

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

RAILS employees must not intentionally perform any of the following activities during a compensated time other than vacation or personal time off. Additionally, employees may never engage in any of these activities by intentionally using RAILS property and resources (such as telephones, cell phones, photocopiers, or computers) for the benefit of any campaign for elective office or any political organization:

"Political activity" means any activity in support of or in connection with any campaign for elective office or any political organization but does not include activities (i) relating to the support or opposition of any executive, legislative, or administrative action, (ii) relating to collective bargaining, or (iii) that are otherwise in furtherance of the person's official duties.

- Prepare for, organize, or participate in any political meeting, political rally, political demonstration, or other political event.

For example: Employees may not send an email to fellow workers during work hours encouraging them to attend a rally for a candidate for elective office. Nor may employees use a RAILS email account, at any time, to, for example, issue invitations to or advertise a political event to anyone.

- Solicit contributions, including but not limited to purchasing, selling, distributing, or receiving payment for tickets for any political fundraiser, political meeting, or other political event.

For example: It is against RAILS policy for employees to collect contributions to fund a political event by placing a "donations" canister on their desktops at work.

- Solicit, plan the solicitation of, or prepare any document or report regarding anything of value intended as a campaign contribution.

- Plan, conduct, or participate in a public opinion poll in connection with a campaign for elective office or on behalf of a political organization for political purposes or for or against any referendum question.

- Survey or gather information from potential or actual voters in an election to determine probable vote outcome in connection with a campaign for elective office or on behalf of a political organization for political purposes, or for or against any referendum question.

For example: It is against RAILS policy for employees, during their workday, to call potential voters on behalf of a political party to find out whom they might vote for in an upcoming election.

- Assist at the polls on Election Day on behalf of any political organization, candidate for elective office, or for or against any referendum question.

- Solicit votes on behalf of a candidate for elective office, political organization, or for or against any referendum question, or help in an effort to get voters to the polls.

- Participate in a vote recount or challenge to the outcome of any election on behalf of a candidate or political organization.

- Initiate, prepare, circulate, review, or file a petition on behalf of a candidate for elective office or for or against any referendum question.

- Make a contribution on behalf of any candidate for elective office or in connection with a campaign for elective office.
- Prepare or review responses to candidate questionnaires in connection with a campaign for elective office or on behalf of a political organization for political purposes.
- Distribute, prepare for distribution, or mail campaign literature, campaign signs, or other campaign material on behalf of any candidate for elective office or for or against any referendum question.

For example: It is unlawful for employees to use RAILS-owned photocopying machines to produce campaign flyers for a school board candidate.

- Campaign for an elective office or for or against any referendum question.
- Manage or work on a campaign for elective office or for or against any referendum question.
For example: It is against RAILS policy for employees to use RAILS-provided telephones, even during an uncompensated lunch period or before or after their normal work hours, to work on someone's campaign for elective office.
- Serve as a delegate, alternate, or proxy to a political party convention.

Lastly, a supervisor may not compel an employee to perform political activities at any time, including during any time off that is compensated (such as vacation, personal, or compensatory time off).

Political Contributions on RAILS Property

As a RAILS employee, you may not intentionally solicit, accept, offer, or make political campaign contributions on RAILS property. RAILS property includes buildings or portions thereof that are owned or exclusively leased by RAILS, as well as RAILS vehicles.

Prohibited Offer or Promise

RAILS employees, appointees, or officials may not promise anything of value related to the RAILS in consideration for a contribution to a political committee, political party, or other entity that has as one of its purposes the financial support of a candidate for elective office. In the context of a prohibited offer or promise related to a political contribution, anything of value includes but is not limited to

- Positions in RAILS;
- Promotions;
- Salary increases;
- Other employment benefits, including, but not limited to, modified compensation or benefit terms; compensated time off; or change of title, job duties, or location of office or employment. An employment benefit may also include favorable treatment in determining whether to bring any disciplinary or similar action or favorable treatment during the course of any disciplinary or similar action or other performance review;
- RAILS Board appointments;

- Favorable treatment in any official or regulatory matter;
- The award of any RAILS contract; and
- Action or inaction on any legislative or regulatory matter.

For example: It is against RAILS policy for an employee, appointee, or official to offer an action by a RAILS facility, or to offer someone a job or to offer an appointment to the RAILS board, or to offer the award of a contract, in exchange for a political campaign contribution.

Penalties

An intentional violation of this Policy may be prosecuted as a Class A misdemeanor by an attorney for RAILS by filing a complaint in the appropriate circuit court charging such offense.

Additionally, an officer or employee who intentionally violates any provision of this Policy is subject to discipline up to and including discharge.

Exclusion: This policy in no way restricts an employee's rights under Illinois or federal law with regard to protected union activity.

See also:

Ethics Ordinance