

## **Department of the Public Advocate Supplementary Ethics Code**

The New Jersey Conflicts of Interest Law (N.J.S.A. 52:13D-12 et seq.) establishes specific standards of conduct for State employees and officers. Pursuant to the Law, the State Ethics Commission has issued a Uniform Ethics Code to govern and guide the conduct of State employees and officers of agencies within the Executive Branch of State Government. The Uniform Ethics Code shall serve as the primary code of ethics for the Department of the Public Advocate (“Department”). Additionally, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 52:13D-23, the Department adopts this supplement to the Uniform Ethics Code to address particular areas of concern with regard to governing the conduct of the Department’s employees and officers.

### Political Activities

All employees functioning as Public Advocate, Assistant Public Advocate, Division Director, Deputy Director, Director of Communications, Director of Outreach, Chief of Staff and Deputy Chief of Staff shall refrain from the following activities:

1. Be a candidate for or hold any elected or appointed partisan public or political party office at the municipal, county or State level or actively participate or assist in any campaign for these offices, including, but not limited to, planning, hosting, being a speaker at, or otherwise actively participating in events relating to such campaigns. This does not preclude mere attendance at an event in one’s private capacity.
2. Directly or indirectly solicit, receive, collect, handle, disburse or account for funds for a partisan political purpose. This does not preclude campaign contributions made in the employee’s private capacity.
3. Organize or reorganize a political party organization or political club or be a candidate for or serve as an officer or member of any partisan political committee.
4. Engage in any activity, the primary purpose of which is to affect the election to public office or political party office of specific candidates or of the candidates of a particular political party in general, that calls attention to or in any way relies on his or her status as Public Advocate, Assistant Public Advocate, Division Director, Deputy Director, Director of Communication, Director of Outreach, Chief of Staff or Deputy Chief of Staff.
5. Publicly endorse or speak on behalf of or against the election to public office or political party office of specific candidates or of the candidates of a particular political party in general.

### Private Practice of Law by Attorneys

All attorneys employed by the Department are prohibited from the private practice of law except with the written approval of the Public Advocate. Approval may be granted: where the representation does not involve an appearance in an adversarial proceeding; where the attorney is not receiving any fee for the services; and, where there is no significant possibility that a conflict of interest with the attorney's duties in the Department will arise. Attorneys who are themselves parties in adversarial proceedings may appear pro se after engaging in the appropriate recusals.

### Division of Rate Counsel Special Provisions

No employee of the Division of Rate Counsel, whether classified, unclassified, temporary or permanent, shall have any interest in or any dealings or transactions in any capacity with any public utility or any industry regulated by the Board of Public Utilities except in the strict performance of their duties. Nothing in this section shall preclude dealing or transacting business with any such public utility or regulated company in connection with personal services involving the person or property of such employees.

No employee of the Division of Rate Counsel shall hold securities in any public utility as defined in N.J.S.A. 48:2-13, any cable television company, or in any industry operating in New Jersey over which the Board of Public Utilities may subsequently be granted regulatory jurisdiction. Employees of the Division of Rate Counsel must either divest themselves of such interest, stock or securities or place any such stock or securities in a blind trust within 60 days after commencing employment. The blind trust shall comply with the provisions of Executive Order 1 (2006), Section II, Blind Trusts. The prohibitions stated above apply equally to the employee and spouse of the employee. No spouse or member of the immediate family of a Division employee shall act as a trustee under any blind trust agreement permitted by the Ethics Code.

No employee of the Division of Rate Counsel shall appear before the Board of Public Utilities in a representative capacity or as an expert witness on behalf of other parties at any time within six months after severing their associations with the Division. Additionally, no employee shall ever appear in any proceeding in which they took an active part when associated with the Division of Rate Counsel.