



COMMISSION 419 Cherry St., Lansing, MI 48933 Telephone: (517) 487-6550 Fax: (517) 487-6977

**Lansing Housing Commission  
Policy No. 2009-10  
Political Activity Policy**

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**Acceptable Activities**

Employees may take an active part in political campaigns and most campaign-related activities provided that the activities are done while **off duty** and **away from the workplace**, and provided also that the activities **do not use any LHC resources** such as vehicles, computers, or telephones. In addition, an employee may not use his/her position as a LHC employee to attempt to influence an election.

This means that an employee may endorse, oppose, or work on behalf of any candidate or party as long as it is done away from the workplace and on the employee's own time. In addition, an employee may not use any LHC resources or do anything to identify him/herself as a LHC employee. If an employee wishes to participate in any activities that occur during normal working hours, the employee must request personal leave and receive his/her supervisor's approval **prior** to the event in accordance with normal procedures. Approval will be granted so long as there is adequate job coverage. Subject to these restrictions, employees may participate in voting drives, distribute campaign materials, make telephone calls, contribute money and attend fundraisers, sign petitions, serve as a polling place worker or observer, and even make political speeches. And, of course, employees may exercise their right as a citizen to register and vote for the candidates of their choice.

An employee may also seek or accept nomination, election, or appointment to a political office in a non-partisan race, provided this activity does not create a conflict of interest or interfere with the employee's regular duties as a LHC employee. The Supervisor/Manager and Human Resources will determine if a conflict of interest exists. Please consult with them prior to deciding whether to run for office. If a conflict exists, and the employee still wants to run for office, the employee may be placed on an approved leave of absence for up to 180 days during the campaign.

This policy does not prohibit LHC employees from talking about political subjects among themselves while on-duty, so long as it doesn't interfere with work. "Water-cooler" type discussions and exchanges of opinion among co-workers concerning the events of the day, including political campaigns, are permitted. However, employees should avoid having such discussions with individuals affiliated with firms that do business with LHC.



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### **Unacceptable Activities**

There are a number of general rules to keep in mind. First, an employee may not use his/her official position or authority to influence an election. Second, the employee may not participate in political activities while on duty, on LHC premises, or in a LHC vehicle. Third, engage in any type of social media activities which infers LHC's endorsement or support. In addition, while on duty an employee may not solicit, accept, or receive financial contributions for a political candidate or party. Employees are also prohibited from soliciting services or any other type of support from a business or organization that does business with LHC.

There are also some specific prohibitions. Employees may **not**:

- Wear any item of clothing, jewelry or other accessories indicating a partisan political position while on duty or while on LHC premises or in a LHC vehicle at any time.
- Engage in any "electioneering" activities while on duty, or while on LHC premises or in a LHC vehicle at any time. This includes such things as handing out political leaflets or brochures, and displaying political posters or other campaign materials in the workplace.
- Provide confidential information (e.g. names, addresses, telephone numbers) relating to other LHC employees or to LHC program participants (e.g. residents of Public Housing or Section 8 participants) to anyone outside LHC for any purpose. In addition, the employee may not use this information except in the course of performing his/her normal job duties. Questions about what information is confidential are to be directed to the Supervisor/Manager or the Executive Director's Office.
- Be a candidate for a partisan political office.

### ***What are the penalties for violating this policy?***

Employees who violate this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including discharge.

### ***Where to obtain more information:***

Questions about this policy should be directed to the employee's supervisor or Supervisor/Manager or Human Resources. (4CFR 7.3 - Political Activities)