



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Outside Activities

Q1: What is an Outside Activity?

A1: An Outside Activity is any employment, self-employment, business, or professional activity that generates more than \$5,000 annually; or service in an elective or appointive public office; or service as an officer or director of a corporate entity, that is not related to a State officer or employee's official State duties.

Q2: Who needs COELIG approval for an Outside Activity?

A2: If your agency has designated you as a Policymaker, then you must obtain approval from COELIG after receiving your agency's approval of the Outside Activity.

Q2: What are some specific examples of Outside Activities?

Some common Outside Activities include – but are not limited to:

- serving as an instructor or adjunct faculty for a college or community college;
- working in a retail store;
- working as a car share driver;
- owning investment real estate through a limited liability company or corporation;
- operating a professional private practice;
- serving as a consultant;
- serving as an officer or director of a corporate entity; and
- serving as a member of a town board, county legislature, or other elective or appointive public body.

Q3: Does a side business operated outside of official work hours with no connection to the State meet the definition of an Outside Activity?

A3: Yes, even operating an unregistered business is an Outside Activity.

Q4: Should I inform my agency about my Outside Activity?

A4: Yes, you should inform your supervisor and your agency's Ethics Officer if you are engaged in an Outside Activity. Each agency can have its own policies and procedures for notification and approval of Outside Activities that may be stricter than COELIG's regulations. For example, an agency can require ALL employees to seek approval for an Outside Activity or have a broader definition of what makes an Outside Activity reportable.

Q5: What types of specific Outside Activities require COELIG approval?

A5: A policymaker must first obtain their agency's approval, and then COELIG's approval for:

- any employment or business venture that generates or is expected to generate more than \$5,000 annually;
- serving in a public office, whether elective or appointive;
- serving as a director or officer of a for-profit entity, regardless of compensation; and
- serving as a director or officer of a not-for-profit entity, if getting paid for the service.

Q6: Can you use your State email address for personal business?

A6: No, you cannot use any State property or State resources, including State email addresses or computer servers, for any non-State related activity.

Q7: Do I need approval for volunteer work?

A7: Unpaid volunteer work generally does not require COELIG's approval but it should be discussed with your agency supervisor and Ethics Officer to confirm there are no conflicts of interest with your State job.

Q8: Can I have more than one Outside Activity?

A8: You are permitted to have more than one Outside Activity, but your commitment to your Outside Activities must not interfere with the performance of your State duties. Your agency or COELIG can deny approval for an Outside Activity if it is deemed to present a "conflict of commitment" with your State job.

Q9: What should I do if I am interested in running for public office?

A9: If you anticipate that you will be running for, and serving in, a public office, you must inform your agency's Ethics Officer to discuss Outside Activity approval and the parameters for campaigning as a State employee.

Q10: When am I permitted to engage in an Outside Activity?

A10: An Outside Activity may only occur outside of your State work hours. An employee's official work hours are determined by their agency.

Q11: Where do the rules governing Outside Activities come from?

A11: [The regulations governing Outside Activities are available on the Commission's website.](#)

Additional Resources:

- Relevant Outside Activity Advisory Opinions: [00-03](#), [99-12](#), [98-16](#), [97-28](#), [93-14](#), [92-23](#), [91-07](#)
- [Relevant Outside Activity Regulations: TITLE 19 NYCRR PART 932](#)
- [Find my Ethics Officer](#)