

## Frigo, Victoria (COE)

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**From:** Frigo, Victoria (COE)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 09, 2011 3:29 PM  
**To:** 'ejljd@bellsouth.net'  
**Cc:** Centorino, Joseph (COE); Murawski, Michael P. (COE)  
**Subject:** INQ 11-169 Gift of meal without adequate consideration

Mr. Langbein,

You asked if you may accept a meal at an anniversary event from a firm that does business with the County. You stated that in lieu of paying for the meal, you have been asked to make a donation of \$47 to United Way.

Our staff concurs that making a donation to a charity does not provide adequate consideration to the donor of the meal and, consequently, the meal you will receive is a gift to you.

The County Ethics Code allows County employees to accept gifts from County vendors and contractors as long as the gift is not associated with travel expenses. County employees are required to report a gift, or series of gifts received within a quarter from the same source, if valued at more than \$100.

These requirements can be found in the County Code at Secs. 2-11.1 (e) and (w). Please feel free to contact me if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

**VICTORIA FRIGO, STAFF ATTORNEY**

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**From:** ejljd [<mailto:ejljd@bellsouth.net>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 08, 2011 4:08 PM  
**To:** Murawski, Michael P. (COE)  
**Subject:** Request for an Opinion

I represent a Firm which will have been in business for 25 years in 2012. The firm does business with the county and appears before hearing officers, some of whom may or may not be governed by the County code of conduct. The firm wishes to sponsor a fund-raising event, for the benefit of the United Way, in recognition of its 25th anniversary in business. The firm contemplates mailing invitations to attendees, including county employees and hearing officers with whom it has dealt over its 25 years in business. The invitations will require purchase of tickets for admission to a dinner event by checks in the sum of \$47 per person, and made payable exclusively to United Way. The \$47 donation to United Way will equal the cost per person of the dinner served at the event. Attendees will forward their checks payable to United Way to my client, who in turn will forward the checks to United Way and send a ticket for admission to the attendee.

My client requests your opinion as to whether the proposed fund-raiser:

- (1) presents any ethical issues for the attendees or the firm as sponsor;
- (2) requires reporting by the attendees.

Thank you for your courtesy.

Evan J. Langbein.

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