

Hanover County Chamber of Commerce

Member Code of Ethics (Draft)

Preamble

The Hanover County Chamber of Commerce exists for one purpose: to make Hanover County, VA the best place to work, live, and play. We do that by championing our businesses, strengthening community relations, and promoting responsible growth across every industry, size, and type of organization in our county.

The Chamber represents the entire local business community, not any one interest, industry, person, or political party. That independence is foundational to who we are, and it shapes what we ask of one another.

This Code of Ethics is the behavioral foundation that makes our shared goals possible. Each member commits to it when they join and upholds it whenever they carry the Hanover Chamber name.

Our Shared Values

The Chamber is built on four pillars: Connect, Inform, Promote, and Support. These define what we do together. This Code defines how we do it. Each pillar depends on trust, and trust requires conduct that is consistent, fair, and grounded in these principles:

- Connect with Integrity: The relationships we build here are only as strong as the honesty behind them.
- Inform with Accuracy: We share reliable information and represent our businesses truthfully.
- Promote with Fairness: We compete on merit and give fellow members the same respect we would want for ourselves.
- Support with Inclusion: We show up for every member, regardless of industry, size, or background, with creativity, encouragement, and dignity.

Member Commitments

By maintaining membership in the Hanover Chamber of Commerce, each member agrees to the following:

1. Ethical Business Practice

Members conduct their business honestly and in accordance with all applicable local, state, and federal laws. Members do not misrepresent their products, services, credentials, or affiliations. Members advertise truthfully, honor their commitments to clients and partners, and compete on merit.

2. Respect for Fellow Members

Chamber membership provides access to relationships, referrals, and the collective reputation of this organization. Members do not publicly disparage fellow members or their businesses, and do not seek unfair competitive advantage through the Chamber, at Chamber events, or through the connections that membership makes possible.

3. Conduct at Chamber Events and Programs

Chamber events are spaces for connection, collaboration, and community. When a member opens their doors to host a Chamber event, they are making a meaningful investment in our community. Members attending Chamber-sponsored events, whether as guests, sponsors, or hosts, are expected to:

- Treat event hosts, venues, and their staff with care and professionalism
- Refrain from directly soliciting the employees or staff of a host business, fellow member, or event sponsor without that business's knowledge and consent
- Avoid conduct that is disruptive, harassing, threatening, or offensive to any attendee, staff member, or volunteer
- Represent themselves and their businesses honestly to other attendees
- Members remain responsible for their conduct at all times. Behavior that is disruptive, offensive, or creates a safety concern will be treated as a violation of this Code.

4. Inclusivity and Dignity

Every person at a Chamber event, program, or interaction deserves to be treated with dignity. Harassment, discrimination, and intimidation have no place in this organization, regardless of race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability, national origin, or any other characteristic. This standard applies to members, guests, Chamber staff, and volunteers alike.

5. Representing the Chamber

When members speak publicly about the Chamber, in media, at community events, or on social platforms, they do so in a way that reflects our shared values. Members do not use their affiliation or the Chamber's name to imply endorsement of positions the organization has not taken.

Accountability

Members who witness conduct that may be inconsistent with this Code are encouraged to bring it to the attention of Chamber leadership. Reports may be directed to the Executive Director, Executive Committee or any member of the Board of Directors.

When a report is received, the Executive Committee will conduct a review. That process may include direct outreach to the member in question, an opportunity for the member to respond, and a Board determination. Possible outcomes, in order of severity, are:

- A formal caution communicated in writing
- A probationary period with conditions set by the Board
- Suspension or termination of membership, which requires a majority vote of the Board of Directors

The process is designed to be fair and consistent. The goal is always a resolution that serves the integrity of our Hanover Chamber community and the trust our members place in this organization.