



What Nonprofit Staff Can Do

At and Outside of Work

Nonprofit staff members often have questions about their personal involvement in political campaigns or work with candidates. Outside of work, nonprofit employees are free to exercise their first amendment right to volunteer for candidate campaigns or engage in other partisan political activities. However, it is important to make clear distinctions between personal and professional efforts, as all voter engagement activities on behalf of your nonprofit must remain completely nonpartisan.

When is it personal time?

Outside of normal work hours, nonprofit staff may engage in partisan political activities, like supporting a candidate for office. Staff may also take vacation or personal time for the purpose of engaging in political activity.

Can staff be identified with their nonprofit organization when supporting a candidate?

As a rule, it is safer to leave the name of the organization off of any partisan political materials. However, it is permissible to list the organization along with the staff member's name if it is clearly noted that the organization is listed "for identification purposes only."

Can staff be listed with their organizational affiliation as supporters of a candidate?

As a rule, it is safer to leave the name of the organization off of any partisan political materials. However, it is permissible to list the organization along with the staff member's name if it is clearly stated that the organization is listed "for identification purposes only."

What about board members and volunteers?

While representing the nonprofit organization, board members and volunteers should follow the same protocol outlined for staff.

What if a candidate lists the name of the Executive Director or another employee without their permission?

If a candidate lists the Executive Director of a nonprofit or any staff member along with the organization's name on campaign material without the appropriate disclaimer (e.g. "for identification purposes only") the organization is not at fault. Ask the campaign to remove your organization's name from the list, and be sure to save a copy of your email or written request for your files.

Separate Your Personal Political Participation from Your Nonprofit Work

- Provide political campaigns or candidates a personal email address. Ask them to call you on your personal phone outside of work hours.
- Don't use any of your organization's resources to support or oppose a candidate, e.g. organizational vehicles, distribution lists, copy machines, office supplies, etc.

Resources

Engaging Your Staff, www.nonprofitvote.org/engaging-your-staff-2/

Election Activities of Individuals Associated with 501(c)(3) Organizations, www.bolderadvocacy.org