



## Political Activity Policy

### I. Purpose

This policy provides direction and guidelines to all Department of Human Services senior facilities regarding permitted and prohibited political activities at a City-operated Senior Center and/or Nutrition Site. The policy is intended to promote an atmosphere of political neutrality at the centers/sites and avoid the appearance of bias or favoritism.

### II. Definitions: The following definitions and acronyms apply to the terms used in this policy:

- **Centers:** All City-operated Senior Comprehensive Centers and Nutrition Sites
- **DHS:** Department of Human Services.
- **Candidates:** Candidates running for elected office as well as any current elected official at any level (local, state, federal, etc.)

### III. Policy

Permitted Activities:

- Centers are encouraged to inform seniors about and provide information on voter education and voter registration drives. These activities must be carried out in a non-partisan manner. Local non-partisan groups may explain sample ballots and voting procedures.
- Candidates or their representatives may mingle informally at any time so long as they abide by all provisions of this policy and do not disrupt Center activities.
- Seniors may wear candidate t-shirts as they have the right to express their political beliefs.
- Candidates may provide gifts to Centers for all seniors, such as healthy refreshments or flowers. These items may not have political slogans, candidate names or candidate pictures on the items.
- Senior Centers may schedule approved transportation, provided by senior center chauffeurs in authorized Senior Center Vans and Busses to polling locations to allow seniors time to vote.

Prohibited Activities:

- Center office materials may not be used related to political campaign activities.
- Staff may not provide mailing lists or participant registries.
- Petitions, political speech, campaign presentations, partisan materials, or any other solicitation, is prohibited on Center property.
- Candidates, or their representatives, may not display political messages, slogans, advertisements, or candidate names on Center property at any time. This includes any display, such as on buttons, t-shirts, caps, vehicles, etc.
- Candidates may not provide gifts with political messages, slogans, advertisements, candidate photographs or names
- Political or campaign materials may not be distributed on Center property or at any senior event by any person. This includes literature, buttons, signs, posters or any other material.
- Political or campaign materials may not be posted, distributed, or left in Centers.
- City vehicles may not be used to transport seniors to political activities, other than previously approved transportation to polling locations provided by Senior Center Chauffeurs in Senior Center Vans and Busses.
- Outside agencies or candidate representatives are prohibited from announcing transportation to political activities.
- Centers or Center staff may not endorse any candidate, party or issue.
- Campaign contributions may not be solicited within the Centers.

**EXAMPLES** \*\*All candidate meetings and items provided for distribution require prior approval by the Senior Center Manager

**Permitted:**

- Fiesta Medals that include candidate or elected official names may be distributed to seniors only during the week prior to, and the period of Fiesta (persons distributing medals must adhere to all other restrictions in this policy)
- Gifts, such as, flowers, corsages, buttons, ribbons, etc. to commemorate or honor seniors on special holidays (Mother's Day, Father's Day, Veteran's Day, Valentine's Day, Birthday's etc.)
- Food items, such as cupcakes, pre-packaged fruit, and other healthy refreshments.
- Mingling informally, for example: calling bingo or leading a book club meeting
- Presentations on topics of particular interest to seniors, such as explaining new changes in Social Security regulations, or AARP benefits, or regarding Medicare.

**Prohibited:**

- Partisan Materials
- Political Messages
- Candidate Names (except Fiesta medals during Fiesta)
- Candidate Pictures
- Slogans / Advertisements
- Solicitations requesting signatures (such as petitions) except as allowable on Public right of way
- Items on gifts or food which state a person's name. Items may contain the district name but not the individual candidate's name.

**IV. Procedures**

- All guests, including sitting incumbents, must sign in at the reception desk of the facility. Upon signing in, they must state their name, organizational/candidate affiliation, and purpose for the visit.
- Center staff will provide all guests with a copy of permitted and prohibited activities.
- Center staff will inspect gifts, cards, notices, etc. for approval prior to distribution.
- If a guest claims an item (gift, card, notice, etc.) has been pre-approved by any person, but it violates this policy, Center staff will contact Senior Services Management for verification and ask the guest to visit another time once approval of the item is verified.
- All meetings and presentations require prior approval by the Social Services Manager.
- Center staff is responsible for monitoring both informal and planned presentations by Candidates. If they feel a violation of this policy has occurred, Center staff should ask the guest to end their meeting or presentation and immediately inform Senior Services Management who will coordinate with City Attorney's Office to notify candidates or elected officials that a violation has occurred.
- All planned and unplanned visits by Candidates must be reported to Senior Services Management as soon as possible, but no later than 1 hour
- Persons in violation of this Policy or creating serious disruption may be asked to leave the Center by the Senior Center Manager or designated staff leads at the site.