

As a registered lobbyist, can I contribute to the campaign of a County official or candidate for County office?

Chapter 14, M.C.G.O. regulates lobbying activities at Milwaukee County. There are no provisions in the ordinance that would prohibit or restrict a registered lobbyist from contributing to an election campaign of County officials. However, refer to the Vendor section of this brochure for restrictions that a registered lobbyist might need to consider prior to making a campaign contribution.

Contact the Milwaukee County Clerk's Office at 414.278.4067 for more information on registration requirements for lobbyists.



County employees may not coerce or attempt to coerce contributions or services from subordinate employees to support a political party or candidate or with regard to referendum position (M.C.G.O. § 9.06(2)).

DISCLAIMER

This brochure highlights certain aspects of the Milwaukee County Ethics Code. In an effort to convey the meaning and purpose of the Ethics Code in the clearest manner, this brochure is written in 'plain English,' and may portray examples of ethical behavior. This brochure is not intended to encompass all the aspects of ethical concerns faced by individuals or groups affected by Milwaukee County's Ethics Code. This brochure is also not intended to replace an advisory opinion, which can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Ethics Board at the address below.



Milwaukee County Ethics Board

Courthouse Room 212
901 North 9th Street
Milwaukee WI 53233

Phone: 414-278-5332
Fax: 414-223-1897

E-mail: mcethicsboard@milwcnty.com

Hours of Operation:
Monday through Friday
8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

MILWAUKEE COUNTY ETHICS BOARD

Campaign Contributions



Courthouse Room 212
901 North 9th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Tel: (414) 278-5332
Fax: (414) 223-1897



The Milwaukee County Ethics Code includes language prohibiting elected officials and Milwaukee County employees from directly or indirectly accepting **“anything of value”** if

“it could reasonably be expected to influence a public official’s or employee’s vote, official actions or judgment, or could reasonably be considered as a reward for any official action or inaction or omission by the public official or employee.”

What is **“anything of value”**?

“Anything of value” means any money or property, favor, service, payment, advance, forbearance, loan, or promise of future employment, business, or other consideration having a value greater than \$25.00, but does **not** include:

- ◆ Compensation and expenses paid by the County;
- ◆ Fees and expenses which are permitted and reported under section 9.14 of the Code;
- ◆ **Political contributions which are reported under Ch. 11 Wis. Stats.;** or
- ◆ Hospitality extended for a purpose unrelated to County business by a person other than an organization.

Does the Ethics Code prohibit **elected officials** from asking for campaign contributions?

- No. County elected officials **are** allowed to use the title or prestige of their office to obtain campaign contributions, *as long as the contributions are permitted and reported as required by Chapter 11 of the Wisconsin Statutes.* (M.C.G.O. § 9.05(2)(a))
- However, County elected officials may **not** knowingly solicit a campaign contribution from an **“at-will” employee.** (M.C.G.O. § 9.05(2)(i))



What is an **“at-will” employee**?

- An **“at-will”** employee is an employee who:
- ⇒ Serves at the pleasure of a County official;
 - ⇒ Is not under union or labor contract with the county;
 - ⇒ Is hired for an indefinite term;
 - ⇒ Is under an independent contract with the County or its subparts; or
 - ⇒ Can be discharged or terminated at any time for any nondiscriminatory reason. (M.C.G.O. § 9.05(2)(i))

What should I do with a campaign contribution from an **individual or business** who should not have contributed?

You can return the contribution and report it on your campaign finance report. Contact the Milwaukee County Election Commission at 414.278.4062 for more information.

What do **vendors** need to know?

Are you a person or business owner with a financial interest in the approval or denial of a contract that is “under consideration” by a County Department or an agency funded by a County department? If so, you are **NOT** allowed to make a campaign contribution to any official with approval or denial authority over that contract **during the contract’s consideration.** If unsure, do not contribute until final disposition of the contract. (M.C.G.O. § 9.05(2)(k))

When is a **contract** “under consideration?”

- ◆ Contract or proposal consideration *begins* when a contract or proposal is submitted to a County department or to an agency funded or regulated by a County department.
- ◆ Contract or proposal consideration *continues until* the contract or proposal has reached final disposition, *including* adoption, County Executive action, proceedings on veto (if necessary), or departmental approval. (M.C.G.O. § 9.05(2)(k))

