



# Combined Federal Campaign

## Ethics Guidance

November 2016

### **Background:**

The Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) is the only authorized solicitation of employees in the Federal workplace on behalf of charitable organizations. The CFC rules are administered by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) through the regulations at [5 C.F.R. 950](#). The CFC campaign is conducted during a designated period, from September through December each year. Upon written request, the OPM Director also may grant permission for solicitations of Federal employees, outside the CFC campaign, in support of victims in cases of emergencies and disasters. (See: [OPM CFC Frequently Asked Questions](#) for additional information.)

The CFC regulations apply only to fundraising activities in the Federal workplace on behalf of charitable organizations. They do not apply to the collection of gifts-in-kind, such as food, clothing, school supplies, and toys, or to the collection of funds among employees for the benefit of other employees. Gift-in-kind collections may take place any time of year as authorized by the Service. The collection of funds among employees for the benefit of other employees may be conducted consistent with Federal ethics laws and regulations. (Consult your agency ethics counselor for guidance.)

### **WHO and HOW you ask for donations:**

- **DO** ensure that all contributions are voluntary and that donors are aware that they may keep their contributions confidential.
- **DO NOT** solicit subordinate employees. (However, supervisors may encourage participation.)
- **DO NOT** solicit contractor personnel or other non-Federal persons present on Federal property. (However, unsolicited contributions by these individuals may be accepted)
- **DO NOT** solicit donations from outside organizations (For example, do not ask local businesses to donate gift certificates to be used in a CFC raffle or auction)
- **DO NOT** ask for information about subordinate participation. (If you are a CFC keyworker, do not share contributor lists or individual donation information with supervisors or others outside of the Service CFC coordinating team.)
- **DO NOT** set individual employee dollar goals or quotas.

### **General guidelines for non-solicitation events and special fundraising events**

The CFC regulations encourage non-solicitation events that build support for the CFC (i.e., campaign kick-off and victory events, and award ceremonies for employees who have demonstrated leadership qualities in the CFC campaign.) They also authorize special CFC



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fundraising events (i.e., raffles, auctions, bake sales, carnivals, athletic events and similar activities). Following are guidelines that apply to all CFC events:

- **DO** hold special events to generate interest in the CFC.
- **DO** obtain approval by the appropriate agency official and ethics counselor before the event.
- **DO** ensure that the events are open to all individuals even if they don't donate to CFC. (Communications about the event should state that CFC contributions are not required.)
- **DO** allow contract employees to participate in CFC events. However, their time cannot be charged to the government. Never solicit contractors to participate in any way in CFC events.
- **DO** use only a reasonable duration of government time to conduct CFC events. (You also may use personal time, such as annual leave, lunch or other authorized compensatory time, to conduct fundraising events. However, if the CFC events occur in the workplace, the event must be approved by management in advance.)
- **DO** accept donations by cash, check or pledge form. Donations by pledge form are preferred. (A revised OPM regulation prohibiting cash donations will go into effect January 1, 2017.)
- **DO** have pledge forms available for participants. Advise employees that donations without a pledge form will be treated as "undesignated contributions," which will be shared proportionately among all charities and federations that received CFC donations in the local area.
- **DO NOT** use your official position, title or authority to endorse a charitable organization, or to give the appearance of government sanction of a particular charity.
- **DO NOT** suggest or specify a particular charity for employees to include on pledge forms.
- **DO NOT** conduct "gambling" activities as fundraising events. Gambling is prohibited in the Federal workplace. Gambling is defined as a:

(1) "game of chance"; (A "game of chance" includes, but is not limited to, a raffle, lottery, sport pool, game of cards, the selling or purchasing of a numbered slip or ticket, or any game for money or property.)

(2) where an employee provides "consideration"; ("Consideration" includes a participation fee, a wager of money, or something of value. )

(3) for the opportunity to win a "prize". (A "prize" includes a monetary award, or a tangible or intangible item, such as meals, drinks, gift certificates, tickets to events, or cash.)

Events must include all three of these elements to be prohibited as gambling activities.

