

## Frigo, Victoria (COE)

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**From:** Frigo, Victoria (COE)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 06, 2013 2:37 PM  
**To:** Otero, Jose R. (ITD)  
**Cc:** Centorino, Joseph (COE)  
**Subject:** Travel expenses from vendor (INQ 13-26)

Mr. Otero,

The County Code at Sec. 2-11.1 (w) allows you to accept training involving travel from a County vendor if you obtain a *waiver* from the Board of County Commissioners.

You may also accept training *locally*, without a waiver, as long as no significant travel is involved. Generally, training offered in the counties immediately surrounding Miami-Dade is considered local. If the cost of training exceeds \$100, you must disclose the training as a gift.

Sec. 2-11.1 (w) prohibits accepting training involving travel from any County *contractor, vendor, service provider, bidder* or *proposer*. You may accept training from entities that do not fall into any of those categories. Again, if the cost of training exceeds \$100, you must disclose the training as a gift.

In the future, ITD may wish to write into contracts with its vendors that training will be provided as part of the contract. This would allow ITD employees to accept training involving travel because, in essence, the County would be paying for it through the contract.

Finally, if you believe that Sec. 2-11.1 (w) should be changed to accommodate the particularities of your department, you may wish to address the Board of County Commissioners to suggest that they amend the ordinance.

Sincerely,

**VICTORIA FRIGO, STAFF ATTORNEY**

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**From:** Otero, Jose R. (ITD)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 05, 2013 2:42 PM  
**To:** Frigo, Victoria (COE)  
**Cc:** Centorino, Joseph (COE)  
**Subject:** RE: Prohibition on accepting travel expenses from vendor

Victoria, is there a process by which the ethics rules of the County can be reviewed, improved? It would appear that in the field of technology there are numerous opportunities to enhance our knowledge by a vendor sponsored event, in these events every single attendee is treated exactly the same with no distinction or preference. We Miami Dade County miss out on numerous opportunities to enrich our knowledge base without it costing our tax payers. There are other County's and governmental agencies such as Broward (I hear) that allow a certain level of latitude with this issue; if everyone is the treated the same then they don't see it as an ethics issue or conflict of interest.

I'm not talking about travel expenses such as airfare or lodging, but conferences where there are no fees or are waived for all participants and meals served at the events to keep a captive audience, yes I know we can brown bag but that looks really ridiculous, I've done it. I have attached a document from IBM where they estimate the value of what they are providing, the County nor any of its employees have requested this venue and is for everyone attending (who in the world has an \$85 breakfast, they must be serving the golden eggs!). Please, when you have an opportunity give me your common sense thoughts and insights on this very important issue, maybe we can continue to improve our County. Your feedback is greatly appreciated.

Thank you.

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