



CITY OF CHICAGO



BOARD OF ETHICS

THE 10 MOST IMPORTANT POINTS TO KNOW ABOUT OFFICIAL VERSUS PERSONAL/POLITICAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS



1. Personal and political/campaign websites and social media accounts should include a prominent statement that they: i) are personal or political sites; ii) do not represent the official views of the City; and, iii) are not funded or maintained with City resources.
2. Similarly, City Council members or other elected officials should state prominently on any official City social media account that it is an official City account, to distinguish it from personal and political accounts.
3. The City seal *may not* be used on personal or political sites.
4. Official accounts or sites *may not* contain any prohibited political content (for example, candidate endorsements, links to campaign websites, donate buttons, or other political content, such as completed sample ballots or information regarding political fundraising events).
5. Political accounts or sites *may* include electioneering content such as endorsements, political advertisements and links for campaign donations. They may also identify an alderperson as an alderperson and may include factual statements about the alderperson's accomplishments in office, including photographs, **BUT *may not*** contain images or likenesses of the official City seal.
6. Followers *cannot* be blocked from official social media accounts unless their comments are obscene, profane, racist, libelous or defamatory, or are commercial and posted to sell goods and services. Followers who post critical comments on official accounts have First Amendment protections and those comments should not be deleted, nor should the followers be blocked except for the reasons stated above.
7. Elected officials *may* block/defriend *anyone* for *any* reason from a personal or non-official social media account.
8. A personal/political page can inadvertently turn into an official page if Ward or other City-services-related information is posted to it, meaning that critics could no longer be blocked from such pages. However, limited footage from City Council meetings may be posted on personal or political pages, if in the context of personal or political commentary.
9. Elected officials may create an official Facebook page that is purely informational and does not enable comments from anyone—*but that means anyone*.
10. Social media questions and the advice we provide are highly fact specific. We strongly encourage any City employee or official to contact us with questions as to what can - and cannot - be posted on each type of social media account.