### **Additional guidelines for raffles, door prizes or auctions:**

- **DO** offer raffle/door prize tickets to all attendees, even if they do not make a CFC donation. (Do not require attendees to purchase a raffle/door prize ticket to attend the event.)
- **DO** offer prizes that are modest in nature. Examples include: lunch with an agency official, an agency parking space for a specific time period, or a gift of minimal financial value such as a batch of an employee's famous homemade cookies, homemade jam, a hand-knit scarf, etc. Do not offer personal services such as dog-walking, pet sitting, babysitting, etc. Note: Often Service employees conduct "gift basket" competitions. This activity is permitted if employees donate purchased or handmade items for the basket. An employee may



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purchase a business gift certificate to be included in the basket; however, the employee may not solicit a free gift certificate from the business.

- **DO NOT** conduct a raffle for prize money (i.e., no 50/50 raffles)
- **DO NOT** raffle or auction government property.

### **Additional guidelines for bake sales, used book sales or similar activities:**

- **DO** provide donated items as an incentive for employees to donate to the CFC. DOI regulations prohibit the sale of these items. However, you may include a suggested donation amount (i.e. "Suggested donation of \$1.00 per cookie" or per "hardback book.")
- **DO NOT** identify a specific charity for employees to include on pledge forms or for their cash donations. (For example, do not advertise that all bake sale donations will be provided to the "Veterans' Childrens' Fund" organization.)

### **Example 1 (kick-off event; used book sale):**

**Scenario:** Susan, a Service employee, is a member of the Board of Directors for the "Kids' Book Bank", a community non-profit organization. The Book Bank is a designated CFC charity. Susan asks the local Service CFC coordinator if the Book Bank could be among those charities highlighted at the CFC kick-off event and she offers to serve as the spokesperson for the organization at the event. She also proposes a CFC used book sale to benefit the Book Bank. Are these activities allowed?

**Answer:** Kick-off event: Susan is not allowed to represent the charity at the CFC event. She is prohibited from using her official position, title or authority to endorse a charity or to give the appearance of government sanction of the charity. In addition, Federal criminal laws prohibit her from representing a charity or other third parties before the Federal government. If the Book Bank is selected as a charity to be profiled at the kick-off event, someone else must introduce the organization. Used book sale: The CFC event organizers may host a used book sale. However, the organizers cannot designate the Book Bank as the recipient of the proceeds for the book sale. If a donation is received through a pledge form, the donor designates the charity that receives the contributions. If the donation is received in cash, it will be treated as an undesignated contribution which will be shared proportionately among all charities and federations that received CFC donations in the local area.

### **Example 2 (raffle):**

**Scenario:** Bob, a Service employee, organizes a raffle that will be open only to Service employees who present a completed CFC pledge card and buy a \$5 raffle ticket. Bob plans to give the proceeds of the raffle ticket sales to the "The Boys and Girls Clubs" which is a designated CFC charity. The winner will receive two tickets to a professional basketball game. (Bob plans to ask Mike, a retired Service employee, to donate his two premium stadium seats for the raffle.) The seats are worth \$300 each. Is this allowed?



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**Answer:** No. This proposed raffle is not an appropriate CFC event for four reasons. First, it violates the gambling in the workplace rule because it is a game of chance (raffle), where employees provide consideration (\$5), for the opportunity to win a prize (basketball tickets). Second, it does not comply with the CFC rules which require that events be open to all Service employees, regardless of CFC contribution or participation. Third, Federal employees are prohibited from soliciting donations from outside sources (former employees are considered outside sources). Fourth, the proposed prize value is excessive. CFC event “prizes” must be reasonable in value and modest in nature.

Instead of the basketball tickets, Bob could raffle the opportunity to have lunch with the Regional Director (provided that the Regional Director agreed!) or some modestly priced item, so long as donations are not required for a raffle ticket. (Bob may, however, notify raffle participants that CFC contributions will be accepted.) Bob should have pledge forms available and, in the event someone makes a donation without a pledge form, advise the donor that the donation will be treated as an undesignated contribution which will be shared proportionately among all charities and federations that received CFC donations in the local area.

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