



District of Columbia

BEGA April 2026 Newsletter

District of Columbia sent this bulletin at 04/10/2026 01:20 PM EDT



Ethically Speaking

Board of Ethics and Government Accountability Newsletter

Volume 11 Issue 2

April 2026

A Message From the Director

Spring has finally sprung and warmer weather is here! For BEGA, warm temperatures mean Financial Disclosure Statement Season is here.



Ashley D. Cooks
Director of Government Ethics

Financial Disclosure is fundamental to furthering the District's integrity and ensuring transparency and public trust in our government. The financial conflicts of interest rule prohibits employees from participating in matters that they know will likely have a direct effect on their financial interests or

the financial interests of a person closely affiliated with the employee. In the coming weeks, some of you will be required to file a financial disclosure statement which will detail your personal financial interests.

The answers you provide on your statement will be evaluated to screen actual real and potential financial conflicts of interest. Therefore, I encourage your compliance with the financial disclosure filing requirements. The deadline to file a financial disclosure statement or certification is May 15, 2026.

And as always, be mindful of the restrictions on political activity when engaging in political/campaign related matters

New and Notable



Financial Disclosure 2026

Financial Disclosure Statements are due **May 15, 2026**. Requests for extensions must be received before the May 15th filing deadline. Late or non-filers may be subject to enforcement action from BEGA, including up to a \$300 fine for failure to timely file their required disclosures.

Ethics counselors who have questions about completing the Financial Disclosure Review Report (FDRR) due June 2, 2026 or the BEGA enforcement process should contact BEGA for additional guidance.

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Resources for filers and ethics counselors are available on BEGA's website.

Local Hatch Act

The 2026 election season is in full swing. To refresh yourself on the rules that govern political activity for District employees, BEGA is hosting a monthly Hatch Act training. Political activity quick reference guides are available here if you want to review the rules on permitted and prohibited political activity.

Welcome to BEGA

OGE welcomes our new Supervisory Attorney, Amber Anderson. Supervisory Attorney Anderson went to Tulane University – School of Law and she joins us from the Federal Aviation Administration where she worked as an Attorney Advisor in the Office of Chief Counsel for Ethics and Compliance. Amber has worked as a Designated Agency Ethics Official and has ten years of government ethics experience.

OGE also welcomes Investigator Iyana Talley. Investigator Talley obtained a Masters in Crime Science Investigation from Stevenson University. She joins us from the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services, where she was an Investigator.

Upcoming Events

General Ethics Training

5/13/26 – 1:00 pm
6/11/26 – 1:00 pm

Local Hatch Act Training

4/15/26 – 2:00 pm
5/20/26 – 2:00 pm
6/17/26 – 2:00 pm

Board and Commission Training

4/29/26 – 11:00 am

Outside Employment Training

7/7/26 – 2:00 pm

Lobbyist Registration & Reporting and E-Filing Training

6/24/26 - 10:30 am

Ethics Counselor Brown Bag

Seeking and Negotiating Employment (NDs and AOs)
4/27/26 – 1:00 pm

Post-employment AOs
5/25/26 – 1:00 pm

Enforcement Updates

25-0002-F In re Trayon White

The Board concluded its adversarial hearing in this matter on March 5, 2026. The Board will deliberate and issue a decision on whether Respondent violated D.C. Official Code § 1-1162.24(a)(1) by failing to file full and complete Public Financial Disclosure Statements in November 2024, May 2025, and November 2025.

22-0079-P In re C. Subido

The Director of Government Ethics imposed a ministerial fine of \$300 after finding that Respondent violated 6B DCMR § 1808.1 by using her District government email account for unauthorized purposes. The Director found that Respondent misused her government email account to send and receive personal and private business emails between February 2021 and June 2022.

Quarterly Complaint Summary Report

BEGA released its Quarterly Complaint Summary Report for the first quarter of FY 2026. You can read the report here and see the heat map data here and here.

Ethics in the News

On March 26, 2026, the House Ethics Committee held a public hearing in the



matter of Rep. Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick of Florida. An investigative subcommittee of the House Ethics Committee found Cherfilus-McCormick guilty of 25 charges, stemming from allegations that she stole millions in federal relief funds. Cherfilus-McCormick has already been criminal indicated on charges that she stole \$5 million in Federal Emergency Management Agency funding, using some of the funding for her 2022 House special election campaign. Her criminal trial is set for April. The full Ethics Committee will meet to consider sanctions for Cherfilus-McCormick after it returns from April recess. [Read more here](#) and [here](#).

