

## **FROM THE DESK OF VILLAGE CLERK VIVIAN PAYNE**

The Village of Lansing frequently receives questions regarding door-to-door solicitors. To protect yourself from fraudulent solicitation practices and privacy invasion, please review the below 'Frequently Asked Questions' and tips for dealing with door-to-door solicitors.

### **Does the Village regulate door-to-door solicitors?**

Yes, solicitors within the Village of Lansing must apply for and be approved for a permit to solicit in the Village. Solicitors must also adhere to specific guidelines and rules regulating door-to-door solicitation. Children under the age of 18 that are soliciting on behalf of a youth organization such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Little League or church youth organizations do not require a permit.

### **Do solicitors need to identify themselves?**

Yes, per Village Code, all solicitors must have a Village of Lansing solicitor's badge visible on their outer garment at all times when they are engaged in soliciting within the Village. Do not be afraid to ask a solicitor for their badge. If a solicitor does not display or cannot produce a solicitor's badge, please report them to the Village of Lansing Police Department by calling (708) 895-7150.

### **When is a door-to-door solicitor allowed to ring my doorbell?**

Solicitations are only permitted between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday. No soliciting is permitted on a Sunday or any state or federal holiday.

### **What if I do not want solicitors to ring my doorbell?**

Display a notice approximately 3" x 4" in size containing the words "No Solicitors" or words of similar meaning. Notices are available to Lansing residents free of charge from the Village Clerk's office.

### **Why can't the Village ban door-to-door solicitors?**

Door-to-door solicitor's rights are protected by the First Amendment and the U.S. Constitution, therefore the Village is prohibited from banning door-to-door sales. The Village may only regulate certain aspects of these activities, and cannot outright prohibit them. Homeowners and occupants ultimately do have the right to determine whether solicitors shall or shall not be invited to their residences or property.

### **The person that came to my door was not selling anything. Does the Village regulate door-to-door advocacy?**

The Village does not regulate or license door-to-door advocacy of a position or cause, with or without distribution of literature. If someone is engaging in simply expressing ideas for charitable, benevolent, philanthropic, patriotic, not-for-profit, religious or political purposes, they are not required to be licensed so long as they are not seeking donations.

### **TIPS TO REMEMBER WHEN DEALING WITH DOOR-TO-DOOR SOLICITORS**

- If you do not want to engage with the solicitor, say "no thank you" through the door and walk away.
- Solicitors must immediately and peacefully depart the premises when requested by the owner, resident or occupant. If the solicitor refuses or does not go away peacefully after you ask – call 911 for assistance.
- Solicitors should never claim that they represent or are acting on behalf of the Village of Lansing or any of its departments or employees.
- Licenses to solicit cannot be used or represented in any way as an endorsement by the Village of Lansing.
- Follow identity theft prevention guidelines by NEVER giving your social security number, credit card information, checks or other personal information to anyone that you cannot verify legitimately represents an organization or charity.
- Protect yourself and your neighbors by reporting suspicious solicitors or those that engage in aggressive or threatening tactics. Solicitors are required to conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner and must not use undue influence or coercion at any time.
- Every resident has the right to feel secure in their own home. Should you ever feel threatened or unsafe based upon the behavior of a solicitor or anyone at your door, call the police immediately.

For a list of currently licensed solicitors in the Village of Lansing, please visit the Clerk's page of our website: [www.villageoflansing.org](http://www.villageoflansing.org)

NOTE: The Village has recently received several complaints related to energy supply solicitors. Please note that through electric aggregation, the Village previously had a contract with Verde Electric, however that contract expired back in July 2014 and all residents that participated in the aggregation program were switched back to the ComEd supply rate. Residents have the option to switch electric suppliers on their own, however you should never release your account number to a solicitor under any circumstance unless you decide to move to that supplier. Quite often these solicitors come to your door claiming to be from ComEd and they ask to see a copy of your most recent bill, but they are actually employed by marketing companies or another electric company. Please make sure to ask these solicitors not only for their Village permit ID, but also the credentials for the company they are working for. Residents are encouraged to call Village Clerk Vivian Payne with any questions or to file a complaint if they feel that a solicitor has violated one of the above regulations. It is important to make note of the solicitors first and last name as well as the company they are representing.