human conduct.

367. Not taking bribes or favors.

368. Doing what is right morally.

369. Morally and legally acceptable.

370. Holding the standard of your job to the letter of the law. Treating each individual with respect and holding myself accountable to my Christian values.

371. Moral principles

372. Doing what is right.

373. Moral principles.

374. Holding to the oath of the elected office.

375. Being honest.

376. Rules and regulations pertaining to honesty and integrity that were presented by our founding fathers to successfully carry out the operations of our government, local, state, and federal. Bottom line--“Operate all transactions above the table!”

377. Moral and honorable conduct.

378. Respecting voters’ comments and complying with all local, state, and federal laws.

379. Traveling the right path that is before you.

380. Ethics means conducting all business in an open and above-board manner. Honesty about all dealings. Not lying or concealing activities of the office or in one’s life. Truthfulness at all times, even if it hurts.

381. If you do anything which could even look suspicious, even if you know it is not unethical, don’t do it. In other words, be sure anything you do passes the “SMELL TEST!”

382. Moral principles each person possesses and, as an elected official, have a duty to practice on a daily basis.

383. The values of a person, such as right and wrong and good and bad, and the responsibility that a person has to do what is right!

384. Truth and honesty.

385. Offering the best representation possible without any influence for personal gain.

386. Not being underhanded.

387. To serve without consideration of my own interest but for the betterment of all those whom I am elected to serve.

388. The necessity of choosing between right or wrong. These judgments are called ethics.

389. Honesty and integrity in all acts of government!

390. The study of right and wrong.
391. Public trust in what you do. Taking nothing that is not yours. You are elected to represent all people, not a certain party.

392. Right conduct—rules/precepts pertaining to right and wrong.

393. Do’s and don’ts of life. Training in good habits. “Training of heart and mind toward the good.”

394. Being of good moral character. Not accepting anything for the decisions you make.

395. What is right or wrong. The morals of a person.

396. Your everyday character and behavior.

397. High standards

398. Doing the right thing.

399. To me, ethics means adhering to a moral philosophy that guides us to make honest and fair decisions concerning the tasks before us. Simply put, I believe that applying the Golden Rule will cover any questionable situation that may arise.

400. The policy that we adopted, to me, is not taking any gifts, monies, or anything for free.

401. Striving to do the right and moral thing.

402. Ethics is about avoiding personal interest as it relates to making decisions concerning the issues elected officials are asked to vote on. This includes the influence of family, friends, lobbyists, money, or any other way by which a person could be swayed.

403. Doing those things that are morally right in a manner that is justified legally and honestly.

404. As an elected official, you need to set some high standards of conduct.

405. Ethics for a particular person is how that person acts or behaves when no one is watching.

406. What is good in principles, morals, values, etc.

407. A standard of conduct guiding the actions of a person based on moral evaluation of what is right and wrong.

408. Doing the right thing.

409. Ethics equals, to me, not having any kind of outside business dealings with the city. A system of moral standards.

410. Morals with legality and responsibility.

411. Not profiting from you elected position.

412. Doing what is right without personal gain or the appearance of gain.

413. Treating everyone and everything with respect, people and property. Doing the right thing.

414. My definition of ethics is being able to lay down at night and go to sleep and not have to worry if I have done something wrong. Also, not taking money or anything else that does not belong to you.

415. Doing what is right.

416. Honest, polite, and respectable to the people.

417. Being honest.

418. Ethical behavioral guidelines for all employees include appropriate acceptance of gifts; inappropriate influence concerning voting or election process, and overall honesty, integrity, and compliance with existing laws governing behavior.
Moral standard of conduct. Fair and honest.

Someone who is honest and can deal with others on a one-to-one or daily basis or deal with the public. Truthful and trustworthy.

Moral standards

Doing what is right and fair for the majority of the people.

If you live by the 10 commandments, this takes care of any ethics problem, even if you are not a religious person.

Doing the right thing. Using common sense in dealing with good and evil.

Honest

The ability to know what is right and what is wrong and to carry it out without question.

Doing right by others. Making right/best decisions for the town and not letting personal feelings control my vote. Being ethically responsible for the town’s assets and their use.

Doing what is right.

Truth and honesty

The right thing

Honesty

Treating everyone fairly. Not misusing the power of the position. Not doing favors in return for money or other things that could benefit oneself or one’s family.

Ethics, to me, is very personal in that it describes a code of beliefs and conduct in which I hold myself to the highest standards. This conduct is no different in life experiences or political office.

Conflict of interest. Accepting favors for influence or vote.

A behavior system of principles and morally correct conduct that one owes to God, family, and country.

Equal treatment

Ethics is how you conduct yourself within the law, government, or personal life.

Personal behavior and conduct

Doing the right thing morally and legally in public or private.

Being honest and doing the right thing in all situations.

Obeying the laws and doing what is right.

The observance/adherence to a set of moral rules that guide your activities, whether in your personal life or the public arena. No “holier than thou.” but a strong, internal, moral compass. Doing the right thing.

A set of principles of right conduct. The study of the general nature of morals and of the specific moral choices to be made by a person. Moral philosophy.

Honesty, integrity, and truthfulness.

