

## A Word About Ethics GIFTS

### 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 dutiesunless acceptance is permitted under exceptions in ethics gift regulations.

#### 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- 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 \$390 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 registered lobbying 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 is:
  - \$10 or less (on an occasional basis);
  - for a major life event, such as a wedding, birth or adoption 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 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, provided that you have authority to accept such 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.

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JULY 20, 2017