

A WORD ABOUT ETHICS

GIFTS

GIFTS FROM OUTSIDE SOURCES

What gifts are not acceptable?

- An employee may not accept a gift:
 - that is offered because of the employee's Government position, or
 - from someone:
 - with business (or seeking business) before the Department,
 - regulated by the Department, or
 - with interests that could be affected by performance of the employee's duties*unless acceptance is permitted under exceptions in ethics gift regulations.*

What gifts are acceptable?

- Exceptions in the gift rules permit employees to accept:
 - gifts from relatives and friends that are based on a personal relationship,
 - gifts of \$20 or less (if not in cash and limited to \$50 per year from the same donor),* and
 - invitations to "widely-attended" events *if a supervisor signs a form approving based on the benefit to the agency,** and
 - gifts from a foreign government.

** exception not applicable if the gift is to a political appointee from a lobbyist or lobbying organization (other than a 501(c)(3) or media company)*

GIFTS BETWEEN EMPLOYEES

Are there any limits on gifts between employees?

- Yes. An employee may not give a gift to a supervisor or accept a gift from a subordinate, unless the gift is:
 - \$10 or less (on an occasional basis);
 - for a major life event, such as a wedding, birth of a child, or retirement;
 - food shared in the office; or
 - personal hospitality at one's home or a gift to a host or hostess (of appropriate value).

May an employee give a gift to a subordinate?

- Yes. Ethics rules do not restrict gifts from supervisors to subordinates.

GIFTS TO THE GOVERNMENT

May an employee accept a gift on behalf of the employee's agency?

- Yes, *provided that* the employee has authority to accept such gifts, it supports agency activities, acceptance will not create an appearance of loss of impartiality, and, if it is a travel gift, it was not solicited.

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