



COOK COUNTY BOARD OF ETHICS

JENNIFER KING

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Advisory on Prohibitions Related to the use of County Funds and Resources during Election Periods

Cook County Ethics Ordinance Section 2-586

Cook County departments and officials are prohibited from using County funds and resources to purchase and distribute newsletters, brochures, advertisements, and public service announcements.

- Only applies to elected County officials who are **candidates** for County elected office.
 - Does not apply to County officials running in non-County elections, such as mayor, state representative or senator, etc.
- Restriction applies 60 days prior to a general, primary, and special election until the day after the election.

County funds and resources may not be used in the following manners:

1. Printing, mailing and distribution of **newsletters** or **brochures** bearing **proper name and/or image** of an elected County official who is a candidate for County office.
2. **Broadcasting and airing** (radio or television) or **printing in a commercial newspaper** or **commercial magazine** or **public service announcements** and **advertisements for County-administered programs** that contain the **proper name, image or voice** of an elected County official who is a candidate for County office.
 - a. Potential exceptions: Elected official appearances on television or radio to discuss County-administered programs and initiatives.

An example of this would be an invitation by a local radio station to discuss the completion of a significant County-funded construction project. This interview should not be political in nature and should avoid content related to any upcoming elections.

Social Media Exception:

- The restrictions do not apply to social media. Materials containing an elected official's voice, image and/or name may be posted on an official County social media profile.
- Examples (Note: This is not an exhaustive list):
 - Flyers, newsletters or brochures containing an official's name and image may be posted on a Cook County-owned website and social media account year-round.
 - Examples of social media include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn and NextDoor.

TONI PRECKWINKLE

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of Commissioners

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15th District

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16th District

SEAN M. MORRISON
17th District

Guidance Issued May 15, 2024

	Allowable Uses of County Elected Officials' Names and Likeness	Not Allowable During Election Period	Never Allowable (Despite Source of Funding)
Internal Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails or other communications to County personnel regarding County programs (that may contain the proper name or image of an Elected County Official) • Materials created in the normal course of business (internal memos, emails) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails to County personnel that request or pressure participation or donations to Elected County Officials, campaigns
Public Distribution (External Communications)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press releases • Award letters • Information available or posted on any Cook County-owned website or County-owned social media account <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Emails containing links to the website/social media account where material is posted • Annual reports that are required by law to be published during the prohibition periods • Segments posted on public educational, government access channels (such as Cook County's Cable Access Network) (e.g., Talk with Toni, Treasurer's Office Fireside Chats) • Business cards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printed or electronic newsletters, brochures, annual reports, palm cards or printed marketing collateral¹ that bear the proper name of an elected County official • Public service announcements and advertisements for County-administered programs that contain the proper name, image or voice of any elected County official • Robocalls regarding County-administered programs with the proper name or voice of any elected County official (allowable if it does not contain elected official's voice) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information available or posted on any Cook County-owned website or County-owned social media account that is prohibited political activity

¹ Any printed material used to promote an elected official.