



- Ethics Officer's August 2010 Monthly Report

Summary

This report provides a general update on the progress and activities for the Ethics Office for August 2010.

Attachments

None

Detailed Report

Activities

1. The second and final AB 1234 workshop of the year for Metropolitan directors and officers will be held on September 14 as the final agenda item at the Board of Directors meeting. Member agency representatives have also been invited to attend. This will be the last AB 1234 workshop until 2012. Metropolitan directors and officers who attended the September workshop in addition to the January 2010 workshop will have completed their state-mandated training until 2012.
2. The Ethics Office is working with management on the Annual Report for fiscal year 2009/10.
3. The Ethics Educator visited Iron Mountain on August 31, 2010.
4. The Harassment and Discrimination Prevention online training for Directors is available to all Directors. Directors will be issued a certificate upon completion of the course.
5. The Ethics Office staff conducted Day 1 orientation for one employee.
6. The Ethics Office website logged 1,201 visitors from August 1-31, 2010.

Logged Questions and Matters of Concern

1. **August 4, 2010 – Issue: Nepotism**
An anonymous concern was received regarding the fairness in the review process for the new class of apprentices. Investigation confirmed that the written exam was developed by an outside company. The test questions were sealed until the test was given to the applicants. More than 400 applicants passed the test and were interviewed using approximately 60 different panelists over 12 days in two locations. No panelists were related to applicants interviewed and, in the case cited in the concern, the caller was in error in listing the interviewers for the particular candidate. Metropolitan has appropriate policies in place to guarantee fairness in the selection of the new apprentice class. (481)
Disposition: Closed
2. **August 9, 2010 – Issue: Gift**
A query was received from an employee regarding whether the employee could accept the gift of travel expenses from a vendor to serve as a guest speaker/panelist overseas. Metropolitan employees are prohibited from accepting vendor reimbursement for expenses associated with serving as a guest speaker/panelist. (482)
Disposition: Closed
3. **August 10, 2010 – Issue: Customer Relations**
A concern was received from a member of the public through the Hotline regarding a Metropolitan employee who was allegedly talking on a cell phone while driving a Metropolitan vehicle. The employee and his/her supervisor discussed the matter and the employee will comply with state laws. (483)
Disposition: Closed

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4. **August 11, 2010 – Issue: Policy Issues**

A concern was received from an employee regarding not receiving notification when changes were made to the employee's time sheet in WorkTech. It was found that the "alert" feature is still active and the employee was advised to contact the help desk if his/her "alert" feature is not working. (484)

Disposition: Closed

5. **August 16, 2010 – Issue: Conflicts of Interest/Commitment**

A query was received from an employee regarding a possible conflict of interest. A company bidding on a job had a business relationship four years ago with a company owned by a Metropolitan employee. As there is no current business relationship, there is no conflict of interest. (485)

Disposition: Closed

6. **August 18, 2010 – Issue: Discounts**

A query was received from an employee regarding whether employees may participate in a discount program that is offered to vanpool participants. The company offers the discount program to all of their customers and not solely to Metropolitan employees. Employee discounts of this kind are permitted under Metropolitan guidelines. (486)

Disposition: Closed

7. **August 20, 2010 – Issue: Retaliation**

A concern was received from an employee regarding alleged retaliation by a supervisor. The matter is under investigation. (487)

Disposition: Pending

8. **August 25, 2010 – Issue: Misuse of Funds**

A concern was received from an employee regarding whether taxpayer dollars were inappropriately used by the Tuition Reimbursement Program. The matter was investigated and it was found that the curriculum required to attain an advanced degree required courses that related to the employee's current job or related to Metropolitan work the employee could reasonably be expected to perform in the future. In addition, the course plan had been approved prior to the request for reimbursement. The employee's tuition was reimbursed appropriately. (488)

Disposition: Closed