The Office of Special Counsel recently entered into three settlement agreements stemming from violations of the federal restrictions on partisan political activity. One matter involved a federal employee who expressed support for a presidential candidate and questioned a patient's opposing views while administering a three-hour diagnostic test on Election Day in violation of the prohibition on making improper political statements during official duties resulting in a 21-day unpaid suspension. A second federal employee agreed to a 30-day unpaid suspension for sending as many as 10 prohibited political messages a day using official video conferencing and email accounts and sending messages to coworkers promoting or disparaging candidates for partisan political office on a least 31 days while on duty. The third matter involved a federal supervisor who ran for and was elected to partisan political office and solicited contributions for his campaign. The supervisor resigned from the elected position and accepted a 10-day unpaid suspension. [Read more here](#).

State and Local Ethics

The New York City Conflicts of Interest Board entered into an agreement with former New York City Mayor Eric Adams

for violations of the City Charter stemming from his re-election campaign. Mayor Adams agreed to pay a \$4,000 fine for conducting campaign activities during the course of his official duties. Mayor Adams had city staffers distribute whistles at an official press conference to draw negative attention to an opponent, former Governor Andrew Cuomo, who resigned from office after allegations of sexual harassment. [Read more here.](#)

The Rhode Island Ethics Commission held an administrative trial on allegations that former Rhode Island Director of Administration Jim Thorsen violated three provisions of state ethics laws in connection with a March 2023 trip to Philadelphia. The Commission is deliberating on whether Thorsen accepted a free lunch on the trip and whether he failed to intervene as his subordinate, David Patten, allegedly solicited vendors for items including vegan cheese and Italian sneakers. The May 2023 trip was planned to meet with a state contractor working to redevelop a project in Providence. After the trip, the contractor wrote an email to state officials alleging a series of inappropriate comments and behavior by the officials during the trip. [Read more here.](#)

Ask BEGA



Question: I have served as a Grant Compliance Auditor in the District government for over 10 years. Recently, while reviewing some community-based grant files, I discovered credible information suggesting that my supervisor may have improperly shared confidential scoring information with an applicant. A few weeks ago, I heard office chatter about him possibly doing something like this before, but I never believed it until then. This could be an ethics violation, but I am nervous about reporting it because I am worried about retaliation from my supervisor and being drawn into a lengthy investigation.

Before I could decide on whether to report what I saw or not, I received an email from BEGA asking whether I had time to speak regarding an ongoing investigation concerning a colleague. I am concerned that responding to BEGA's interview request, or even retaining the files, may put me at risk. For my own protection and job security, I am trying to understand my responsibilities. Am I required to participate in the meeting? And if I do, what protection is available to me?

Answer: Thank you for reaching out to BEGA. I'm sorry to hear that you are experiencing challenges regarding whether to comply with a BEGA investigation request. We understand that this can be a difficult decision for any employee who may be called upon. However, District government employees have a duty to comply with BEGA investigation requests. The good news is that both BEGA and the District Personnel Manual ("DPM") provide important safeguards for employees who do so.

BEGA Safeguards

BEGA investigations prioritize confidentiality. Specifically, interviews and other investigation-related requests made by BEGA are not shared with entities outside of BEGA. In addition, BEGA does not disclose how or where it obtains evidence and information to the public.

District Personnel Manual ("DPM") Safeguards

Under DPM § 1801.1, once you have credible information about a potential violation of the District Code of Conduct or this chapter, you must immediately and directly report it to the DC Office of Government Ethics (OGE), the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), or both. Reporting internally within an agency or raising concerns directly with the subject of the potential violation does not satisfy this obligation, you must go directly to OGE and/or OIG.

Under DPM § 1801.2, you must not interfere with or obstruct any investigation conducted by a District or federal agency. This means you should preserve relevant records, avoid alerting potential subjects, and follow lawful instructions from investigators.

DPM § 1801.3 requires you to fully cooperate with any investigation, enforcement action, or other official function of OGE. Full cooperation includes timely and truthful responses, producing documents, and participating in interviews or hearings when requested.

You are also protected from retaliation. Under DPM § 1801.4, no one may take coercive, harassing, or retaliatory action against you for acting in good faith. "Good faith" means you reasonably believe the violation is credible—even if it is later unsubstantiated. Prohibited retaliation includes demotion, adverse assignments, threats, harassment, or intimidation.

Practical Steps You Can Take

- **Respond and Report Promptly:** Cooperate fully. Respond to OGE requests and follow instructions. If applicable, file a direct report with OGE and/or OIG with dates, facts, documents, and witnesses (anonymous reporting is permitted).
- **Preserve Evidence:** Keep all emails, notes, and materials intact. Do not alter or delete anything.
- **Avoid Informal Probing:** Do not conduct your own investigation or alert the colleague; this could be viewed as interference.
- **Track Potential Retaliation:** Document any adverse actions and notify OGE or OIG if they occur. Retaliation is strictly prohibited under § 1801.4.

We encourage you to contact our office for specific advice, and to review the resources linked below:

- [BEGA Training and Educational Resources](#)
- [BEGA Complaints](#)



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