



ETHICALLY SPEAKING

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A Message from the Director

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Greetings Fellow Ethics Enthusiasts! With the District's primary election approaching, it's a perfect time to remind employees of the restrictions on political activity as set forth by the Local Hatch Act.

The purpose of the Hatch Act is to ensure that government programs are administered in a non-partisan manner, to protect employees from political coercion in the workplace, and to ensure that employees are advanced based on merit and not their political association. Except for elected officials and employees of the courts, all employees are covered by the Hatch Act.

The Hatch Act defines political activity as any activity that is regulated by the District directed

toward the success or failure of a political party, candidate for partisan political office, partisan political group, ballot initiative, or referendum. At all times, employ-



Ashley D. Cooks
Director of Government Ethics

ees are prohibited from using their authority or influence to affect the results of an election, knowingly soliciting, accepting, or receiving political contributions, and being a candidate for a DC partisan office. In addition, em-

ployees shall not engage in political activity while on duty (teleworking), in a government building, while wearing a uniform or insignia, or using a government vehicle.

The Hatch Act is not a complete bar on employees engaging in political activity, but it sets boundaries on certain types of activities and/or the manner in which employees can engage in those activities. It creates boundaries to guarantee the separation between government operations and politics.

So whether an employee is contemplating running for office, donating to a campaign, attending a political event, or raising money for a candidate, the Hatch Act provides the rules.

Upcoming Events

General Ethics Training

July 13, 2022 - 1:00 PM

August 10, 2022 - 1:00 PM

Register for [Ethics Training](#)

ANC Ethics Training

July 21, 2022 - TBD

Hatch Act Training

July 5, 2022 - 1:00 PM

August 2, 2022 - 1:00 PM

Register for [Hatch Act Training](#)

Ethics Counselor

Brown Bag

June 27, 2022 - 1:00 PM

Post-employment Restrictions

July 25, 2022 - 1:00 PM

Misuse of Government Resources

New and Notable

BEGA's Learning Management System is Live

BEGA's [Learning Management System](#) (LMS), an online, self-paced training portal, is live and ready to train District employees. We have a mix of courses, including several options that satisfy the annual training requirement for employees who are required to file annual Financial Disclosure Statements. From the launch of the system through the end of May, over 300 District employees registered for the system. Click here to register for the LMS and start your personal training plan: [Learning Management System](#)



Lobbyist Registration and Reporting (LRR) Updates

Lobbyist Activity Reports for the Second Quarter covering April 1 through June 30 are due on July 15, 2022. To assist registrants with their filings, BEGA's Lobbyist Program will conduct a training on Wednesday, July 6, 2022. Late-filing penalties will begin accruing on a daily basis, so make sure you get those registrations and reports in on time. Find more information about the LRR program and sign up for July 6, 2022 training here:

[Register for lobbyist training](#)

Ethics Week 2022 is coming soon

BEGA will host its annual Ethics Week in October. Past events have included training sessions on Unlocking the Positive Values of Ethics, Ethics Pitfalls in a Remote World, and The Intersection of Ethics and Donations, etc. Stay tuned for more details about this year's offerings.

Enforcement Updates

22-0044-F In Re: S. Diallo

Respondent, a former official in the Department of Employment Services (DOES), failed to submit a full and complete public financial disclosure statement in violation of D.C. Official Code § 1-1162.24(a) (1). In 2019, Respondent submitted a public Financial Disclosure Statement that failed to disclose his spouse's outside employment and his outside business dealings and income. Respondent did not disclose more than \$40,000 in outside earned income he earned through consulting services he provided through a single member LLC. Respondent

agreed to a \$1,000 fine and to amend his 2019 Public Financial Disclosure Statement. You can find the negotiated disposition here: [22-0044-F In Re: S. Diallo](#)

Quarterly Reports

The Office of Government Ethics (OGE) published the complaint summary reports for the First and Second Quarters of FY2022 covering the period from October 1, 2021 through March 31, 2022. The Quarterly Complaint Summary Reports list the open matters under review by OGE, final closed matters, matters that are closed pending collection, and matters that are stayed and the

reason for the stay. The reports provide a window into the types of ethics complaints that BEGA receives. You can review the reports on BEGA's website:

[FY2022 Q1 Report](#)

[FY2022 Q2 Report](#)

Ethics in the News



Post-Employment Restrictions

The Department of Justice (DOJ) recently charged a government contractor, Intelligent Fiscal Optimal Solutions LLC (iFOS), and its owner, Tawanda M. Smith, with

violations of the False Claims Act for submitting invoices to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in connection with a DHS contract with iFOS..

