

ORDINANCE NO.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA, AMENDING CHAPTER 2.78 REGARDING CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT.

The City Council of the City of Riverside does ordain as follows:

Section 1: Section 2.78.040 of the Riverside Municipal Code is amended as follows:

“Section 2.78.040 Implementation.

To achieve the objectives of this chapter, the following mechanisms shall be followed.

A. All public officials upon election or re-election, appointment or re-appointment, shall be given a copy of this chapter and required to affirm in writing that they have received a copy of this chapter and understand its provisions.

...

F. Only those who live, work (including vendors and contractors), or attend school in Riverside may bring a complaint, unless the alleged violation took place outside of the boundaries of the City of Riverside and the complaining party must have personally witnessed or observed the alleged violation.”

Section 2: Section 2.78.070 of the Riverside Municipal Code is amended as follows:

“Section 2.78.070 Written complaint procedures; rejection of non-compliant complaints.

A. Only alleged violations of the prohibited conduct section of this chapter shall be grounds for a complaint against any public official pursuant to this chapter. Complainants are covered by whistleblower policies and the City will not retaliate nor tolerate retaliation against those who, in good faith, report suspected fraud, waste, or abuse, or participate in an investigation of a suspected violation.

...

D. Complaints shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

1. Name, address, telephone number and email address, if available, of the complainant;

...

5. The specific provision of the prohibited conduct section of this chapter alleged to be violated.

For alleged violations of RMC Section 2.78.070(M), the complaining party must identify the specific

1 section(s) of the Charter of the City of Riverside or the Riverside Municipal Code, or the policy of the
2 City of Riverside, ~~including when the policy of the City of Riverside was established,~~ that is alleged
3 to have been violated;

4 ...”

5 Section 3: Section 2.78.075 of the Riverside Municipal Code is amended as follows:

6 **“Section 2.78.075 Pre-conference procedures.**

7 A. The complainant may be permitted to submit one revised complaint to only add additional
8 allegations of the prohibited conduct section of this chapter. This updated complaint must be submitted
9 to the City Clerk following the established policies and procedures within 30 days of the original
10 complaint being filed with the Clerk. The only amendment may be the addition of additional
11 allegations of violations of the prohibited conduct section of this chapter. If an amended complaint is
12 submitted to the City Clerk within the 30-day time frame, the City Clerk reviews the amended
13 complaint in accordance with RMC Section 2.78.070. The time frames established in the RMC for
14 actions by the City Clerk, hearing panel and Board of Ethics will be reset using the date that the
15 amended complaint has been accepted and determined to be complete. The acceptance of the amended
16 complaint is not deemed to be a continuance.

17 ...

18 D. The Board of Ethics shall conduct a pre-conference prior to a hearing date being set by the City
19 Clerk. All parties are to attend the pre-conference; however, the absence of any party at the pre-
20 conference shall not be grounds for a continuance and the pre-conference shall proceed as if the absent
21 party were present. The pre-conference shall be conducted as follows:

22 1. The Board of Ethics shall review the complaint to determine if it complies with all of the
23 following to establish jurisdiction of the Board of Ethics:

24 ...

25 5. The complainant may verbally present to the Board of Ethics any and all evidence, both
26 tangible and testimonial, that will be presented at the hearing to prove the allegations in the complaint.
27 The public official will have the option or opportunity to present to the Board of Ethics any and all
28 evidence, both tangible and testimonial, that will be presented at the hearing or address the evidence

1 presented by the complainant, including whether the complainant has shown that the evidence, ~~if taken~~
2 ~~as true~~, more likely than not shows that there may be a potential violation of the prohibited conduct
3 ~~section of this chapter alleged in the complaint~~. During the pre-conference, any member of the Board
4 of Ethics may ask questions of the parties.

5 6. The Board of Ethics shall determine, by a majority vote, whether the complainant has shown
6 that the evidence, ~~if taken as true~~, more likely than not shows that there may be a potential violation
7 of the prohibited conduct ~~section of this chapter alleged in the complaint~~. All evidence submitted by
8 the complainant and public official shall be taken in its totality with equal weight given to both parties.

9 7. If it is determined by the Board of Ethics that the evidence shows it is more likely than not
10 that there may be a potential violation of the prohibited conduct ~~section of this chapter alleged in the~~
11 ~~complaint~~ has occurred, then a hearing panel shall be selected in accordance with RMC
12 Section 2.80.040(B). The City Clerk shall set a hearing date on the complaint within 20 City business
13 days of the pre-conference. The hearing date shall be within 45 City business days following the pre-
14 conference.

15 ...”

16 Section 4: The City Council has reviewed the matter and, based upon the facts and information
17 contained in the staff reports, administrative record, and written and oral testimony, hereby finds that
18 this ordinance is not subject to review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)
19 pursuant to CEQA Guidelines sections 15060, subdivision (c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct
20 or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and 15061, subdivision (b)(3)
21 (there is no possibility the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment). In
22 addition to the foregoing general exemptions, the City Council further finds that this ordinance is
23 categorically exempt from review under CEQA under the Class 8 Categorical Exemption (regulatory
24 activity to assure the protection of the environment), CEQA Guidelines section 15308.

25 Section 5: The City Clerk shall certify to the adoption of this ordinance and cause publication
26 once in a newspaper of general circulation in accordance with Section 414 of the Charter of the City
27 of Riverside. This ordinance shall become effective on the 30th day after the date of its adoption.

28 //

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1 ADOPTED by the City Council this _____ day of _____, 2026.

2

3

4

PATRICIA LOCK DAWSON
Mayor of the City of Riverside

5

Attest:

6

7

DONESIA GAUSE
City Clerk of the City of Riverside

8

9

I, Donesia Gause, City Clerk of the City of Riverside, California, hereby certify that the foregoing ordinance was duly and regularly introduced and adopted at a meeting of the City Council on the _____ day of _____, 2026, by the following vote, to wit:

10

11

12

Ayes:

13

Noes:

14

Absent:

15

Abstain:

16

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the official seal of the City of Riverside, California, this _____ day of _____, 2026.

17

18

19

20

DONESIA GAUSE
City Clerk of the City of Riverside

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