



ETHICS UPDATE

POLITICAL ADVISORY

Update No. 2017- 1



In this Advisory:

- Do's and Don't's for (Un) Classified Employees
- Guidelines on Running for Elected Office
- Use of Vacation/Leave for Campaign Activity
- Ballot & Levy Issues
- Poll Worker Service

With the upcoming primary election on September 12 and the General Election on November 7, the Agency of Inspector General (“AIG”) offers this advisory to guide County employees who want to participate in election-related activities, make campaign contributions, run for elected office or become an employee or volunteer of a political campaign. Guidelines for appropriate employee activities concerning ballot issues that relate to, or affect, the County are also provided.



[See Full Advisory Opinion](#)

General Guidelines for Election-Related Activity

To avoid any suggestion that government resources are being improperly used to assist candidates for public office, both classified and unclassified employees must avoid engaging in election-related activity on County time, on County property, or using County equipment. This includes conference rooms, computers, printers, office supplies, e-mail systems, telephone, copiers, fax machines, or any other County property or equipment.

In addition, County employees may not engage in any election-related activities which interfere with, or pose a conflict of interest with respect to, their County duties and responsibilities.

Classified Employees Do's and Don't's

Examples of Permitted Activity

- Registration & Voting
- Making Voluntary Contributions to Candidates/Organizations
- Attending Political Rallies
- Wearing Political Buttons
- Signing Petitions in Support
- Expressing Opinions
- Running for Office where Candidates are not Selected by Political Parties
- Serving as a Poll Worker

Examples of Prohibited Activity

- Running for Office Where Candidates are Selected by Political Party (Partisan)
- Filing Petitions Meeting Requirements for Partisan Candidacy
- Circulation of official nominating petitions for any candidate in partisan election
- Service in an elected or appointed office in any partisan organization
- Support or participation of any other partisan activity

Unclassified Employees may, on their own time, engage in election-related and partisan activities. However, unclassified employees may not solicit classified employees for the financial benefit of a political party or candidate for public office.

Running for Elected Office

County Employees running for public office must abide by the following guidelines:

- Avoid Conflicts of Interest and Appearances of Conflict. Consult the AIG prior to any formal candidate related activity. Failure to do so can result in termination.
- No notice is required if running for non-partisan office including but not limited to school board member or city council member.
- Requests for leave of absence must be reasonable. It should not extend past a time period that would adversely affect the employee's ability to fulfill job duties.
- Vacation time must be approved and may be used for permitted Campaign Activity



Ballot & Levy Issues

County employees may use County time and equipment to provide information relating to ballot or levy issues that may affect the County or department.

However, County employees may not use County time or resources to engage in political activities unrelated to their job duties.

Poll Worker Service

Classified or unclassified employees who wish to work on Election Day as poll workers (also known as an election judge), may do so after notice and approval of their supervisors.