Treating citizens and groups fairly and equally. Favoritism based on wealth and status is unethical. Decisions are to be made for the public good and not for personal interest; again, keeping your oath to uphold the tenets of the TN Constitution and the U.S. Constitution.
446. Honest, unbiased, moral behavior; showing respect to others, including employees; and having self-respect.
447. Personal standard of right and wrong.
448. Knowing right from wrong in all walks of life.
449. The conscious upholding of moral values.
450. Avoiding any activity that would be against the law as would violate the trust of the voters. This may sound trite, but it is simply a personal matter of not doing something that you know is wrong.
452. Integrity, honesty, and doing what is “right.”
453. Doing the right thing.
454. The moral conduct and moral choices in relationship to governmental law and every day life as a whole.
455. The rules or standard of conduct of a person in office. Moral issues.
456. Behavior and standards that would be considered, by the public, as legal and without conflict of interest.
457. What is legal and what is not for each elected official’s office.
458. The ability to look at every issue as important to the people who have confidence in you and to always keep their trust.
459. I think it is a waste of time--salary, etc. People in government or high-ranking elected officials are not going to abide by ethics.
460. Morals
461. Something else for citizens to complain about. I can’t even go to lunch with my friends anymore because of this ethics crap.
462. A “standard” accepted by people of what is right or wrong. What is perceived as moral principles.
463. To make decisions based on truth and honesty. Not being swayed by relations, monetary gain, political gain, or pressure. (Just do what you know to be right by law and morality.)
464. Fair and honest
465. Providing leadership and guidance as reflected by my district.
466. Not allowing anyone to have influence over my job.
467. Doing the right thing. Being honest.
468. Doing what is right.
469. A code of conduct by which we live our lives and do our business.
470. Having the discipline and moral obligation to deal with what is good and bad behavior concerning your elected duty to the public you represent.
471. To provide the services required of your office without benefit to yourself or anyone else other than the person who legally needs the service.
472. Not doing anything to gain personally from an elected position.
473. Doing the right thing.
474. To be of good moral character. To only take actions and make decisions that are honorable.
475. Honestly above all else.
476. For elected officials, decision-making based on facts pertaining to the issue, both pro and con, not influenced by single-issue special-interest groups. By the bye, I do not believe ethical behavior can be “taught.” What can be done is to detail what the consequences are for unethical behavior.
477. Morals and values related to human conduct. The “rightness” and “wrongness” of your actions.
478. Ethics is doing the correct thing all the time, regardless of influences.
479. Moral and professional standards of conduct. To conform to ethical behavior.
480. Being honest, fair, above board, and open about interests in anything you are voting on.
481. Keeping integrity in office.
482. Doing what is morally and legally correct. Not violating TCA. Treating everyone fairly.
483. Doing the right things for right reasons, following the laws of the state and US, and following the vows taken as an elected official.
484. Doing the right thing and not being influenced by monetary or other type of means.
485. Common sense. To be fair to all and to not be influenced by gifts and monies in your job.
486. The difference in what is right and wrong. The ability to make choices based on what is right and wrong and to do right. The ability to do the right thing even when the opportunity to do the opposite is available and attractive.
487. Realizing that the position I am elected to does not belong to me, so I should not use it to accomplish personal goals. Everything I do I should expect others to know about.
488. Doing the right thing all the time!
489. Trying to do an honest job without handouts hanging onto your coattail.
490. Moral standards and professional conduct
491. Apply the “Golden Rule.”
492. Judgment and honor. Respect for the taxpayer to not use power for personal gain.
493. Transparent. Never accepting anything over $25 per company or individual per year. Full disclosure of all contributions. To be totally honest.
494. Distinguishing between what is right or wrong by taking an action or making a decision and doing the right thing. This should guide our personal conduct, moral standards, duties, and the consequences of our actions.
495. The practices of serving the public in whatever practice you have been appointed/hired on a fair and equal basis, to the best of your ability, without bias for profit in any capacity or without special influence in any capacity.
496. Moral, values, rules. (A set of moral principles; a system or a code of behavior.) Based on right and wrong. Ethics defines one’s values and determines a person’s moral response and duty.
497. Ethics is right and wrong, good and bad, and a person’s moral judgment.
498. Standards to live by
499. Doing the right thing and being honest.
500. Doing things lawfully and right to the best of your ability. Not taking anything for doing favors or not doing favors that are not good for everyone. Right and good conduct at all times.
501. A set of rules, standards, and principles governing the conduct of an individual.
502. Acting outside of policy guidelines.
503. To not engage in any activity of accepting pay, favors, or gifts in exchange for votes. To represent all citizens whom I was elected to serve by being honest, trustworthy, and a good steward of the community’s resources. To provide leadership that is not influenced by individuals or groups seeking special treatment. To serve God, family, and community with a clear conscious.
504. Doing the right thing.
505. You should know what is right and what is wrong when you accept an office.
506. Moral values
507. The conduct and moral judgment of a person.
508. Serving the public with honor; not serving yourself for profit.
509. Doing what is right.
510. To have all things honest and open. As I represent the people in my county, as a merchant I will do no business with the county or state. I do not feel it is right for an elected official’s family members to be employed by the county government (no nepotism). All elected officials should be public servants, not politicians.
511. Honesty in all things you do.
512. Providing the highest level of services to the public with the highest degree of honesty and integrity.
513. General and personal rules and guidelines directing personal decisions, acts, and responses.
514. The principles and moral values one uses in their personal or professional life.
515. Having a good, moral standard of conduct. One should have a good religious belief. Being respectful of other’s feelings.
516. Being honest and obeying the laws of our great country. Representing the people who elected me.
517. Standards that reflect honesty, integrity, reliability, and forthrightness in all relationships. Avoiding actual or apparent conflicts of interest and providing accurate information. Taking immediate corrective action when one becomes aware of errors or inaccuracies in information previously provided. Confidential information acquired in the course of work will not be used for personal advantage and will only be shared when properly authorized to do so. Complying with all laws, rule, and regulations.
518. Moral principles applied to personal, private, and political conduct.
519. Upholding standards of not individually benefiting from the job. Demonstrating character that subscribes to ethical standards set by the county, state, and God. Verbalizing ethical standards to citizens.
520. Doing what is right without any possible motive for gain. Integrity.
521. Moral principles and doing what is right.
Decisions of an elected official should be made based on what is best for the city, even if you are personally in disagreement. (b) Elimination of all conflicts of interest. Do not vote on any issue that may benefit yourself.

Call into question any action of an official who violates a and b.

Making the right legal and moral decisions.

Having sound moral values.

Fair, honest, and reliable votes and decisions, not for individual gain but for the betterment of the community as a whole.

Ethics, to me, mean the difference in good moral character or bad, the difference in being honest or being a thief, the difference in telling a lie or telling the truth, and the ability to treat other people and material things like you want to be treated.

A set of moral principles or values. With regard to professional behavior, it is a code of professional standards, containing aspects of fairness to the general public.

My personal code of conduct tells me to do the right thing, even when it’s not popular or easy to do.

Ethics is doing the right thing without myself, my family, or my friends benefiting directly from my vote.

To do the right thing for the position that you are in.

Using sound moral judgments in the workplace or in your personal life.

Moral principles or values. Anyone in an elected position needs to be aware they are obligated to know what is right and wrong and possess the discipline to conduct themselves in such a manner that it would not even be an issue.

