

August 14, 2000
Re: IO-00-126

You inquired whether a county employee may be assigned to work with United Way as the campaign coordinator for the annual county United Way campaign. There are no ethical issues involved in assigning a county employee to do this work. The United Way campaign is a permitted gift solicitation because it benefits the citizens of the county, not any individual employee, and because it has been approved at the highest level of county government.

The ethics commission has identified certain matters that may raise ethical issues in the conduct of the campaign. First, under §3-104(a), an employee may not use the prestige of the office or position to benefit another. In the context of charitable solicitations, the ethics commission has determined that supervisors may not solicit from those they supervise, and that the use of coercive tactics in soliciting contributions from employees must be avoided. Second, under §3-106(a), county employees may not solicit gifts from businesses as employee incentives, since those gifts are for the benefit of county employees.

Thank you for your inquiry. If you have any more specific questions with respect to the United Way campaign, please feel free to call at any time.

Sincerely,

Betsy K. Dawson
Executive Director