



Fundraising in the Federal Workplace

Fundraising can be a complicated issue — one must sift through independent, overlapping, and unrelated regulations to determine what is, or is not, authorized. The following information is a sample of recurring concerns/issues raised to Inspectors General throughout the Marine Corps. A good source for guidance is the [12th Ethics Counselor Course Deskbook](#), Oct 2014.

What is fundraising? Per the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch ([5 C.F.R. § 2635.808](#)), fundraising is “the raising of funds for a nonprofit organization, other than a political organization as defined in 26 U.S.C. § 572 (e), through either the solicitation of funds or sale of items; or active and visible participation in the conduct of an event in which any portion of the cost of attendance or participation may be taken as a charitable tax deduction by the person incurring that cost.” The term fundraising is also commonly used in conjunction with raising funds for groups that *are not* 501(c)(3) charitable or nonprofit organizations (i.e., school projects, spouses’ clubs, military ball committees), or collection of gifts-in-kind, rather than funds.

Who can solicit within the federal workplace? The Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) *is the only authorized solicitor* of Government personnel in the federal workplace on behalf of charitable organizations. The CFC is intended to reduce disruptions in the federal workplace by consolidating all approved solicitations into a single, annual, officially supported campaign. The Director of the Office of Personnel Management has the authority to set the annual dates for the campaign period.



Exceptions to fundraising in the federal workplace:

- **“By our own, for our own”** [Joint Ethics Regulation 3-210.a\(6\)](#): “Organizations composed primarily of DoD employees or their dependents when fundraising among their own members for the benefit of welfare funds for their own members or their dependents when approved by the head of the DoD component command or organization after consultation with the Designated Agency Ethics Official or designee.”
- **Marine Corps Birthday Ball Celebrations:** Subject to rules established in [MCO 7040.11A](#).
- **Fundraising for Emergencies and Disasters:** Organizations cannot conduct other charitable fundraising in the federal workplace unless Director OPM grants permission for special solicitations of federal employees in support of victims in cases of emergencies and disasters. Examples of special solicitations authorized in the past: Hurricane Sandy, Japan Earthquake & Tsunami, and the Haiti Earthquake.
- **Gifts-in-Kind:** This exception supports traditional collection efforts including food drives, coats for homeless, and toys for children. Commanders may approve these types of solicitations to be held in public areas of government buildings, such as lobbies or other entranceways.
- **Toys-for-Tots:** An official activity of the Marine Corps and official mission of the Marine Corps Reserve, this program is conducted in accordance with [MCO 5726.14F](#).
- **Military Relief Societies:** The Military Departments have issued their own specific guidance outlining permissible support.
- **Impromptu Groups:** “Commanders may approve, on a limited basis, the use of areas that are outside of the federal workplace for DoD personnel’s purely personal, unofficial volunteer efforts to support such fundraising (spouse clubs, DoD school projects, etc.), as long as the efforts do not imply DoD endorsement.”

Fundraising activities/actions not permitted in the federal workplace:

- **Cannot** solicit individuals or entities that are not federal personnel (no DoD contractors).
- **Cannot** be an expressed, or implied, requirement to give as a condition to the granting of privileges and entitlements.
- **Cannot** receive something of value, special favors, or privileges, which are an inducement to contribute.
- **Cannot** enter the fact of participation, or nonparticipation, into a performance appraisal or evaluation report.
- **Cannot** establish non-contributor lists (coercive).
- **The command cannot** endorse a specific charity.

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