

# Political Activities: Dos & Don'ts for City Employees

## Do

### Know the Rules Before Engaging

It's important to understand the City's rules before engaging in any political activity. This will help you avoid any misuse of public resources and any real or perceived conflicts of interest.

### Understand the use of City Resources

State and local law impose specific restrictions on political activity. Local public agencies may not expend public funds to support or oppose a candidate or ballot measure.

- City officers and employees may not engage in political activity during working hours or on City premises. Any use of City resources or City personnel for political activity is prohibited. This includes the use of City email, computers, phones, vehicles, copiers, and other City equipment.
- For the purposes of this prohibition, the term "City premises" does not include property that the City makes available to the public for political activities, such as public parks, plazas, or sidewalks.
- City officers and employees may not participate in political activities of any kind while in uniform.

**In cases where there is a discrepancy between this summary and the law, the law governs.**

## Don't

### Solicit Other City Officers or Employees for Campaign Contributions & Volunteers

City officers and employees may not directly or indirectly solicit campaign contributions from other officers or employees or from persons on the City's employment lists.

The previous statement applies, unless the solicitation is part of one made to a significant segment of the public that may include City officers or employees.

Elected officials and members of boards and commissions also may not request that any subordinate employee volunteer for any campaign for or against any ballot measure or candidate.

### Don't Fundraise for Appointing Authority

Members of boards or commissions (other than the Board of Supervisors) who are appointed to their seat by a City elective officer, may not fundraise for (1) their appointing authority's election campaign; (2) any candidate for the office held by the appointing authority; or (3) any political committee controlled by their appointing authority.

For these purposes, a commissioner's appointing authority is the official who currently holds the office with the authority to make appointments.

# Don't

## Continued...

For example, for a member of the Planning Commission who was appointed by a past Mayor, the commissioner's "appointing authority" is the current Mayor.

### **Remain a Member of a Board or Commission While Running for Elected Office**

The Charter provides that when an appointed member of a board, commission, and other decision-making body established by the City's Charter files a declaration of candidacy for any State or City elective office, the member immediately forfeits their seat on the City board or commission.

## Want to learn more?

To learn more about political activity restrictions:

- Visit the [San Francisco Ethics Commission's website](#).
- Consult the City Attorney's most recent memorandum on "[Political Activity by City Officers and Employees](#)."