Being morally responsible. Behaving ethically should mean behaving at a high level of responsibility and always making sure decisions and judgments are based on the most current, intelligent information available. Being personally accountable.

Doing things above board with the interest of the community always being first.

Doing what is right, upholding moral values, and obeying the law. Holding an elected position does not exempt me from obeying and following the law.

Ethics is one’s sense of right and wrong behavior.

Acting the part of a responsible leader and citizen for all at all times.

Behavior that is within the law and applicable to municipal government and appropriate. Morally exercising honesty, integrity, and responsibility.

A moral and civic responsibility to all people.

Full disclosure

A set of principles for proper conduct in office.

Inappropriate actions. Not illegal but just not appropriate actions for today’s society.

The application of a moral code to life’s activities

The right or moral standard of behavior.

Doing the right thing regardless of who you will alienate and regardless of who you know.

The proper way for decision making and acting in and out of public.
Behavior that does not compromise moral and honest decision-making based upon local, state, and federal guidelines.

A standard of conduct expected by both the constituents and peers.

Ethics are a person’s moral principles to do the right thing for all people for the right reasons at work and everywhere else.

A set of moral values for the conduct of one’s life, both private and public.

Doing the right thing. Acting moral, obeying the law, and setting an example.

Professional standards of conduct. Moral values.

Conducting yourself in accordance with acceptable standards.

Ethics as related to politics carries a unique set of guidelines, as the individual with power is responsible for not only personal behavior but the outcomes and consequences as they relate to the public at large. Governmental ethics correlates closely with Marxism. This philosophy focuses special sympathy for the working class or what is better for the most people.

A code of morals expected of sworn officers of the government to hold a higher standard for the people you serve.

Morality rules that people should abide by without being forced.

A professional standard of conduct that is expect of an elected official.

Conducting personal and public business in a morally safe manner regardless of personal financial gain or loss.

Knowing right from wrong. Treating and dealing with others as you would expect to get treated. Knowing the laws that apply to your position which deal with business and community relations.

Doing the right thing when no one is looking.

Doing what is right.

Always doing what is right. Following the law. Being a good steward over what you have been given the authority. Always remembering there will be a day of accountability, so be found faithful always.

Being honest. No receiving free gratis.

A standard of living in all walks of life.

The principle of right or wrong. That which guides your moral conduct which, in turn, affects how you value all your life aspects, both professionally and personally.

Behavior consistent with what society in general considers to be morally and legally right.

Doing the right thing. Using good moral judgment.

Conforming to accepted moral principles.

Doing the right thing when nobody is looking.

Conducting business with forthright values.

To execute the duties of your office in the best interests of the citizens that elected you to the best of your ability.

Doing what is right by current law and my Christian beliefs.

Doing and appearing to do the right thing.
575. Doing the right thing when no one is watching.
576. Friendly, courteous, and giving good services.
577. A decision you make that you do not have to question ethically.
578. Ethics is making decisions based on the law, on equality in the administration of the law, and on laws made based on fairness, not using public office for personal gain.
579. Honesty and giving your position the best you can.
580. Doing what is: (a) Right for the public; (b) Within the law; (c) moral.
581. Being open to the citizens represented by the office or position appointed fairly and equally and never receiving reimbursement for such, either monetarily or otherwise.
582. A value set in which things are evaluated and done in a way that everyone involved is treated fairly.
583. To be open and honest in everything you do and say.
584. Being honest beyond reproach. Doing the right thing even though the law may provide a legal out.
585. A standard of conduct that provides for officials to be honest in fulfilling their duties. Personal interest cannot be permitted to control decisions made in the name of the political entity served.
586. Doing that which is honest and correct.
587. Knowing the difference between right and wrong and applying it to every situation.
588. To always be above board in all of my decisions. To protect the assets of the county and not be involved in any way financially. To always support hiring the best people (not my friends) but the best qualified.
589. Being honest in all my dealings and conversations.
590. Being honest and serving people to the best of my ability. Using the money of the people wisely.
591. Doing and saying things that are entirely within the law.
592. Whatever Webster says.
593. Everyone elected to a position of power should have a personal high code of ethics; they don’t always. This being said, I think we need better guidelines for everyone elected and staying within policy.
594. To always do what is right.
595. Ethics reform helps to keep politicians more honest and open to the public.
596. Acting in a manner to best benefit the citizens of your city.
597. To do the job you were elected or appointed to perform without doing anything illegal for personal gain.
598. Making choices between right and wrong.
599. A high moral standard.
600. Standards of conduct.
601. Doing what is right and being responsible.
602. Service for the good of the electorate without seeking personal gain.
603. Good moral standards.
604. Doing what you know is right.
605. Doing the right thing for the people that trust and elected you.
606. Doing the right thing when only you would know if you didn’t!
607. A code of behavior defining what actions are acceptable and unacceptable for a particular group.
608. Following the law. Trying to do what is morally right.
609. Doing the right thing.
610. Treating everyone the same. Not doing favors for anyone.
611. Being able to practice doing, to the best of your ability, what you think is morally right and applying those principles to your everyday life, whether at work, home, or play.
612. A standard to which all elected officials MUST adhere!
613. Conduct becoming of an elected official.
614. A set of moral principals. The problem with current ethics resolution is that items are often referred to as “what a reasonable person would assume.” This is certainly vague. There is also a big difference in lobbied politicians vs. local officials.
615. Morally correct actions
616. Putting the public’s trust and welfare first. Passing laws and motions for the public’s good and not for one’s personal benefit.
617. Ethics is hard to describe in your own words. Of course, it’s acceptable behavior in every aspect of your life. In a leadership position, in this particular case an elected or appointed government position, sometimes the lines become grey, but you have to do what is right morally and professionally whether you agree with it or not. Every outcome in court depends on good ethics of all involved from court clerks to judges.
618. One who is honest and does not use their position for gain. One who represents all the people and not only the powerful.
619. Dealing with people in such a way as to always insure your integrity is protected.
620. As a commissioner, my definition of ethics is: You should vote the way of your moral duty. ie: You should declare a conflict interest before voting on a matter before the commission.
621. It’s being honest and truthful even when nobody is watching, guarding the use of public monies to be sure they are spent prudently and without undue gain to any individual, and considering the rightness or wrongness of a situation before acting.
622. High moral values which I use as a standard for decision-making.
623. To have all records public and not to make decisions and policy behind closed doors.
624. Doing what is morally correct, politically correct, and correct in the eyes of God.
625. Accountability to your constituents
626. Honesty. Trustworthiness of handling the affairs of the people.
627. Moral standards and how they affect conduct.
628. Always doing the right thing or making the right choice, even though in your heart you don’t know it’s right but in your mind it is.
Doing what is right.
Honesty and moral character.
A person with high morals. A person who is known by his associates as an honest person.
This is not what you ask. I think some things about ethics get in your personal life. I have a friend I have been around all my life. Sometimes we go to games together, and sometimes they give me their tickets. I use one and give the others away. So am I doing anything wrong?
The behavior that is required of all elected officials.
How one conducts business when no one else is looking. Always being open and honest with everyone, even with the person that may have not supported you.
Knowing and understanding the difference between right and wrong (as well as legal vs. illegal) and acting (voting) appropriately.
How you conduct yourself as an elected official. Your morals or actions.
Just being an honest person.
Obviously, no bribes or kickbacks. Also, spending the taxpayers money is an ethical part of the job, so everyone’s money should benefit the community as a whole. Avoiding the very appearance of misconduct.
To be honest and truthful and to do your job to the best of your ability.
Handling matters honestly. Treating others the way you would want to be treated.
Being accountable. Being open to constituents. Adequately publicizing meetings. Fully disclosing details to voters. Staying out of the “click” on issues.
Ethics is a study of a person’s conduct. That study would include the moral standards expected of one.
The principle of human morality and the duty of morals.
The act of dealing with people, whether business or personal, in an honest and professional manner.
Trustworthiness
Conduct and moral judgment of right and wrong and the ability to do right!
Making decisions and taking actions that are free from political influence and are for the public’s welfare.
Always doing the right thing.
Understanding and obeying all the rules of elected officials.
A principal of right and wrong. Using these definitions to set a standard of behavior for any member of government or a profession. A moral compass.
Doing the right thing.
Serving your elected position with complete honesty and integrity without regard for any personal gain.
Doing work openly and above reproach.
Doing your job honestly and fairly.
As an office holder elected by the people, I feel it is my duty to vote on projects that will benefit all as a whole, not just a few select people and definitely not for myself.
Question #11:

