

# MYECCHO ETHICS HOTLINE AND CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM for Local Governments



## **Congratulations!**

By selecting MYECCHO, you have chosen a trusted, secure and confidential hotline for use by everyone connected to your City.

## **Ethics**

Improving the lives of your citizens...

You know that ethics is not a part of your business, it *is* your business. By way of values and guidelines, individual and organizational ethics guide behavior. City employees receive these values and guidelines from your City hall's culture and formal ethics program. Along with an ethics code and ethics training, an ethics hotline is an integral part of this program. That is why cityethics.org (a non-profit organization inspired by the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws) lists an ethics hotline as an essential component of a local government ethics program.

## **City integration**

MYECCHO is customized so that your ethics hotline is integrated with other important City helplines. The toll-free hotline includes multiple prompts that forward users to, for example, a City complaint line.

## **TIPS FOR MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATORS**



## **Hotline communication**

To make the most of your ethics hotline, it is important to communicate its availability and proper use to everyone from City employees to citizens.

MYECCHO recommends your ethics hotline is introduced internally in conjunction with an announcement or a reminder of your City hall's policies and ethics code. This is typically done via an employee memo, an article in your City's newsletter, a handout (for example, flyer or wallet card) to City employees, or at the end of ethics training. Be sure to consider all of the primary spoken languages and don't forget new hires. To inform the wider community, an article in the City's newspaper is a common practice. After the rollout, constant reminders of your ethics hotline are equally important. For example, posters should be placed conspicuously and in areas of high-traffic. This also brings awareness of your ethics hotline to citizens. Many local governments additionally choose to link the ethics hotline on the City website.

(Ask about customized ethics training and awareness material like wallet cards and posters!)

For maximum effectiveness, get the endorsement of top officials in all ethics hotline communication.

MYECCHO recommends during launch and follow-up communication of your ethics hotline, its purpose should be made clear. It should be apparent that your ethics hotline is not an emergency service; and that it does not substitute for existing channels such as face-to-face communication with City representatives, authorities, Human Resources, Complaints Office, etc. Your ethics hotline is an additional way for those connected with your City to voice concerns in a secure, confidential and anonymous manner.

MYECCHO recommends you also explain the types of issues that can be raised via your ethics hotline in communication material:

- Accounting, internal accounting controls, or auditing matters
- Workplace issues (such as substance abuse, FLSA, FMLA)
- Environmental, health and safety concerns
- Falsification of documents (fabricating, altering, or destroying any part of a document such as a record for the purpose of gaining some advantage)
- Discrimination (age, disability, genetic information, national origin, pregnancy, race/color, religion, sex), harassment (written, verbal or physical; suggestive or direct) or violence
- Conflict of interest (when a personal interest influences the objective exercise of one's duties; including related to gifts)
- Breach of confidentiality
- Theft or embezzlement (fraudulent appropriation of property or funds)
- Vandalism/destruction or improper use of property
- Corruption, bribery, kickbacks
- Suggestion (or anonymous inquiry)

Finally, your ethics hotline's sustained effectiveness depends on communication in the form of the "tone at the top" and appropriate reaction to concerns including changes to internal policies.



### **Whistleblower protection**

The greatest strength of your ethics hotline is the ability of everyone connected to your City to raise a concern anonymously, without fear of retaliation or reprisal.

MYECCHO recommends that a whistleblower protection policy is appended to City policy or ethics code communication. At minimum, the whistleblower protection policy should contain:

- a statement that, when reported in good faith, whistleblowers will not be subject to any form of retaliation such as firing, demotion, harassment, or consideration for promotion, even if investigation findings do not support the nature of the complaint; and
- reference to applicable state whistleblower protection laws.

For maximum effectiveness, clearly communicate and document your whistleblower protection policy.

MYECCHO recommends the following additional measures to assure whistleblower protection:

- all of your ethics hotline information, including passwords and copies of reports, be kept in a secure environment;
- procedures are established for the proper handling of complaints by your ethics hotline administrators and others involved in the handling process;
- procedures are periodically reviewed with legal counsel;
- investigations are conducted in a timely manner and, if necessary, in consultation of legal counsel;
- during investigation of an incident, only necessary personnel are made involved and, unless needed, it is not revealed that the inquiry is in reaction to a tip (disclosure of which may be a breach of confidentiality and may put the whistleblower at risk); and
- the outcome of an ethics hotline investigation, including disciplinary action or changes to internal policies, is carried out with consideration of whistleblower protection.

## HOW TO USE YOUR ETHICS HOTLINE



### MYECCHO was developed with the user in mind

The site layout, instructions and content were designed to make reporting easy and least intimidating. The same is true for our phone prompts. (Ask about your customized landing page and phone prompts!)

### Employees: It's as easy as 1, 2 and 3!

1. Employees/users go to [www.ethicshotline.org](http://www.ethicshotline.org) to enter the “File a New Report or See the Status of an Existing Report” area and enter your City name. See the important notes and instructions on the bottom of the screen. Multilingual reporting options are available from this screen.



Make sure you call out the City name used for login in all of your ethics hotline communication.

