



# San Francisco Ethics Commission

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## January 12, 2026, Enforcement Update: Ethics Commission Fines Public Health Lab Director Dr. Godfred Masinde \$2,500 for Causing Violations of Ethics Laws

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At its monthly public meeting on Friday, January 9, 2026, the San Francisco Ethics Commission voted 3 to 1 to approve a stipulated agreement that levied a \$2,500 penalty against Dr. Godfred Masinde, the Director of the Public Health Lab (“PHL”) of the Department of Public Health (“DPH”), for causing violations of gift laws by several of his subordinate employees in violation of SF Charter section C3.699-13(d). In the stipulation, Dr. Masinde took responsibility for the violation.

As authorized by the City Charter, the resolution of violations through a stipulated agreement enables Respondents and the Ethics Commission to resolve enforcement matters without the need of a lengthier and costlier process involving a hearing on the merits. The Commission is authorized to assess a monetary penalty of up to \$5,000 for each violation or three times the amount that was unlawfully received.

As detailed in the [Stipulation](#), PHL held a holiday luncheon on December 21, 2023, at the Espetus Churrascaria Brazilian Steakhouse restaurant in San Francisco that was paid for by Abbott Laboratories, Inc. (“Abbott”), a business entity under contract with DPH to supply equipment and materials essential to the functioning of PHL during the period when the event occurred. Because Abbott was contracting with DPH during the relevant period, Abbott was a restricted source to DPH and its employees. As such, DPH and its employees were prohibited from accepting a gift valued at more than \$25 per occasion.<sup>1</sup> By coordinating and approving the holiday luncheon, which was attended by nineteen PHL staff, Dr. Masinde caused those nineteen PHL staff to violate the restricted source gift rule. The event cost a total of \$2,565, which totaled \$2,432 for the City employees in attendance and resulted in approximately a \$128 pro rata share for each City employee. Accordingly, each City employee who attended received a restricted source gift of \$103 each, paid for by Abbott.

The restricted source rule is one of the bedrock rules of the City’s ethics laws. It seeks to ensure that City officials and employees do not receive gifts from those doing business with their department that have the potential to unduly influence their official actions or that could create the appearance of pay-to-play in the eyes of the public. Any violation of the restricted source rule compromises the public’s trust in the integrity of City government; City officials may be viewed as placing personal benefit over public duty. Even the acceptance of small gifts from a restricted source can severely erode public trust. Although Dr. Masinde did not attend the event or receive any personal benefit from the event and explained that he understood the event to be “a professional development activity,” none of these absolve Dr. Masinde of his responsibility for the violations here.

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<sup>1</sup> This prohibition has been expanded under Proposition D to include additional restrictions. See [SF C&GCC § 3.216 \(current\)](#). The prior law was in existence since July 2011, until Proposition D went into effect in October 2024.



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*The San Francisco Ethics Commission was created directly by the City's voters with the passage of Proposition K in November 1993 and is responsible for the independent and impartial administration and enforcement of laws related to campaign finance, public financing of candidates, governmental ethics, conflicts of interests, and registration and reporting by lobbyists, campaign consultants, permit consultants, and major developers. Our mission is to practice and promote the highest standards of integrity in government. We achieve that by delivering impactful programs that promote fair, transparent, and accountable governmental decision making for the benefit of all San Franciscans. Public service is a public trust, and our aim is to ensure that San Franciscans can have confidence that the operations of the City and County and the decisions made by its officials and employees are fair, just, and made without any regard to private or personal gain.*