Have you witnessed what you consider to be unethical behavior in your current elected position?

Narrative responses were analyzed and determined to apply to the following categories:

- Nepotism
- Misuse of taxpayer funds
- Illegal activities
- Conflict of interest
- Violation of the Sunshine Law (Open Meetings Act)
- Personal gain
- Moral issues/abuse of power
- Favortism

1. Elected officials drinking alcohol at public functions
2. Not on the part of fellow city council members. (The county officials’ conduct is a different situation, and this demonstrates the worst in conduct.)
3. Circuit Court Clerk abandoned his job (did not come to work for several months.) and resigned after ouster charges were filed. Finance director paid late payroll tax fines with checks not signed by county mayor to hide this. (The financial structure has since changed, and they will hire a new financial director soon.)
4. I have had attorneys ask my staff and I to falsify records. I have reported them to the Board of Professional Responsibility and/or law enforcement.
5. Appointment of county commissioners in Knox County.
6. Technically unethical, but legal. Again, the intent was to serve the greater good.
7. Decisions being made to enhance a return favor at a later date. Doing favors for individuals through your position, which increases opportunities for re-election.
8. Many decisions that were made based solely on race.
9. Previous county mayor met with certain commissioners to make a decision before the meeting.
10. Some people always want you to do things for them that are against the law.
11. We have had some office holders seem to have too much money (cash) and expanded real estate holdings. Former trustee went to the Federal Pen. I am not into rumors.
12. Most of the commissioners have spouses or children or both that are in the education field; so, therefore, they think education is the only thing to spend the money on. If you question anything about the way the schools spend money, then you are verbally attacked. But I have a right to question and I will.
13. I had a county commissioner and his wife (who is not an elected official but is employed at the local U.S. Representatives office) seek, pursuant to a motion by the commissioner during a committee meeting, for $50,000.00 for a non-profit organization that was run out of their home. This fact wasn’t disclosed.
14. An appointed official negotiated improvements to his/her property from a developer. It was a public meeting and was quickly nullified. He/she took a while to understand why his/her action was wrong.

15. Persons guilty of crimes who did not step down from their positions.


17. County commissioners appointing individuals to positions in violation of the Sunshine Laws and in direct conflict with their employment.

18. Placing personal interest above county interest.

19. Public action, not elected official.

20. Self-interest on the part of other elected or appointed officials. Their actions are to the detriment of my constituents as a whole.

21. This is a matter of opinion.

22. Allowing people to vote on bills that would, in time, provide them with jobs. Placing more burden on the taxpayer to gain an elected few jobs!

23. I have seen it all in 24 years: (1) Bidding processes not used. (2) Personal gain for votes and nonprofit boards that are actual conflicts of interest. (3) County attorneys and commissioners abusing power for personal gain. (4) Surplus property sales abuses.

24. Violations of open meeting acts are rampant.

25. Voting for wage increases for themselves.


27. Sheriff charged with illegal crimes.

28. I am the liaison over the fire department. The former fire chief took a purchase order from our municipality to Rural King to purchase two trailer hitches supposedly for the department; however, he took them home and installed them on his personal vehicles. In addition, I have smelled alcohol on him numerous times while he has been on duty. As a result, the mayor and I gave him the choice to retire by the end of the month or be fired. He retired.

29. Minor Sunshine Law violations. Working out deals for votes. (“I’ll support you on this issue if you’ll support me on this other.”)

30. Some elected officials decided to communicate and make decisions behind “closed doors” without presenting the information in an open meetings with full participation of all elected officials.

31. I have witnesses very little unethical conduct. On a small scale, I have seen government workers working on non-government projects. I have seen a few cases where someone was let go after committing an offense because of a position he held.

32. Sales persons offering “incentives” to buy their products. Decisions based on personal gain instead of what was right or good for the county.

33. Questionable in that an individual was on the board of a semi-public agency as an elected official, and then bought options on lots in a development long before it was available to anyone else.
34. Decisions on appointments to boards/commissions for reasons other than service to community.

