

GIFTS

2021

A WORD ABOUT ETHICS

2021

GIFTS FROM OUTSIDE SOURCES

What gifts may I not accept?

- You may not accept a gift:
 - that is offered because of your 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 your duties
- unless acceptance is permitted under exceptions in ethics gift regulations (see below).

What gifts are acceptable?

- Exceptions in the gift rules permit you to accept:
 - gifts from relatives and friends,
 - gifts of \$20 or less (if not in cash and limited to \$50 per year from the same donor) and agency-related or profession-related books of \$100 or less,*
 - invitations to “widely-attended” gatherings *if a supervisor approves in writing based on an agency benefit,** and
 - gifts from a foreign government of \$415 or less (above that amount you can accept for the U.S. Government).
- * *You may not use this exception if: (1) you are a political appointee and (2) the gift is from a lobbyist or lobbying organization that is not a media company or 501(c)(3) organization.*

GIFTS BETWEEN EMPLOYEES

Are there any limits on gifts between employees?

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

May I give a gift to a subordinate?

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

GIFTS TO THE GOVERNMENT

May I accept a gift on behalf of my agency?

- Yes, if you have authority to accept gifts; the gift supports agency activities; acceptance will not create an appearance of loss of impartiality; and, if a travel gift, it was not solicited.
- Generally, a gift is not acceptable if from an agency contractor, grantee, or licensee or from someone in an industry sector regulated by the agency.