

**Ethics (COE)**

INQ 09-100

**From:** Ethics (COE)  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 09, 2009 3:06 PM  
**To:** 'Lainey Brooks'  
**Subject:** RE: Friends of Library - Board Members

Dear Ms. Brooks:

Thank you for the additional information. It appears that the funds dedicated to advocacy and volunteer assistance would have no bearing on a library employee if one were appointed to the board. The funds that help sponsor programming and staff development could potentially benefit a library employee and it could present a conflict of interest. I don't believe such a conflict would be the reason to exclude a library employee from the board, but rather the employee would have to abstain on any matter where he/she could be directly affected. For example, if staff development dollars were likely to be distributed to benefit the board member employee in terms of travel or education (two of the examples you gave me), then the board member employee should not participate or vote on the staff development allocation. If the board member employee would not be affected by the allocation, or the benefit is an indirect one, no such conflict exists.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss the above.

Sincerely,

Robert Meyers, Executive Director  
 Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust

**From:** Lainey Brooks [mailto:brooksl@mdpls.org]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 08, 2009 5:14 PM  
**To:** Ethics (COE)  
**Subject:** RE: Friends of Library - Board Members

Dear Mr. Meyers:

I hope the following information answers your questions.

Mission Statement from Friends' website [www.friendsofmdpl.org](http://www.friendsofmdpl.org)

**MISSION STATEMENT:**

**The Friends of the Miami Dade Public Library is dedicated to furthering library excellence through the advancement of library initiatives utilizing a three-dimensional approach:**

**Advocacy:** *build an active and informed base of library champions that will provide grassroots support at the county, state, and national levels to advocate on behalf of the interests of the Miami Dade Public Library System and the people it serves.*

**Volunteer assistance:** *provide access to a pool of volunteer support for both branch programming activities and system-wide Friends activities.*

**Fundraising:** *provide supplementary funds that help sponsor Library programming and staff development.*

Each year, during the Friends budget planning process, the Library is asked to submit its annual funding requests for specific projects. For example, in 08-09 the Library requested and got approved \$35,000:

1. \$10,000 to help fund various literacy projects throughout the year; specifically Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, Teen Read Week, National Library Week and the Summer Reading program. In each instance, a program budget is submitted to the Friends that has been approved by the Library Director and the Assistant Library Director in charge of Outreach and Programming. Checks are distributed by the Friends provided the expense appears in the budget and provided proper invoices and/or receipts are submitted with the Assistant Director's signature.

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2. \$15,000 to help fund the Library's Annual Art of Storytelling Festival; these expenses must also be pre-approved by the Library Director and Assistant Director.

3. \$10,000 in support of staff development; specifically giving money to send staff to the annual American Library Association conference and to help staff that are going to school to get their Master's in Library Science. All staff requests must come through the Library Director's office for approval before being submitted to the Friends for payment.

Please let me know if you need additional information or clarification.

Thank you,  
Lainey Brooks  
305-375-5017

**From:** Ethics (COE) [mailto:ethics@miamidade.gov]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 08, 2009 4:39 PM  
**To:** Lainey Brooks  
**Subject:** RE: Friends of Library - Board Members

Ms. Brooks:

Could you give me a better sense of the mission of the Friends of the Miami-Dade Public Library Board? Who decides how the money raised by Friends' is distributed within the library system. I do not believe there is a conflict per se in having county employees sit on the board. However, my concern with library department employee sitting on the board is more related to being in a position to direct funding to benefit that individual's position or program within the public library.

Once you answer these questions, I can provide you with a response.

Thanks,

Robert Meyers, Executive Director  
Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust

**From:** Lainey Brooks [mailto:brooksl@mdpls.org]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 08, 2009 9:56 AM  
**To:** Ethics (COE)  
**Subject:** Friends of Library - Board Members

Are county employees permitted to be Friends of the Miami-Dade Public Library Board Members? The Friends is a separate 501(c)3 organization. The by-laws do not definite who can and can not be a board member. The by-laws simply state term limits and identify the responsibilities of the executive officers. 100% of Friends' proceeds benefit the Library's program and outreach efforts.

Specifically, the Friends have someone in mind from the county's finance department and someone from the library department.

Thank you.

Lainey Brooks  
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*Delivering Excellence Every Day!*

7/9/2009