



“The people of Hawaii believe that public officers and employees must exhibit the highest standards of ethical conduct and that these standards come from the personal integrity of each individual in government.”

- Hawaii State Constitution, Art. XIV

The High Road

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Free Trips for State Employees: Request Ethics Advice Before You Start Packing

Many state employees take trips to attend conferences, meetings, and other events in connection with their state employment. Sometimes a private business or organization offers to pay for an employee’s travel expenses, which may include airfare, hotel, meals, and other related expenses. For example, a professional association that is hosting a conference on the mainland may invite a state employee to participate in the program and may offer to pay for the employee’s travel expenses for the conference.

Under the State Ethics Code, the payment of a state employee’s travel expenses by a non-state entity is considered a “gift” and is subject to the statute’s gifts law. The gifts law prohibits an employee from accepting any gift, including travel, if it appears the gift is offered to influence or reward official action. The State Ethics Code also prohibits an employee from soliciting or accepting “unwarranted” privileges, including travel-related benefits, that are offered solely because of the person’s state position.

Does this mean that the State Ethics

Code prohibits all gifts of travel for state employees? No. Whether an employee may accept a gift of travel depends in large part on whether the source of the gift is involved in official action by the employee or the employee’s agency, and whether the trip will provide a benefit to the

State or the employee in performing his or her official duties.

Employees who are offered free travel in connection with their state employment may contact the

State Ethics Commission for advice. Employees may be asked to complete a “travel questionnaire” form to provide information about the trip. The form (*Request for Guidance Regarding Travel Expenses Paid by Non-State Entities*) is available on the Commission’s website at <http://ethics.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Travel-Questionnaire.pdf>. Based on the provided information, Commission staff will provide advice about whether the employee may accept the offered trip under the State Ethics Code and also whether the trip must be reported on a gifts disclosure statement.



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Next Public Meeting:
August 19, 2015
10:00 am

ETHICS TRAINING

The Commission is offering general ethics training workshops in August:

State Employees:
Aug. 18, 2015
9:30 am - 11:00 am
Mission Memorial Auditorium

State Board and Cmn. Members:
Aug. 26, 2015
9:30 am - 11:00 am
State Capitol Auditorium

ETHICS GUIDELINES FOR ALOHA UNITED WAY FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

The 2015 Aloha United Way Live United Coordinated Campaign starts August 18 and runs through October 2. As it has in the past, the State is participating in the A UW Campaign by asking agencies to assign campaign coordinators who are responsible for leading their respective agencies and encouraging fellow employees to give to the A UW Campaign.

Fundraising activities in state agencies often raise ethics concerns because the State Ethics Code prohibits the use of state time, equipment, and facilities for "private business" purposes, which includes fundraising for charities. The A UW Campaign, however, funds a broad range of community services in Hawaii and has been adopted by the State as "public business." The State has authorized the use of state resources, including state personnel, to support A UW through the State's annual work-

place giving program.

Employees' participation in the A UW Campaign, however, must be voluntary. Employees cannot be pressured or coerced, directly or indirectly, into donating to A UW or its partner charities; agencies cannot post the names of employees who have or have not donated to A UW.

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State agencies often raise funds for A UW through auctions and food sales.

Some fundraising activities may raise additional ethics issues. General guidelines for A UW fundraising activities are posted on the Commission's website at <http://ethics.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/AUWFund.pdf>. Employees who are planning fundraising activities as part of their agencies' participation in the A UW Campaign are encouraged to review these guidelines and contact the Commission with any questions.

SUSAN DeGUZMAN ELECTED CHAIR, DAVID O'NEAL CONTINUES AS VICE CHAIR

At its July meeting, the Commission elected Susan DeGuzman as its Chair. Commissioner DeGuzman was appointed to a 4-year term starting on July 1, 2012. She previously served as the Judicial Assistant and Executive Secretary for retired Hawaii Supreme Court Chief Justice Ronald

T.Y. Moon.

David O'Neal will continue to serve as the Commission's Vice Chair. Commissioner O'Neal was appointed to a 4-year term starting on July 1, 2014. He is the General Manager of the Mililani Town Association.

