

**THORNTON TOWNSHIP
COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS**

ORDINANCE NO. 25-003

**AN ORDINANCE RELATED TO ESTABLISHING A WHISTLEBLOWER
PROTECTION POLICY FOR THORNTON TOWNSHIP, COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS.**

**ADOPTED BY THE
TOWNSHIP BOARD OF THORNTON TOWNSHIP**

**TIFFANY A. HENYARD, Township Supervisor
LORETTA C. WELLS, Township Clerk**

**CHRISTOPHER GONZALEZ
DARLENE GRAY EVERETT
CARMEN CARLISLE
STEPHANIE WIEDEMAN
Trustees**

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* * *

WHEREAS, Thornton Township, Cook County, Illinois (the "Township"), is a duly organized and existing township and unit of local government created under the provisions of the laws of the State of Illinois, and is operating under the provisions of the Illinois Township Code, 60 ILCS 1/1-1, *et seq.* (the "Code"), and all laws amendatory thereto; and

WHEREAS, the Township Supervisor (the "Supervisor") and Township Trustees (collectively, the "Township Board") are committed to protecting Township employees and officials from acts of retaliation; and

WHEREAS, the Township Board finds it necessary to implement a whistleblower protection policy to ensure Township employees and officials are free to report unethical behavior, harassment, or any form of misconduct without fear of retaliation or negative treatment by their managers.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Township Board of Thornton Township, Cook County, Illinois, as follows:

**ARTICLE I.
IN GENERAL**

Section 01. Incorporation Clause.

All of the recitals hereinbefore stated as contained in the preambles to this Ordinance are full, true and correct, and the Township Board does hereby, by reference, incorporate and make them part of this Ordinance as legislative findings.

Section 02. Purpose.

The purpose of this Ordinance is to protect Township officials and employees from retaliation when reporting in good faith any suspected illegal or unethical activities, or any acts of misconduct, within the Township or its departments, as well as to ensure transparency, accountability, and integrity in Township operations by providing robust protections to whistleblowers.

Section 03. Invocation of Authority.

This Ordinance is adopted pursuant to the authority granted to the Township by the Constitution of the State of Illinois and the Illinois Compiled Statutes.

Section 04. Definitions.

1. Whistleblower: An employee or official of Thornton Township who reports in good faith any suspected illegal or unethical activity, or any act of misconduct, to the appropriate authorities or board.

2. Retaliation: Any adverse employment action taken against a whistleblower as a result of their reporting of suspected illegal or unethical activities or any act of misconduct.

3. Manager: Any department head, elected official, appointed official, or person in a position of authority over the whistleblower.

Section 05. Protection from Retaliation.

1. The Township and its officials and employees may not make, adopt, or enforce any rule, regulation, or policy preventing an employee from disclosing information to a government or law enforcement agency if the employee has reasonable cause to believe that the information discloses a violation of a State or federal law, rule, or regulation.

2. The Township and its officials and employees may not retaliate against an employee who discloses information in a court, an administrative hearing, or before a legislative commission or committee, or in any other proceeding, where the employee has reasonable cause to believe that the information discloses a violation of a State or federal law, rule, or regulation.

3. The Township and its officials and employees may not retaliate against an employee for disclosing information to a government or law enforcement agency, where the employee has reasonable cause to believe that the information discloses a violation of a State or federal law, rule, or regulation.

4. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, termination, demotion, suspension, harassment, write-ups, transfers, changes in duties or assignments, changes in benefits or terms of employment, and/or any adverse employment action against the whistleblower. Threats of termination, demotion, suspension, harassment, write-ups, transfers, changes in duties or assignments, changes in benefits or terms of employment, and/or any adverse employment action against the whistleblower shall also be considered retaliation.

5. Any other act or omission not otherwise specifically set forth in this Ordinance, whether within or without the workplace, also constitutes retaliation by an employer under this Ordinance if the act or omission would be materially adverse to a reasonable employee and is because of the employee disclosing or attempting to disclose public corruption or wrongdoing.

6. Any manager or official found to have engaged in retaliation against a whistleblower shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Section 06. Reporting Procedures.

1. Whistleblowers should report suspected illegal or unethical activities or any act of misconduct to their manager, the Township Board or to designated authorities identified for such purposes.

2. Reports should be made in writing whenever possible, and should include detailed information regarding the suspected activity, including dates, times, persons involved, and any supporting evidence available.

