

**Meyers, Robert (COE)**

INQ 08-142

**From:** Meyers, Robert (COE)  
**Sent:** Friday, August 22, 2008 11:25 AM  
**To:** Abbott, Tim (Aviation)  
**Subject:** RE: Question for ya

Hi Tim,

Thanks for your question. As a general proposition, a County employee may solicit contributions/donations from third parties as long as such solicitations are made in one's private capacity. In effect, this means not using County resources or one's title as part of the fundraising effort. Finally, an appeal to companies ought to be as broad-based as possible. The idea is to avoid targeting only those doing business with Miami-Dade County. We do not want to leave the impression that County vendors are obligated to contribution to causes or charities which County employees, especially those in positions of authority, believe are worthwhile.

In light of these standards, I find your letter to potential corporate contributors highly appropriate. Furthermore, the letter will be on Miami Bach Society letterhead and there is no reference to your employment or position with the County. As I stated above, you should try to broaden your solicitation efforts and not solely focus on County and/or Aviation Department vendors and contractors.

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

Thanks,

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

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**From:** Abbott, Tim (Aviation) [mailto:TABBOTT@miami-airport.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 21, 2008 5:45 PM  
**To:** Meyers, Robert (COE)  
**Subject:** Question for ya

Robert: Hi. I'm the Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Miami Bach Society, a small group of baroque music nuts who put baroque music events together for the local community. We bring in baroque musical groups from all over the world, mostly from Europe but some from South American and the Caribbean. The venues are typically at churches in the Coral Gables area, and we have two performances at Vizcaya this year.

Ticket sales raise all of about 25% of our budget. Applying for government and private grants and funds are the bigger ticket item and seeking corporate contributions are an important part as well.

Could I send a letter like the following to some of the companies I am familiar with through my work at the airport:

Dear Mr. \_\_\_\_:

The Miami Bach Society is a local, non-profit community organization whose goal is to present performances of baroque musical performers for those in the community who share a love for baroque music. As Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors of this worthy organization, I wonder if your company would consider a contribution to the Miami Bach Society to help defray the rather significant costs our organization encounters in bringing baroque musicians to Miami from around the world. A contribution of \$250 would be most appreciated, as would any lesser or greater amount you are able to make.

8/22/2008

Thank you very much for whatever you may be able to contribute to the Miami Bach Society. (Please note that the Miami Bach Society is a registered Section 501(C)(3) company under the IRS tax code and therefore your contribution should be tax deductible.)

Sincerely,

Thomas P. Abbott

Robert: the foregoing letter would be placed on Miami Bach Society letterhead.

Would there be a violation of County Code of Ethics by my sending such a letter?

Thanks so much.

Thomas P. (Tim) Abbott  
Assistant County Attorney  
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305 876-7040