35. Free passes to local high school ball games. Officials abusing government vehicles for personal use. Elected officials that do not show up for work on a regular basis.

36. Yes, I have seen an appointed department head use his department credit card to buy dinner for several elected officials at in-town restaurants. My understanding is those cards are for paying for lodging/travel expenses for out-of-town business.

37. Too many to describe. You name it, I’ve seen it.

38. Vote on a bill to help a spouse that works for county government. Vote on taxes that help a charity you sit on the board directory. Vote on a thing for special interest.

39. Some elected officials using position for personal gain.

40. Self-gain by councilmen.

41. County commissioners voting in favor of legislation affecting their own salaries and benefits as full-time county employees. i.e.: Teachers or other full-time county employees.

42. A commissioner had his private driveway declared a county road so the county highway department could pave and maintain it.

43. In West Tennessee, specifically Memphis, there have been many incidents that have occurred.

44. We have a commissioner that serves on a county committee that affects his business. In my opinion, it is unethical for him to be on a committee where he benefits by the decisions of that committee. There are other instances, but I cannot prove them.

45. Minor issues with voting on an issue with a personal interest.

46. Decisions made in previous administration were not disclosed to some officials and the present administration.

47. Previously, I have heard certain officials make the remark that since so-and-so is not a local voter, the official would either do or maybe not do such-and-such for the person. Probably was more of a joke, I hope.

48. The previous county mayor acted in violation of county commission wishes and did things without commission’s approval.


50. An elected official having employees transport them to and from a location for the purpose of having an affair.

51. The good-ole-boy rule. A bad comment about gays.

52. Not by any local elected officials. I have witnessed questionable behavior by other professionals.

53. Previous chair school board voted to extend contract of school’s director (Pen Pro***y) and then showed up on school payroll 1 day after resignation. The person was asked by another school board member if he was going with the school system, and the reply was, “No.” (This person has just been denied tenure.)

54. I have witnessed conflicts of interest in the past by a very small number of government officials.

55. Elected officials favoring people who have helped in their campaigns.
56. Favoritism. Elected officials receiving personal gain from county employees, which has been/is in the process of stopping.

57. A general sessions judge/ juvenile judge (one and the same) in my city passed judgment on an individual and then represented that person in another proceeding. This was a strong conflict of interest.

58. I believe that a former colleague took money for votes.

59. Persons more affluent or connected (i.e. kin, fellow workers, fellow churchgoers, well-known individuals) get special consideration with any problems or concerns.

60. It is curious to me how a person with a criminal record and a poor reputation could become the Human Resource Director.

61. Also, how come the mayor’s husband gets a $10,000.00 pay raise the same month she is sworn in? How can the city mayor take new members of our city council out to eat after every council meeting and pays the bill?

62. An official purchased property in a somewhat shady manner--The property would have been perfect to promote county tourism. Misuse of work hours.

63. Elected officials voting to support business associates or to position themselves to financially profit from their decisions.

64. Elected officials taking too many perks.

65. People deceiving others to gain control of situations.

66. Other commissioners (2/3) voted for liquor by the drink. I, myself, did not.

67. Although I have witnessed what I feel is “unethical business behavior,” I don’t believe it affected the population as a whole (not for political purposes).

68. Elected officials making decisions based on personal or financial gain.

69. Commissioners are breaking the Open Meetings Law (Sunshine Law) by meeting between specified meeting dates and agreeing to things to be put on our agenda, after they’ve already decided how they’re going to vote.

70. Too much to write here!!! See Tennessean articles from 2006 regarding Coopertown mayor. Links to court documents are given. Also, see Robertson County Times. Case pending in Court of Appeals.

71. Having private meetings to make a decision on an issue before a public meeting.

72. People making promises that they cannot deliver and blatant lies.

73. A past city mayor and past city council violated his code of ethics by talking to 3:5 council members without informing or getting input from others. He/they also did not reveal connections/relationships to business concerning rezoning, etc.

74. A good buddy will expect a favor, but will be treated as everyone else. They may not be your good buddy when they leave. They were treated as everyone with respect and the best of our ability, agreeable to law.

75. Getting paid by a firm he was steering business to.

76. Decisions made on a personal agenda instead of the public’s.

77. Commissioner whose full-time job was real estate voted on a re-zoning issue from which he could potentially make money.

78. The Tennessee Waltz: State legislature and local county commission.
79. A council member who is a real estate agent solicited business from applicants before the zoning board re-zoned property.
80. I haven’t actually witnessed this yet, though I have been clearly suspicious.
81. Council members not following the rules.
82. A member of the Board of Education voted to retire the Director of Schools less than 1 month after the director hired his board member’s wife as an employee of the system. This member campaigned on the platform of removing this Director.
83. I see this every day in the course of doing business in every aspect of county government decision-making.
84. A favored employee was not held accountable by the rules established for each and every employee. Also, favorite customers were allowed privileges that other customers did not receive.
85. No, but I have been told that some people who were seeking election to public office were paying for votes.
86. People abusing their elected positions.
87. Ignoring Sunshine rules.
88. Taking bribes or money for certain favors. Treating customers in unfair and hateful communication.
89. Doing business with city or county or school board in the county you represent.
90. Conflicts of interest/cronyism.
91. Excess political fundraisers. Attending Grizzlies games with people who do business with the city and county.
92. Borderline behavior, mostly conflict of interest issues with commission members.
94. Misleading facts.
95. Mayor abusing power.
97. Conflict of interest votes. Use of county vehicles.
98. County officials attending sporting events.
99. Sometimes I see some commissioners voting on issues when I have felt they had a conflict of interest.
100. Insurance agents attempting to extort public officials.
101. I believe if your community elects you to do a job, then you should do that job to the best of your ability, no groaning, fussing, or complaining about it! Just do it or resign.
102. Commissioners voting where there was a conflict of interest and they should have abstained.
103. Acceptance of gifts from vendors.
104. Votes being cast for personal reasons or for pressure that caused the vote.
106. Not obeying current laws and local resolutions.
107. The breaking of one’s word. Violation of rules of order.
108. Voting on matters by county commissioners in which there was an apparent financial conflict of interest.
109. Two elected officials attempted to wedge their relatives onto the city payroll; however, as many rejected the same because of ethics. In a recent county election, the county mayor used county “letterhead” to direct a letter to all residents in my city that included a campaign pamphlet, and he/she used taxpayer money to pay for the explanation of “tax free” weekend, and that included his photo during the campaign.
111. The vast, vast, vast majority of elected officials that I come in contact with bend over backward to do the right thing ethically.
112. Irresponsible representation by attorneys.
113. Individuals working issues “under the table” and not disclosing this to anyone that is supposed to be working and giving a unanimous vote on the issue. There is too much “good ole boy” politics throughout all levels of government. The masses don’t trust politicians anymore. They are always voting for the lesser of the evils.
114. A judge asked judicial personnel for money for a civic organizations to which he belonged.
115. We have had a couple of staff members in other offices caught stealing funds.
116. The previous county mayor would try to convene a commission to vote his way by offering special committee appointments if the commissioners went along with his requests.
117. Nepotism
118. Letting your kin’s work get special consideration or paying them for no work.
119. Commissioner living outside the district he represented.
120. We had a circuit court clerk dismissed for unethical behavior.
121. Hiring or firing county employees for political reasons, not for experience or wrong doings.
122. Elected officials with a mindset of “How can this benefit me?” rather than “How can I serve in this capacity to benefit others?”
123. Some council in the past have tried to and have made money off the government they served.
124. County commissioners who are school teachers voting on pay raises for teachers.
125. I am from a rural area, but I find that most elected officials here are honest and hardworking. We appreciate our jobs and want to do the very best we can to help our people.
127. County commissioners meeting in private to decide on issues.
128. An alderman’s vote was swayed by a few constituents, even though the applicant complied with his requesting application.
129. Abject favoritism. Bidding from selected few rather than all in an area that are equally well qualified. Lack of truthfulness. Closing down meetings in apparent violation of state law.
130. Elected official giving holiday bonuses to employees under their authority, calling it over time and going against the policy of the county commission.

