

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**



SUBJECT: POLITICAL ACTIVITY

POLICY NO: 744

PURPOSE: To establish policy governing the political activities of Department employees.

POLICY: Employees shall refrain from political activities while in their official capacity. While it is essential that County employees be free to exercise their rights and privileges as citizens, their position in government often gives greater influence to their actions than to similar actions by other citizens. In fact, actions which may be proper for an ordinary citizen may be improper and unethical for a County employee.

A County employee who engages in the following improper activities shall be subject to immediate disciplinary action:

1. Knowingly soliciting or receiving political funds or contributions from County employees or from persons on County eligible lists.
EXCEPTION: Soliciting funds for passage or defeat of a ballot measure affecting the pay, hours, retirement, and service or other working conditions of County employees is permitted.
2. Participating in political activities which conflict with, limit, or restrict the effective performance of the employee's official duties and responsibilities.
3. Participating in political activities of any kind during working hours or while in uniform.
4. Favoring or discriminating against any employee or person seeking County employment because of political opinions or affiliations.
5. Participating in political activities in a manner so as to represent the County or any of its departments, officers, agencies, or officials, as endorsing a ballot measure, if such endorsement has not previously been given publicly.
6. Directly or indirectly using official authority or influence to interfere with any election.

APPROVED BY:

EFFECTIVE DATE: November 1, 2004

SUPERSEDES:

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7. Running for any political office, the campaign for which requires expenditures of such a substantial amount of the employee's time as to interfere with the effective performance of the employee's job, unless a leave of absence is secured by the employee upon declaration of intention to run.
8. Permitting any person, to enter any facility under the employee's control for purpose of soliciting or receiving political funds or contributions.
9. Using a County office to confer benefits or detriments in return for political activity, votes or corrupt considerations.
10. Expending any public resources to promote any partisan position. (This includes a prohibition of all signs and placards of a political nature on County property.)
11. Using any County property, including computers and e-mail, for political activities.

In addition to the above, employees on "grant funded" or "GAIN Participant" items funded by the Federal government are restricted by the Hatch Act from running for partisan political office. (Additionally, employees in services financed in whole or in part by loans or grants made by the Federal government may also be restricted from running for partisan political office.) The enforcement of such restrictions rests with the Federal government.

Nothing in this policy shall be interpreted as denying any employee's right to vote, to express an opinion on any political matter, to participate in non-partisan political activities or engage in political activities during off-duty hours.

AUTHORITY: Opinion of John H. Larson, County Counsel, dated August 27, 1979 (Subject: Political Activities of County Employees) Hatch Act (5 USC 1502)

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