2. Users see your City logo, can click the link to see your ethics code, and are made aware of other methods your City has in place to report ethics concerns. After clicking on “File a New Report or Add to an Existing Report”, users are prompted to enter details about the concern. They can choose to remain anonymous or enter their name and contact information. The last step is entering a passcode. After hitting “Submit”, the passcode is displayed along with a unique report number. The user is asked to keep the report number and passcode in a safe place so that they can enter a follow-up report or see the status of the report.



3. Users can see your City’s response to their concern by clicking on “See the Status of a Report.” After entering his/her report number and passcode and hitting “Submit”, the user is taken to a confidential screen which shows the status of the report, including all of the responses entered by your City. Phone method users receive a unique report number and passcode and also see report status here.



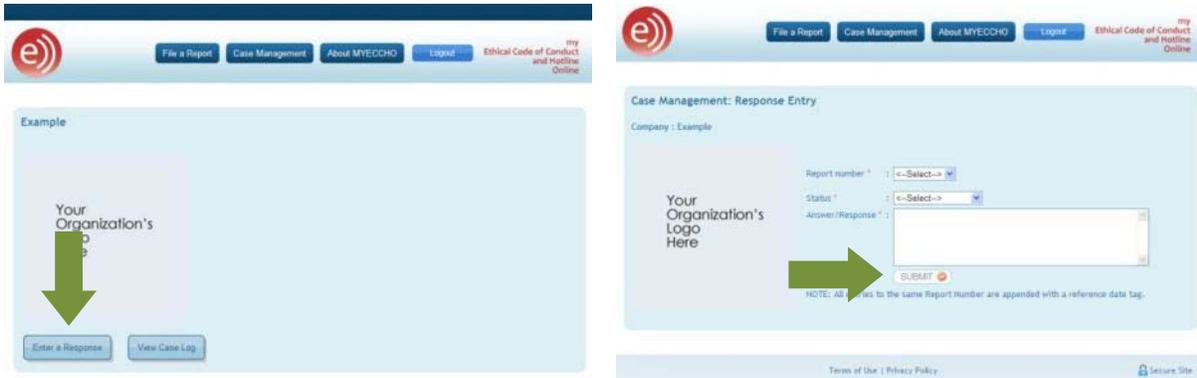
Seek legal advice before use of ethics hotline outside of the US - privacy laws vary country to country.

**Administrators: It's as easy as 1, 2 and 3!**

1. Administrators enter the “Case Management” area and enter your City name and password. Your City’s administrator password can also be updated from this screen.

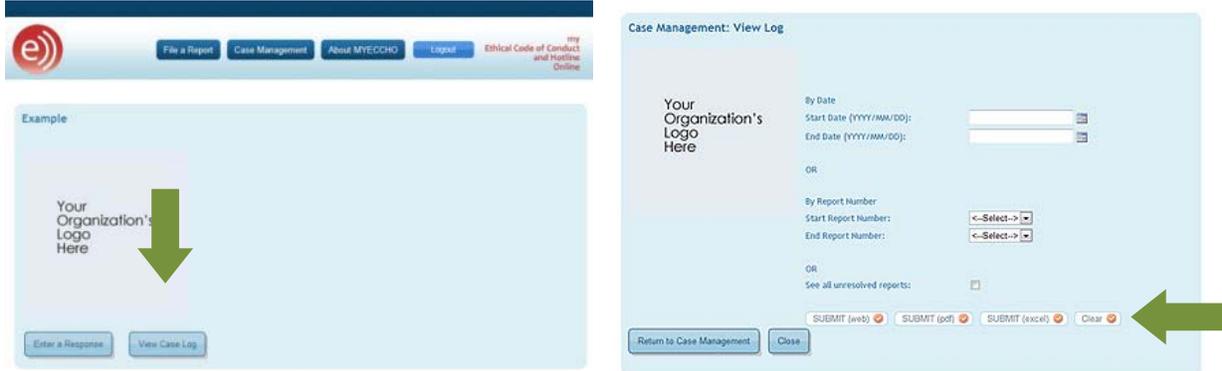


2. Administrators will receive an email whenever a new report is entered, regardless of the entry method (Internet, phone, etc.). Phone reports contain a transcript of the message. Depending on your setup, multiple people may receive a “new report notice” email; also, a two-tier system may be in place (e.g., for reports that are related to the administrator). Clicking on “Enter a Response” takes you to a screen that allows you to select a report and enter a response. When selecting a report number, it will open for display. All administrator responses are logged with a date stamp. Clicking on “Submit” will take you to a screen that confirms that a record has been added to the case management system.



Organizations using MYECCHO pledge to a non-retaliation policy and honesty in response to reports.

3. To see all the reports in your City’s case management system, click on “View Case Log.” The next screen gives the option of viewing reports by date, by case number, or by status. Go to a screen with customizable views; or output logs in PDF or Excel formats. This on-demand case management system facilitates your City’s ability to analyze incident data, manage your CAPA/resolution process, and help auditing functions.



## WE’RE HERE TO HELP!



### The beginning of a beautiful (and ethical) relationship

Where did we begin? Yes - ethics *is* your business. But we know you can use some help. And that’s why we’re here. Contact us any time with questions, comments (or just to say hi!).

<i>Your Representative</i>	<i>Contact Number, Email</i>
<i>Login</i>	<i>Toll-free Number</i>
<i>Image Instructions</i>	<i>Phone Prompts</i>
<i>Ethics Code Instructions</i>	<i>Start Date</i>
<i>Comments</i>	

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