

What You CANNOT Do

The City defines 'political activity' as 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.

This is a brief overview of the laws that apply to political activity. Other restrictions may apply, so please contact the Ethics Commission for guidance.

Political activity is limited for City officials and employees.

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 time or 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 panels.
- In limited circumstances, use City resources to inform the public of the possible effects of a bond issue or ballot measure relating to the City. This only applies when you are providing factual information that is not advocacy and you are legally authorized to use City resources.

- 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 (subject to limited state law exceptions), or an officeholder or legal defense committee.
- Receive, deliver, or attempt to deliver a contribution in City Hall, another City building, or 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 City uniform or 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 space 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. Additional state law restrictions may also apply.
- Engage in the following activities on behalf of an elected City official, 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 City 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.
 - 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.



Board Member Barbara is asked to get involved in the re-election campaign of her friend, Councilmember Clara. She agrees, with two caveats: 1) Her name may not appear on fundraising solicitations; and 2) If her City title appears on other types of campaign materials, it must be accompanied by a disclaimer that the title is being used solely for identification purposes. 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 his City 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 the 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 engages in that work on his personal time, not 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 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

This is a brief overview of laws that apply to City employees and officials who participate in political activity.

Please contact us for more information about how the laws apply to you.
We are happy to help!

ethics.lacity.org

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

(213) 978-1960

REPORTING VIOLATIONS

You may report possible violations to (800) 824-4825, or ethics.lacity.org/enforcement

Anyone who violates these laws (or aids and abets another person in a violation) may be liable for administrative penalties of up to the greater of \$5,000 per violation or three times the amount of money at issue.

Los Angeles City ETHICS COMMISSION

Political Activity

