

**AGO POLICY  
II.25**

**USE OF STATE RESOURCES**

**Contact:** All Managers

**Cross References:** *RCW 42.52; WAC 292-110-010; Political Activities Policy; Electronic Mail Use Policy; Internet Services Use Policy; Software on AGO Computers Policy*

**Approved:** 08/22/05 (rev. 11/18/09)

**I. POLICY STATEMENT:**

**A. Overview**

State resources shall be used consistent with state law and, except as permitted by this policy, only in support of Attorney General's Office goals, objectives and operation. The personal use of state resources for private benefit or gain is prohibited by the Attorney General's Office, the Ethics in Public Service Act, *RCW 42.52 et. seq.*, and *WAC 292-110-010* (Use of State Resources Rule), with limited exceptions. This policy applies to the use of any state resources, including staff, office space, telephones, copiers, fax machines, computers, office supplies, vehicles and other Attorney General's Office equipment. The exceptions in this policy are intended to be narrow and must be in compliance with *WAC 292-110-010* and the Ethics in Public Service Act. Attached is a *Q and A from the Executive Ethics Board* giving examples of permissible and impermissible activities.

**B. Permitted Use**

Any use of state resources reasonably related to the conduct of official state duties does not violate *RCW 42.52.160* or AGO Policy. Additionally, the use of state resources that is reasonably related to an official state purpose, but not to an employee's or volunteer's official duty, is allowable only if it is authorized in writing by a deputy, division chief or equivalent designee. An example is conducting the agency's combined fund drive. The written authorization shall contain guidelines for the permitted use.

**C. Permitted Limited Personal Use**

1. In accordance with *WAC 292-110-010*, state employees or volunteers may make very limited personal use of state resources that supports organizational effectiveness and does not undermine public trust and confidence as determined by management. AGO employees and volunteers may make occasional and limited use of state resources only if the following conditions apply:

- There is little or no cost to the State;
- Any use is brief;
- Any use occurs infrequently;
- The use does not interfere with the performance of the employee's or volunteer's official duties; and
- The use does not compromise the security or integrity of state information or software.

Charitable activities that otherwise meet these conditions and fall within any applicable criteria in part E below are permissible.

2. Use in conformance with this policy does not need prior approval unless otherwise indicated herein. Staff with questions regarding a particular use should contact a supervisor for clarification.

3. AGO employees or volunteers may use AGO computers and other equipment to access the Internet provided the use conforms to WAC 292-110-010 and this policy. Use of the Internet shall also not be for a prohibited purpose under the Internet Services Use Policy. **Employees or volunteers should have no expectation of privacy in the use of these resources and should understand that the AGO reserves the right to monitor, and does monitor, Internet usage in appropriate circumstances.**

#### **D. Prohibited Uses**

The following personal private uses of state resources are prohibited:

- Any use for the purpose of conducting an outside business, private employment, or other activities conducted for financial gain;
- Any use for the purpose of supporting, promoting the interests of, or soliciting for an outside organization or group, including, but not limited to a private business or political party, or supporting, promoting the interests of, or soliciting for a nonprofit organization unless provided for by law or authorized by the Attorney General's Office pursuant to policy;
- Any use for the purpose of assisting a campaign for election of a person to an office or for the promotion of or opposition to a ballot proposition;
- Any use for the purpose of participating in or assisting in an effort to lobby the state legislature, or a state agency head;
- Any use that is otherwise prohibited by federal or state law, or office policy; or
- Illegal activity; or
- Any private use of any state property that has been removed from state facilities or other official duty station, even if there is no cost to the state.

#### **E. Permitted Types of Charitable Solicitations**

The Attorney General's Office encourages AGO staff to participate in charitable endeavors and authorizes some limited use of state resources for that purpose. Such participation can contribute to the overall morale and organizational effectiveness of the Office. However, the Office also recognizes that there should be controls on the manner and frequency of charitable solicitations of AGO staff, as too many charitable solicitations can be disruptive to the normal work of the office and some staff may be sensitive to too many pressures to contribute.