The Complaint alleges that iFOS and Smith coordinated with Kenneth J. Buck to steer a DHS contract to iFOS while Buck was an official at DHS with the plan for Buck to serve as a DHS contactor for iFOS on the contract once he left the agency. DOJ charges that Smith and Buck were aware of the post-employment provisions of 18

U.S.C. § 207, which imposes a “cooling off” period which restricted Buck’s ability to communicate with DHS on behalf of iFOS after he left the agency. You can read more about the charges [here](#).

Along with the post-employment restrictions in the District’s Code of Conduct, District employees are also subject to the post-employment restrictions in 18 U.S.C. § 207. Ethics counselors can learn more about the post-employment restrictions at our next Brown Bag on June 27.

State and Local Ethics

Vermont Adopts Ethics Code

Vermont recently adopted its first statewide code of ethics. The bill, which was signed into law by Governor Phil Scott in May, establishes a code of ethics for officials in the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of state government. It includes provisions dealing with multiple issues that may arise from state employment including conflicts

of interest, preferential treatment, gifts, outside employment, the use of state employment for personal gain. Read more about the new law [here](#).

No Dual Employment for Next Governor of Hawaii

The next governor of Hawaii will not be able to hold any outside employment while serving as the state’s top elected official.

A new law will go into effect in November that would prohibit the governor and four county mayors from outside employment or maintaining a controlling interest in a business. Officials subject to the new prohibition would need to place any controlling interest in a business in a blind trust within 61 days of election or appointment. Read more [here](#).

Inside the Mirror

Business Ethics... Mixing Business with Pleasure

Because doing good makes you feel good, business ethics is something every organization and every individual should maintain. For individuals, showing concern for doing what is right is a reflection of a person’s character; this is undoubtedly the same for business ethics.

Now, you may have heard that you should not mix business with pleasure. However, working for a business that prioritizes making the “right” choices can be very pleasurable. Steve Jobs said, “the only way to do great work is to love what you do,” and finding pleasure in doing good work is a productivity booster and enhances performance.

BEGA encourages our District agencies to keep ethics at the forefront to ensure that our people benefit from mixing business with pleasure, so they can feel good about the work they do and the services they provide to the District of Columbia and its residents.





Board of Ethics and Government Accountability

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For more information about BEGA you can find us at:



To subscribe to this newsletter, email us at bega@dc.gov.

Ask BEGA

Question: As a D.C. government employee, may I work for my favorite candidate's campaign?

Yes-with some restrictions. The political activities of District government employees are governed by the Local Hatch Act (LHA). In general, while not on duty, it is permissible for employees to take an active part in political campaigns as a volunteer or for compensation. However, the LHA contains a number of prohibitions that employees should be mindful of when helping with a campaign, as listed below: (1) Employees are prohibited from doing any fundraising or accepting or soliciting any funds for partisan candidates in District regulated elections, (2) Employees are prohibited from engaging in ALL political activity: while on duty; in any District room or building; while wearing a

uniform or official insignia identifying your office or position. (3) Employees cannot wear any campaign paraphernalia to their official office or that is visible during virtual work; (4) Employees cannot capitalize on their official title or position; (5) Employees cannot use government resources for political campaigns; (6) Employees may not knowingly direct or authorize another to direct a subordinate employee to participate in a political campaign or make a political contribution; (7) Employees may not use their official authority to interfere or affect the results of an election, and (8) Employees may not coerce



any subordinate employees to engage in political activity.

If government employees do not violate these prohibitions, they can feel free to work on or participate in political campaigns. For example, employees may: Assist in voter registration drives, attend fundraisers (just no hosting, soliciting or handling funds), do campaign work on their own time as long as they do not use District resources, hand out flyers, attend meet and greets, town halls and community forums, and work the polls on election day.

If you have questions about a specific political activity you want to participate in, please reach out to our office. You can also read the LHA here:

[Local Hatch Act](#)