

Appropriate Use of State Resources

Veronica is a long-time UCHC employee who, to supplement her income, recently became a local distributor of gourmet cookware. She advertises through her own website and by circulating brochures. In addition, she maintains regular email contact with her customers. Her products are gaining in popularity since she has started to pass out brochures at work and to get the word out via email to other UCHC employees. During slower work times she updates her website and catches up on customer emails using her UCHC computer. Since it is convenient for UCHC employees and much easier for others to reach her at work during the week, she provides her UCHC email and phone extension as part of her contact information.

Is this permitted under the State Code of Ethics and UCHC policy? What should Veronica take into consideration?

There are many factors to consider in this scenario. First, the State Code of Ethics prohibits state employees from using their positions for any type of personal financial gain. So, although it is fine for Veronica to have a job or business outside of her UCHC responsibilities, she may not use her state position in any way to promote that business or to solicit customers. This means that she may not use work time or UCHC resources such as computers, phones, fax machines, copiers, supplies, or email to conduct her outside business. In addition, Veronica may not use her UCHC phone number or email address in her business contact information.

Additionally, it is important to remember that, per UCHC's [Rules of Conduct](#) and [Information Technology Computer/Electronic Resource Use Policy](#), UCHC equipment and resources may be used **only** for work-related purposes and not for any personal reasons.

So, what is permitted?

The State Code of Ethics does allow employees to offer items for sale at work on an **infrequent, informal** basis as long as it does not involve state time or resources and anyone in a position of authority does not coerce those in his or her chain of command to make purchases. For instance, it is OK to occasionally leave a catalog in a common area for others to peruse **on their own time**. However, regular use of state property or any use of state equipment to advertise or promote an outside business is not permitted.

Remember to also refer to your department's policy which may be stricter than the State Code of Ethics and to check with your supervisor before distributing any information that is non-work related.

For questions or to discuss a specific situation, please contact Ginny Pack, UCHC Ethics Liaison, at (860) 679-1280 or pack@nso1.uchc.edu.