Due to the impact on the workplace of numerous solicitations, the State initiated the Combined Fund Drive (CFD) a number of years ago. The CFD was designed in part to channel charitable solicitations into one effort to avoid numerous solicitations of state employees for charitable purposes by a number of worthy organizations throughout the year. However, there has been a tradition of charitable giving in the AGO that goes beyond the CFD. Some of these charitable events not only benefit the recipients of the charity, but also promote agency effectiveness by providing social and other opportunities for AGO staff. Accordingly, the Office endorses the below listed types of events and authorizes limited use of state facilities or resources for them.

Planning and soliciting for these events and activities may be conducted during the work day so long as the planning and soliciting meets the criteria in section I.C above.

1. *Legal Services for the Needy.* Staff may solicit volunteers for pro bono legal work to be done consistent with the AGO Policy on Pro Bono Activities (III.12).
2. *Events or Activity for the Needy.* Divisions, other work groups, or groups of divisions sharing office locations may, with approval of the relevant division chief or chief administrative officer for the building, undertake events or activities to benefit the needy. These events can include food drives, "giving trees," bake sales, silent auctions, solicitations in conjunction with office social events, or lunches at which some modest donation of food or money is encouraged. In accordance with the guidance of the Executive Ethics Board, these must be conducted outside of office hours or at lunch or break times.
3. *Volunteer Work Parties.* With the approval of the division chief, or equivalent, divisions or other work groups may volunteer, or solicit volunteers, to provide labor or other services for a charitable purpose outside the regular work day. Examples could include restoring fish or wildlife habitat, cleaning areas adjacent to highways, assisting with a Habitat for Humanity project, or participating in a blood drive. (However, blood drives may also be organized and take place during the work day.) In limited circumstances, with the approval of the division chief, or equivalent, volunteer work parties may be undertaken during the work day, such as part of a team building exercise during a division retreat, or when the focus of the work party is closely related to the work of the division and would therefore have educational value that would benefit the state.
4. *Traditional Recurring Events Involving Large Segments of the Office.* There are a few events that, for historic or other reasons, have become traditional in the AGO and in which staff may participate without further approval. These include the Susan Komen Breast Cancer Awareness Day and the "Well Fed, Well Read" drive among state offices in the Olympia area.
5. *Solicitations to Assist Staff in Need.* Occasionally, AGO staff suffer an unforeseen illness or family tragedy. With approval of the division chief, or equivalent, members of a workgroup may solicit other members within that workgroup to donate money, food, clothing, or personal time to assist a co-worker. With the approval of the Chief of Staff, such solicitations may extend office-wide.
6. *Periodic Other Events.* On rare occasions, the Chief of Staff may approve other office-wide fundraising for special purposes. Any staff member wishing to coordinate such an event should submit a request for approval and justification to the Chief of Staff who will, prior to approval, consult with the Operations Committee. Examples in the past have included: a solicitation for the American Red Cross to benefit Hurricane Katrina victims, a march in support of victims of 9/11, and a special event to benefit Northwest Harvest. It is possible that there may be no more than one or two such special events per year.

Individual staff members may also wish to solicit contributions from coworkers, or sell coworkers something, to benefit local charitable purposes of a non-profit organization. Examples may include sales of Girl Scout cookies, candy bars to support the purchase of school equipment, or tickets to a school or community play, or pledges for an event such as the Crop Walk or a charitable "Bowl-a-Thon". Office resources, such as computer equipment, may not be

used for these purposes. The only office facilities that may be used are bulletin boards or table surfaces in break rooms, coffee rooms, or other common areas.

Managers and supervisors should never personally solicit employees who work under their supervision or over whom they have influence. Aside from the above approval requirement under this section, staff engaged in charitable solicitation should similarly avoid conveying any perception that the solicitation is supported or endorsed by supervisors or management. Staff should remember that those from whom they may seek contributions of time or money may not be able to give or may choose to give to other charities.

## II. RESPONSIBILITIES:

*All employees and volunteers* must be familiar with the parameters of this policy and related policies, and must use state resources accordingly.

*All supervisors* have authority to provide approval for limited personal use pursuant to Section I.C and must ensure that employees and volunteers are aware of this policy and ensure compliance to the extent possible.

*Division Chiefs or equivalents, Deputy Attorneys General, or the Chief of Staff* must approve use of state resources related to official state purposes, but which are not related to a requesting employee's or volunteer's own official duties, as well as those charitable solicitations regularly approved under sections I.E above.



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**APPROVED**  
**Executive Ethics Board**

Date: 1/8/10