Section 07. Investigation and Confidentiality.

1. Upon receipt of a report, the Township shall promptly investigate the allegations in a fair and impartial manner.

2. All investigations shall be conducted with due regard for the confidentiality and privacy of the whistleblower, to the fullest extent possible.

Section 08. Remedies.

1. If retaliation is found to have occurred, the whistleblower shall be entitled to remedies including, but not limited to:

- A. Reinstatement with the same seniority status that the employee would have had, but for the violation;
- B. Back pay, with interest; and
- C. Restoration of benefits.

2. Whistleblowers who knowingly make false accusations maliciously or with reckless disregard for the truth may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

3. In case of termination or adverse action taken against a whistleblower, the affected employee may appeal said termination to the Board of Trustees. Any such appeal must be in writing and shall be filed within twenty-one (21) calendar days of the adverse employment action. The appeal must describe the reason for the appeal, including stating why the employee believes they are being retaliated against. The Board shall endeavor to hear the appeal within forty-five (45) days or as soon as possible. The employee shall be entitled to have an attorney represent them, at the employee's own cost.

Section 09. Non-Waiver.

1. Nothing in this ordinance shall be construed to waive or limit any rights or remedies available to whistleblowers under state or federal law.

**ARTICLE III.
HEADINGS, SAVINGS CLAUSES,
PUBLICATION, EFFECTIVE DATE**

Section 10. Headings.

The headings for the articles, sections, paragraphs and sub-paragraphs of this Ordinance are inserted solely for the convenience of reference and form no substantive part of this Ordinance nor should they be used in any interpretation or construction of this Ordinance.

Section 11. Severability.

The provisions of this Ordinance are hereby declared to be severable and should any provision, clause, sentence, paragraph, sub-paragraph, section or part of this Ordinance be determined to be in conflict with any law, statute or regulation by a court of competent jurisdiction, said provision, clause, sentence, paragraph, sub-paragraph, section or part shall be excluded and deemed inoperative, unenforceable and as though not provided for herein, and all other provisions shall remain unaffected, unimpaired, valid and in full force and effect. It is hereby declared to be the legislative intent of the Township Board that this Ordinance would have been adopted had not such unconstitutional or invalid provision, clause, sentence, paragraph, sub-paragraph, section or part thereof been included.

Section 12. Superseder.

All code provisions, ordinances, resolutions and orders, or parts thereof, in conflict herewith are, to the extent of such conflict, hereby superseded.

Section 13. Publication.

A full, true and complete copy of this Ordinance shall be published in pamphlet form as provided by the Illinois Township Code, as amended.

Section 14. Effective Date.

This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect following its passage, approval and publication, as provided by law.

[Signature page follows]


PASSED by the Township Board of Thornton Township, Cook County, Illinois, on the 20 day of March, 2025, by the following roll-call vote:

Gonzalez: Yes
Gray Everett: Absent
Carlisle: Yes
Wiedeman: Yes
Supervisor Henyard: Absent

APPROVED this 20 day of March, 2025.

Tiffany A. Henyard
Township Supervisor

ATTEST: 


Loretta C. Wells
Township Clerk

COUNTY OF COOK)
) SS
STATE OF ILLINOIS)

CLERK'S CERTIFICATE

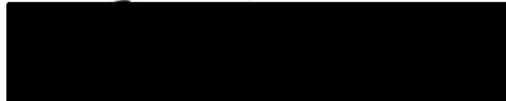
I, Loretta C. Wells, certify that I am the elected and duly qualified Clerk of Thornton Township, Cook County, Illinois (the "Township") and, as such, I am the keeper of the records and files of the Township and its Supervisor and Trustees (collectively, the "Township Board"). I further certify as follows:

Attached to this Certificate is a true, correct and complete copy of Township Ordinance No. 25-003 entitled:

AN ORDINANCE RELATED TO ESTABLISHING A WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION POLICY FOR THORNTON TOWNSHIP, COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

This Ordinance was passed and approved by the Township Board at a duly noticed meeting held on the 20 day of March, 2025. I do further certify that a quorum of said Township Board was present at said meeting, and that the Township Board complied with all the requirements of the Illinois Open Meetings Act in connection with said meeting.

20 Given under my hand and official seal at Thornton Township, Cook County, Illinois, this day of March, 2025.



Loretta C. Wells
Township Clerk

(SEAL)