131. Not making everyone buy a building permit, like the law states.

132. County employees elected to county positions voting on budget business when it affects them personally. (Conflict of interest)

133. Pay salaries are not set according to workload or hours worked.

134. I think the mayor is unethical.

135. Our county mayor has been elected two times and has never been a resident of our county. She lies and says she does, but she only owns property. She lives in Lincoln County, not Giles County.

136. I see unethical behavior every day at some level, but I haven’t seen it anywhere near the level of the TN Waltz.

137. Officials abusing their authority, treating employees badly, and not doing their jobs.

138. Known conflicts of interest, whether direct or family members, is the most evident, although most are not considered illegal.

139. Misleading decision-makers to achieve personal agendas.

140. I think it is wrong to work for the county and serve as an elected official.

141. Individual aldermen making decisions concerning local government without consideration at an official meeting.

142. The hiring of family and the problems this action causes.

143. People in elected office sometimes think they are above the law.

144. Fellow commissioner--voter registration fraud. He reported false address. He was prosecuted.

145. The “Good Ole’ Boy” syndrome runs rampant in Smith County.

146. People gaining personally because of inside information and the ability to gain financially because of influence.

147. Nepotism, purchasing practices, hiring practices, violations of the Sunshine Law, and conflicts of interest.

148. People looking after what is best for themselves or their businesses and not for the overall good of the citizens.

149. People allowing friendships to influence their judgment and interfering with the role to which they have been elected.

150. Some of the other commissioners are employed by the county government and should not vote on certain issues.

151. County commissioners that are county employees voting on budgets that include salary raises and insurance benefits they receive; real estate agents on planning commissions; attorneys on county committees that represent landowners and developers; and purchasing without bids.

152. A person made statements of what they could do in their hired position concerning the public and was reprimanded.
When I came into office 5 months ago, there were some questionable practices taking place in the city, particularly with the awarding of contracts.

Indictment of ex-sheriff and his budget director.

Nepotism

Office of court clerk funds were missing.

An outburst in a meeting with name-calling.

Aldermen who interfere in the day-to-day operations of various city departments in order to interfere with the normal course of operation. The past mayor would assign projects to various departments that were not the city’s responsibility in order to gain favor of individuals.

I have seen violation of Sunshine Laws. Some people just push their own agendas, and their own sense of self-importance seems to interfere with their ability to see that what they are doing is something they despise other officials for doing. (My opinion)

Not only am I an elected official and work in public constantly, but one son is a police officer and the other is an assistant principal and coach in the middle school. Believe me, we see a lot of unethical behavior.

I have suspected, but am not sure, of someone being given privileges for certain votes.

I believe that county employees should not be allowed to hold public legislative offices (county commissions, etc.) or local school employees be allowed to hold county legislative office (county commission). I also believe that school board members should not be able to hold those positions when immediate family members are employed as part of the school system. Also, school board members should not be allowed to conduct personal business (a sporting goods store) with the school system. This happens in Sequatchie Co.

We have an elected official still on our board who was arrested for stalking and reduced to 2 counts of harassment. I believe she should step down. An investigation is open now.

I think I have witnesses political personal favors.

When someone goes against the majority that wants to do business the right way and wants to protect certain people no matter the expense to the taxpayers and straight out lies trying to protect himself.

I have witnessed unethical behavior out of many folks in the public that I deal with on a daily basis. A lot of people don’t hesitate to cheat or lie in order to avoid certain taxes or fees that we deal with.

Knox County for commissioners by news accounts.

People being swayed to vote one way or another based on a friendship or “business” relationship.

A situation occurred when a magistrate tried to use his power to encourage a young girl to participate in sexual related activities.

A disagreement between an employee and a city resident.

When you are dealing with the public, it is hard to be ethical at all times.

No, but I have heard rumors of unethical behavior.

This is difficult to respond to, as one must prove the facts. The good-old-boy network reaches many levels.
Some years back, three aldermen made a decision before they came to the board meeting. County commissioners breaking Sunshine Laws and also trying to sell/buy items for/from their family and friends.

Out of control behavior at council meetings.

I have seen aldermen vote in cases where they would benefit financially.

A city employee was recently terminated after an investigation of ethics violation. Details withheld because of potential litigation.

Asking for my vote on an issue that has not been brought up.

All I have witnessed involved attorneys and the treatment of clients.

Good, moral, and fair behavior.

Favors being done for family and friends by other elected officials.

