

FPPC Complaint

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Your Contact Information:

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Respondent Information:

Individual

Position/Office Held (if applicable): Paid Officer of Partnerships to Uplift Communities
Jurisdiction (if applicable): Charter School
First Name: Ref
Last Name: Rodriguez
Address:
Email: ref@refrodriguez.com
Phone Number:

Violation Type: Conflict of Interest

Violation Code Section: General Rule 87100

Explanation of Violation: Ref Rodriguez participated in several transactions in his official capacity which he had a personal financial interest.

It appears Ref Rodriguez was the paid President/CEO of Partners for Developing Futures, a Delaware non-profit corporation (PDF), during the relevant periods described here, as indicated in its 2011 and 2012 tax returns, Form 990-PF, filed by PDF. (PDF 2011 and 2012 990-PF) It is believed that PDF did not file tax returns for 2013, 2014, and 2015. However, both the 2013 and 2015 Statements of Information filed by PDF with the California Secretary of State still listed Ref Rodriguez as the CEO. (May 6, 2013, Filed Statement of Information for PDF; February 11, 2015, Filed Statement of Information for PDF)

Ref Rodriguez was also a founder of Partnerships to Uplift Communities (PUC) charter schools, which operate under Partnerships to Uplift Communities Los Angeles, Partnerships to Uplift Communities Lake View Terrace, and Partnerships to Uplift Communities Valley, each a

California nonprofit public benefit corporation. PUC employed Ref Rodriguez in varying capacities from 2008 through 2015. (Employment History of Ref Rodriguez with PUC) Specifically, during 2014, Ref Rodriguez was the paid treasurer of the PUC nonprofit corporations. (Employment History of Ref Rodriguez with PUC)

During 2014, it appears Ref Rodriguez requested and/or arranged, on behalf of PDF, and then authorized and signed multiple checks on behalf of PUC, transferring funds to PDF. (May 30, 2014, PUC Schools Fundraising Check Request Form and Related Records; June 2, 2014, PUC Schools AP Check Request Form and Related Records; June 3, 2014, PUC Schools Fundraising Check Request Forms and Related Records; October 3, 2014, Checks from PUC to PDF) The transfers were ostensibly for “reimbursement” of consulting services related to a program to develop, train, and mentor public school leaders, called the LEAD Program under an agreement between PDF and PUC. (MOU between PDF and PUC, Development and Piloting Leadership for Excellence, Accountability and Diversity)

Although the agreement called for the creation and implementation of a leadership development program beginning in 2012, it is believed that the agreement was not presented to PUC or executed until 2014. The amounts paid by PUC and PUC charter schools to PDF totaled approximately \$265,629.86. (May 30, 2014, PUC Schools Fundraising Check Request Form and Related Records; June 2, 2014, PUC Schools AP Check Request Form and Related Records; June 3, 2014, PUC Schools Fundraising Check Request Forms and Related Records; October 3, 2014, Checks from PUC to PDF)

Secondly, during early 2014, Ref Rodriguez also signed checks transferring PUC or PUC charter school funds to Better 4 You Fundraising, a California corporation. (March 10, 2014, Check from CALS Charter Middle School to Better 4 You Fundraising; May 15, 2014, Check from PUC to Better 4 You Fundraising) It now appears Ref Rodriguez has, and may have had, a financial interest in Better 4 You Fundraising based on his November 6, 2014, Form 700, filed when he took office on the Los Angeles Unified School District school board. If he had an interest in Better 4 You Fundraising in 2014, PUC was not aware of it. These amounts totaled approximately \$20,400.00. (March 10, 2014, Check from CALS Charter Middle School to Better 4 You Fundraising; May 15, 2014, Check from PUC to Better 4 You Fundraising)

An agreement was also entered between LAUSD and PUC/PDF to provide LAUSD services related to the LEAD Program. (December 5, 2014, Agreement for Professional Services between LAUSD, PDF, and PUC) It is believed LAUSD issued a check in an approximate amount of \$27,000.00 to PUC.. The agreement was signed by Ref Rodriguez on behalf of both PUC and PDF. (December 5, 2014 Agreement for Professional Services between LAUSD, PDF, and PUC)

Witness First Name: Jacqueline

Witness Last Name: Elliot

Street Address: PUC Schools Home Office, 1405 North San Fernando Blvd., Suite 303

City: Burbank

State: CA

Zip: 91504

Phone: (818) 559-7699

Email: j.elliott@pucschools.org

Information this Witness Can Provide: Jacqueline Elliot is a co-founder of the PUC organization and may have more records/information related to the transactions.

Witness First Name: Lisa

Witness Last Name: Tovar

Street Address: PUC Schools Home Office, 1405 North San Fernando Blvd., Suite 303

City: Burbank

State: CA

Zip: 91504

Phone: (818) 559-7699

Email: l.tovar@pucschools.org

Information this Witness Can Provide: Lisa Tovar may have more records/information related to the transactions.