

Frequently Asked Questions

Donations to Council Member-Organized Community Events

(June 5, 2009)

Q. Can a Councillor publicize a City of Toronto Community Environment Day?

- A. Yes, Councillors can publicize these events, and can work with community organizations to provide games, activities, and to showcase local community initiatives. Community Environment Days are City of Toronto programs/events. Councillor advertising, including any shared flyers or publicity with the City, should refer to the Councillor's support for the City's Environment Day. For example, a flyer can state, "Come Join Councillor X at the Community Environment Day." A flyer should not state "Come to Councillor X's Community Environment Day." Councillor advertising also should not include logos or references to any partner or supporting organization that is a lobbyist, a client of a lobbyist, or that has a pending planning or related application before the City.

Lobbyists can still take part in the City's Environment Day, if they are invited/organized by the program. Councillors should not invite lobbyists to participate in Environment Days on behalf of programs.

Q. Are there limitations on Councillors publicizing community events that are organized by community organizations?

- A. Councillors can publicize community events organized by community organizations, e.g. in their newsletters, websites and advertisements. However, Councillors should not display the logos or the names of any lobbyists in such materials.

Councillors should also not coordinate the sponsorships or participation of community events organized by community organizations through their office.

Q. Can a Councillor receive donated goods or services from local community agencies or businesses? Are there any limits to these donations?

- A. Yes, subject to the overall cap of \$10,000.00 annually in support for councillor-organized community events. Also, the Councillor cannot solicit or accept donated goods or services from a lobbyist, a client of a lobbyist, or that has a pending planning or related application before the City. All donations should be made to the City of Toronto and sent through the City Clerk's Office. Donations which exceed \$300.00 must also be reported to the Integrity Commissioner. This reporting no longer requires a separate form. All donations, whether less or more than \$300.00, will be included in the calculation of the Councillor's \$10,000.00 annual limit on donations.

Q. Can a Councillor who has a permit to put on a community event provide space to community organizations for their activities, and are there any restrictions on those community organizations if using space which is part of a Councillor's event?

A. A Councillor can support community organizations by providing space to those organizations at an event for which the Councillor has a permit. The Councillor, however, remains responsible for the use of the space. If community organizations plan to offer activities sponsored by lobbyists, for example, the Councillor should inform the organization that it will need a separate permit.

Q. Where can a Councillor, community organization or member of the public find out more about the policy on Councillor-organized community events?

A. Information on the policy can be found at <http://www.toronto.ca/integrity/pdf/council-org-comm-events-policy.pdf>; Questions can be directed to the City Clerk's Office, Council and Support Services and/or to the City's Integrity Commissioner.

Q. Can community organizations hold fund-raising activities at a Councillor-organized community event?

A. Community organizations can hold fund-raising activities at a councillor-organized community event, as long as there is no recognition/participation of lobbyists.

Q. Can Councillors rent equipment from other Councillors?

A. Councillors can share use of equipment with each other and pay for additional expenses such as staff time or transportation requirements. Funds should not flow between Councillor office budgets.

Q. If a Councillor receives a donation for an event which is held the following year, how does the accounting towards the \$10,000 work?

A, Donations are accounted for in the year in which the funds are received. Similarly, expenses to be paid for through donations must be incurred in the same year that the donation is received. If a Councillor holds an event in the following year, he/she should arrange for the donation to be received in the same year as well. Donations cannot be carried between calendar years.