Seeing or knowing some persons abusing the system with travel reimbursements, turning in overtime, and/or not working the hours reported.

Officials voting on matters of self-interest and benefit.

Excessive wining and dining on trips paid for by the city.

Decisions made about issues prior to meetings and decisions that are not in the best interest of the county financially.

The former mayor was 78 years old and had a bad habit of doing his own thing, such as having an illegal waste dump.

When another council member had a direct conflict of interest issue yet would not recuse himself!

The way the job was done in the past, conduct and language.

Letters sent by commissioners to fellow commissioners soliciting votes on issues or for positions. Phone calls offering exchange of support on issues.

Misuse of county property. ie: a person at work but working on line to complete his/her degree. Violation of the Hatch Act.

Violation of open meeting law, dishonest information, favoritism, contract violations, violations of b.i.d. procedures, and board policy violations.

Suppliers charging more than what they did services for

Bribing to vote

Lots of self serving people

A trustee in Hamblen county took $90,000

The experience I have had with unethical behavior was what I saw that a person did and what I believed that person was doing. That person is no longer in the position.

Personal contact with firms of candidates for employment which provided an advantage in the bidding or interview process.

A person calling in favors to get elected. Not in office now.

Within our county commission. Refusing to fund budget for what an elected office needs. Adopting resolutions and disregarding what is in the resolution.

Vote zoning approval of a flag lot below city standards that belonged to a friend.
Question #12:

In general, who do you think would be the best type of classroom instructor to teach ethics training? (other, please specify):

Narrative responses were analyzed and determined to apply to the following categories:

- None…ethics can’t be taught.
- Anyone who is qualified and ethical

1. Consortium--Office holder, attorney, and training professional.
2. A panel of some of the above-mentioned people.
3. Someone who has violated ethics policy or has been convicted.
4. None of the above listed. If it was not taught in childhood by word and deed, it is too late to begin now.
5. Combine several of the above, i.e.: clergy, CTAS, MTAS, University professor
6. Ethics cannot really be taught. You are honest or you are dishonest.
7. By a person known to be honest, a leader in the community, or a possible lawyer with up-to-date knowledge of ethics law and its changes.
8. A retired judge
9. Any of the above if they have a record of responsible behavior and an understanding of the current laws.
10. Cultural diversity training
11. Someone from the Ethics Commission.
12. I don’t really know if ethics can be taught!
13. Someone who has proven himself to be ethical.
14. Any of the above who are ethical themselves.
15. This could be a combination of the above.
16. County attorney
17. Whomever you choose.
18. Someone with good common sense.
19. I think it is a team-teaching topic: (a) Someone versed in the law; (b) someone who has walked in our shoes; (c) someone who has spiritual insight or perspective.
20. Anyone who is qualified.
21. Other training staff, such as IAAO or DPA because they are up to date on laws.
22. Ethics professor from a private college, like CBU or Rhodes.
23. Representative from out of state.
25. You aren’t going to teach this at this point of someone’s life.
26. Former FBI Special Agent who now holds appointed or elected state or local position.
27. Any individual with high integrity in the community.
28. I think the basics of ethics are learned early in and through life. Laws could be shared and taught.
29. I do not see the need.
30. Someone who knows and understands county government and how elected constitutional officers relate or should react in county government. Someone who knows and understands both sides.
31. This could be all of the above or none of the above; it depends on the person.
32. Only someone with ethics can teach it.
33. What about a mix of the above? Ethics involves **ALL** aspects of the human experience, from legal issues to moral/religious issues.
34. Someone proven to be ethical and up to date on all ethics laws pertaining to elected officials.
35. An ethical person.
37. I think anyone can teach ethics as long as they understand the law and can explain circumstances that might be questioned.
38. It can’t be taught. We have ethics by honesty.
39. Someone that does not do anything wrong intentionally and conducts themselves in an upright manner.
40. Someone who studies this in particular.
41. An educator from the public school system.
42. In general, I don’t believe you can teach ethics or morality to someone who doesn’t understand them to begin with.
43. Please note that there are several qualified in the above list. CTAS has proven to me (in my short term) to be the most helpful and knowledgeable. They have given me unbiased information and are familiar with the system. Also, remember we have the original book on ethics, the Bible.
44. None of the categories has an inside track on ethics. If possible, ethics should be taught by an ethical person. Unfortunately, the premise here is flawed. If a politician isn’t ethical in the first place, a 1-hour (or a 6-hour) course is unlikely to change him. (I take it the premise is that an ethics course will make us more ethical.)
45. Someone whose own behavior is above reproach.
46. A human resources professional
47. If I had my choice, the instruction would be a person trained in ethics with knowledge of how politics work and the ability to speak wisely about both.
48. Someone who understands what ethics really means.
49. A person with an I.Q. of at least 120 who has successfully raised a family.
50. A family person. A Christian with high morals, and someone not from the local community.
51. Someone who will step on the toes that need to be stepped on, whomever they are.
52. Any good teacher who has excellent morals and conduct.
53. Any of the above with proper education and training.
Question #21:

How often do you believe ethics training should be required of local elected officials? (other, please specify)

Narrative responses were analyzed and determined to apply to the following categories:

- With each new term in office
- Each time the law changes or is updated
- Only when newly elected
- Once
- Never or not at all
- Every 4 years (note: This could be considered each term if a county official but not necessarily and definitely not for city)

