

Political Activity Guidelines

“political activity”

Activity directed at the success or failure of any candidate for elective office or ballot measure in a future election. It includes but is not limited to endorsing a candidate; engaging in fundraising; developing, displaying, or distributing campaign materials; conducting research; and posting comments on social media or other Internet sites.

Political activity is LIMITED for City personnel.

What you **can** do:

- * Use your own money to make political contributions, subject to applicable limits.
- * Perform volunteer work, endorse candidates, and take positions on ballot measures, as long as these activities do not involve the use of City resources and you make it clear that you are acting as an individual and are not acting on behalf of the City .
- * Solicit a political contribution from a person who is not a City official or employee, subject to the limitations in the next two columns (e.g., you do not use City time or resources, you do not solicit contributions for City candidates if you are a general manager or a board or commission member, etc.).
- * Use City resources to inform the public of the possible effects of a bond issue or ballot measure relating to the City when using City resources is legally authorized.

What you **cannot** do:

- * Solicit contributions from a City official or employee to support or oppose a candidate for elected office, the recall of an elected official, a ballot measure, or an officeholder or legal defense committee.
- * Receive, deliver, or attempt to deliver a contribution in City Hall, another City building, or building space for which the City pays most of the rent. This does not apply to City space that is rented by a private party, unless the rental agreement prohibits it.
- * Engage in political activity in the following scenarios:
 - While on duty for the City.
 - Using City equipment, vehicles, supplies, or resources, including but not limited to phones, computers, mailing and distribution lists, electronic mail, and electronic data.
 - In any manner that implies you are speaking on behalf of the City or communicating a City position. This may include wearing a uniform or official City insignia or using a City title or position.
 - In a room or building that is owned, primarily paid for, or used by the City and is occupied by a City official or employee in discharging City duties. This does not include a City room or building that is available to the public for political activities, as long as you do not use the space during your City working hours and do not use other City resources.
- * Induce or coerce another person to violate these prohibitions.

If you are the head of an agency or a board or commission member, you *also cannot*:

- * Solicit, direct, or receive a contribution from a person who has, or in the preceding 12 months had, a matter involving City action pending before you.
- * Engage in the following activities on behalf of an elected City officer, a candidate for elected City office, or a City controlled committee (unless the activities are on behalf of your own candidacy):
 - Asking someone to make a contribution.
 - Inviting someone to a fundraising event.
 - Supplying names to be used for invitations to a fundraising event.
 - Permitting your name, signature, or official title to appear on a solicitation for contributions or an invitation to a fundraising event.
 - Providing the use of your home or business for a fundraising event.
 - Paying for 20% or more of the costs of a fundraising event.
 - Hiring someone to conduct a fundraising event.
 - Delivering someone else’s contribution to an elected City officer, a candidate for elected City office, or a City controlled committee.
 - Acting as an agent or intermediary in the making of a contribution.
- * Ethics commissioners may *not* participate in or contribute to the election campaign of:
 - Anyone running for City or LAUSD office.
 - A City official or LAUSD member running for any office.

Examples:



los angeles city ETHICS COMMISSION

This is a brief overview of the political activity laws. Please contact us for more information about how the laws apply to you or to report a possible violation.

Address:

200 North Spring Street
City Hall 24th Floor
Los Angeles CA 90012

Phone:

(213) 978-1960

Whistleblower Hotline:

(800) 824-4825

Fax:

(213) 978-1988

Web:

ethics.lacity.org

Photo credit: Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection
Last updated: March 2016

Board Member Barbara is asked to get involved in the re-election campaign of her friend, Councilmember Clark. She agrees but explains that her name may not appear on fundraising solicitations and asks that her City title not appear on other types of campaign materials. Barbara is complying with the laws. She may also volunteer on phone banks or walk precincts, as long as she is not asking for contributions.

Firefighter Fred appears in a video to endorse a ballot measure that would increase the City's sales tax. In uniform, he urges voters to save jobs by voting for the ballot measure and says the City and its employees thank them for their support. Fred has violated City law by implying that he is speaking on behalf of the City, both by what he said and by wearing his City uniform while saying it.

Council Staffer Carlos is volunteering with the re-election campaign for his boss. He refuses to engage in that work on City time. He does not use City equipment, email lists, web sites, or social media accounts. Even when using his own cell phone or electronic tablet on his City lunch break, he does not use them for campaign purposes while in a City office. Carlos is complying with the laws.

los angeles city
ETHICS COMMISSION

...preserving the public trust.

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