

- Ethics Officer's September 2006 Monthly Report

Summary

This report provides a general update on the progress and activities for the Ethics Office for September 2006.

Attachments

None

Detailed Report

Activities

1. The first Ethics Dinner-Discussion will be held Monday evening, October 9, 2006. The speaker will be Robert O'Brien, United States Alternate Representative to the 60th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.
2. The third of the three required AB 1234 workshops, Power and Privilege, was held Tuesday, September 26, 2006. 52 directors, officers and guests participated.
3. The Employee Ethics Manual and AB 1234 CD Self-Study series are in process.
4. The Ethics Educator and Senior Administrative Analyst conducted Day 1 employee orientations to 7 new hires and Day 2 employee orientations to 12 new employees.
5. The Ethics Educator made field visits to three facilities, meeting with 161 employees and 6 managers.

Logged Questions and Matters of Concern

1. **August 1, 2006 – Issue: Contractor Relations**
A contractor contacted the Ethics Office with concerns about the work environment at La Verne. The contractor was asked for additional information, but had not responded as of August 24, 2006. The Group Manager reviewed the matter and found nothing amiss. The contractor failed to respond to repeated requests for further information. (176)
Disposition: Closed
2. **August 24, 2006 - Issue: Outside Employment**
An employee brought to the attention of the Ethics Office that another employee was doing consulting closely aligned with his/her Metropolitan duties. The Ethics and Legal Departments discussed the matter with the employee and reviewed documents presented. Determinations were made on allowable limits for the employee's external consulting. Limitations were described as follows: Material for outside work activities must be developed on the employee's own time; employment or consulting agreements must not be made with any governmental agency, special district or other entity within our service partner region or with any agency, special district, or entity that has a pre-existing relationship with Metropolitan. If an agency with which the employee consults forms a relationship with Metropolitan, the consulting agreement must be terminated. All outside work activity must be performed on the employee's own time and references to MWD must be limited to identification of oneself as an MWD employee. (179)
Disposition: Closed

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3. **September 1, 2006 – Issue: Favoritism**

An employee expressed concern that he/she was a victim of favoritism because he/she was told that he/she would not be eligible for housing if hired into a new position and the successful candidate ultimately did receive housing. Investigation showed that the housing policy was changed three months after the position in question had been filled. At that point, based on the change in policy, the person holding the job was offered housing. Neither candidate was offered housing prior to the position being filled. (181)

Disposition: Closed

4. **September 18, 2006 – Issue: Unauthorized Discounts**

An employee contacted the ethics office to ask if he/she could accept a complimentary registration for an upcoming conference. It was determined that the employee could accept the complimentary registration in this case because it is not from a particular vendor, nor is it directed to MWD. Vendors pool money to support complementary registrations for participants chosen from a broad population. (182)

Disposition: Closed

5. **September 18, 2006 – Issue: Theft of Time**

A copy of an e-mail was provided anonymously to the Ethics Office regarding an employee's request for flex/comp time to handle family issues. The employee's supervisor was notified; the supervisor reports having scheduled a talk with the employee regarding the need to make up lost time or charge it to annual leave. (183)

Disposition: Closed