1. 4 years
2. At least once a year.
3. Beginning of term
4. Not required
5. At least once per term, unless new laws are enacted.
6. Beginning each term
7. Once per term (every 4 years).
8. Shouldn’t be required at all.
9. After election
10. When elected.
11. Each new term
12. Every 4 years so newly elected officials can take the class.
13. Whenever they are tempted.
14. Once at the beginning of a term.
15. At the beginning of each term.
16. After each election.
17. At the beginning of each term.
18. One time.
19. During the term of office.
20. Each term
21. Once every term elected.
22. Once
23. Every 2 years
24. Every 2 or 4 years according to the term elected to.
25. Once a term
26. Never. This should be unnecessary.
27. Upon election to office.
28. Starting of term.
29. The year the official is elected and each year that the official is in office.
30. Once a term
31. Once per term
32. At the beginning of each term.
33. At the beginning of elected official’s term.
34. First term in office.
35. When sworn into office.
36. Once upon election.
37. Once
38. Once every 4 years
39. Every 3 years
40. Every term
41. At the beginning of the elected term.
42. 120
43. Don’t know.
44. Every term.
45. After each election cycle.
46. When the oath of office is taken.
47. Every 4 years.
Every 4 years.
According to the change in laws.
4 years
In a 4-year term
Every term
Once when first elected, and then every 4 years would be enough.
Once per term.
When first elected.
Once
At the beginning of one’s term.
Every 4 years
When laws change
4 years (once a term)
Once
term
Once every term
Newly elected officials
Once when first elected to a term.
Every election cycle
4 years (beginning a term of office).
Once per elected term.
Term of office.
After each election.
Every term of office.
4 years
4 years
Upon election to office.
After each election.
Upon each election or re-election.
After each election.
Only once
At the beginning of each term.
Once every 4 years.
Each election period (4 years).
Every 4 years at the beginning of elected term.
One time per elected term.
Upon election
Every 4 years
One time
When elected
4 years
Beginning of newly elected term.
After each election of official.
At the beginning of term of office.
Optional. Some elected officials give others a bad name!
As necessary
Every 4 years
Every 10 years
Upon election within 90 days and every 4 years after.
You should not have training. It is something that is instilled as a child by the actions of your up bringing.
At least once every 4 years.
Every 4 years
At least when elected to office
Once
When newly elected
At the time of induction to office.
Once every election term.
Within 6 months after election.
When first coming to office
Once every term
Every 4 years.
Once every elected term
Each election date.
Each new term.
Beginning of the term.
None
Before taking office
Every 4 years
Once after being elected
Once beginning of each term of office
Newly elected officials
Every 2 to 3 years
None
First year of each term.
4 years
Once per term (4 years)
After every election
4 years, after elections
Within 6 months of election.
Never
Never
Each election cycle
Once an elected cycle.
Every 4 years after elections
Material could be mailed out once a year
When they take office
When elected to office
At beginning of their term
Starting terms of office
Starting term of office.
Every 4 years
Whenever necessary
When elected to office
Once time only, when he/she is elected to first term.
Once every term.
Every 4 years
Each elected term.
None
Every 2 years
To newly elected officials
Each time elected
As a newly elected official as part of orientation
The first year of term
Each election cycle
Once in a 4-year term of service
If law is amended.
Once every term
Required as elected to office
Once every term of office.
Once every term of office
When elected and repeated, every 2 to 3 years
Not necessary
Beginning of each term
After each election.
Every term
Every term when elected to take office
Following elections
At least once during their elected term of office
Decided locally or as needed
Every term
Ethics is hard to teach, but must be emphasized
4-year election cycle
Following election
4 years
As laws change
Might relate to the type of office
Each term of office
Upon being elected each term
Once every term
Shouldn’t be required--should be optional
Beginning of term
Once
At the beginning of an election cycle
Every 4 years
Never--it shouldn’t be required.
Once during elected term.
Once every term (4 years)
2 years
At least when they are elected.
Not required unless the constitution is changed; otherwise, it would be illegal.
1 to 2 times during held office (each elected term
Never
4 years
Every term
Every election
All new officials should have it. After that, once every 4 or 5 years.
Term length
4 years
Yearly for ethics committee
Every 2 to 3 years
Every election term
Once every term
Once every election term
Once every elected term
Newly elected officials
202. Once every 4 years
203. Every 4 years
204. Once every term, because of possible legislation changes.
205. Once
206. Once every term
207. Once
208. The beginning of a new term
209. During the term of office
210. Never
211. At the beginning of a new term of office.
212. Once every 4 years
213. 4-year election cycle
214. Every elected cycle
215. Once
216. Once during the beginning of each term.
217. One time when elected
218. Maybe every 4 years
219. Upon election and every other year thereafter
220. 4 years apart
221. Once a lifetime
222. Once every term
223. Every 4 years
224. Every time you are elected to a new term
225. Newly elected
226. Every other year, unless ethics laws are changed.
227. Once per elected term
228. Each term of office
229. One time
230. At the beginning of every term.
231. You cannot teach ethics; this is something you should have.
232. At the beginning of each election to office
233. Once every 4 years
234. Every newly elected official should be required to take training.
235. None
236. At the start of a term
237. When elected for each term
238. Following each election
239. Every four years

240. We as elected officials should work constantly on ourselves
241. Newly elected officials
242. Never
243. Every term
244. When you have 2 or more new members
245. Once every 4 years
246. At time of election.
247. I don’t feel it should be required at all
248. Every Sunday.
Question #24

How long was the most recent ethics training course in which you participated? (Check one.) (other, please specify)

Narrative responses were analyzed and determined to apply to the following categories:

- Less than 1 hour
- More than 2 days

1. 8 hours
2. I took a course at my own pace--maybe 2 weeks.
3. 3 days
4. Approximately 30 to 45 minutes.
5. A 40-hour seminar--It was great.
6. Too long
7. None
8. Less than 1 hour as part of another program.
9. During elected official academy
10. County attorney

Question #26:

How was the most recent ethics training in which you participated taught?

Narrative responses were analyzed and determined to apply to the following categories:

- No identifiable trend for categorizing these comments.

1. In council chambers
2. CLE at a seminar with a speaker and case study materials.
3. Lecture format with Power Point presentation.
4. Reading about it
5. In a hotel with too many people and too much talking.
6. None
7. City Council work session with MTAS presentation.
8. A good room with representation (lawyer & MTAS).
9. By county attorney
Question #27:

Other than: (a) person currently in elected office, (b) person who has previously held elected office but is no longer in office; (c) professional trainer/consultant from the private sector; (d) University professor; (e) attorney licensed in the state of Tennessee; or (f) representative from CTAS or MTAS, most recent ethics training was taught by:

Narrative responses were analyzed and determined to apply to the following categories:

- No identifiable trend for categorizing these comments.

1. FBI
2. County employee
3. TLETA
4. Representative from IAAO
5. Director of TN Election Commission
6. Guest speaker
7. TSBA Representative
8. None
9. CTAS--Attorney. My training was geared more towards the new ethics laws and local adoption of policy and boards.
10. Pastor
11. St. Ranner
12. City administrator
13. Instructor from IAAO
14. County attorney
15. AOC
16. Executive director of TN Ethics Commission
VITA

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