

Meyers, Robert (COE)

INO 08-27

From: Meyers, Robert (COE)
Sent: Tuesday, February 26, 2008 2:35 PM
To: Suarez, Carmen (ETSD)
Subject: RE: Requesting your opinion

Ms. Suarez:

The county's ethics ordinance prohibits vendors from paying travel or travel-related expenses of County employees or officials. Based upon the facts you have supplied me, the company licensing software products to the County is a vendor and it would be a violation of the ethics code to have the vendor waive the conference registration fee for the three staff members who wish to attend this conference. If the County believes there is merit in the three employees attending, then the County should pay the registration fees. The other option is for Board of County Commissioners to grant a waiver which would then enable the vendor to waive the registration fees.

With respect to your second question, I am assuming that IBM is a County vendor and the same rule applies, but I would reach a different conclusion. If IBM's policy is to waive the registration fee for all speakers and this arrangement is not unique to employees of Miami-Dade County, then it would be acceptable for you to accept the waiver of the conference registration fee to speak at the conference.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Robert Meyers, Executive Director
 Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust
 (305) 350-0613

From: Suarez, Carmen (ETSD)
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2008 4:56 PM
To: Walker, Ardyth (COE); Meyers, Robert (COE)
Cc: Cacicedo, Pedro (ETSD); Chicola, Gus (ETSD); Gonzalez, Ulma (ETSD)
Subject: Requesting your opinion

Good afternoon and Happy Valentine's Day. I am writing to request your opinion on ethics questions. I have two questions to present.

Firstly, we have the opportunity to have staff attend a conference (Cognos Forum) with the waiver of the conference registration fee. This fee is valued at \$1,395 per person if we register before March 31st. Two ETSD staff and one MDPD staff would attend. MDC currently licenses software products from this company and ETSD is considering establishing an enterprise licensing agreement with this vendor. The staff attending would be receiving the benefit of this conference as education and their time would be marked as educational leave on their payroll timesheet. MDC would pay for all other expenses. Is it appropriate to accept the waiver of conference registration fee?

Secondly, I have been asked to speak at the IBM Impact 2008 conference. All speakers get their registration fee waived therefore my registration fee for this conference is waived since I am a speaker. The value of this fee is \$2,095 before March 31st. I have already committed to this speaking engagement as a MDC representative of ETSD. I would receive the educational benefit of attending the conference my PAR timesheet would be marked as educational leave. IBM is definitely one of the vendors that MDC does business with. MDC would pay for all other expenses. Is it appropriate to accept this waiver of conference registration fee?

Thank you very much for your help with these questions.

2/26/2008

Regards,

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