INVITATIONS AND GIFTS FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR

May I accept an Invitation to a holiday party?
• Yes, provided that the invitation is:
  - based on a personal relationship,
  - $20 or less in value,* or
  - to an event attended by a large range of private sector persons and your supervisor
    approves as benefitting the agency (using a form available from the Ethics Law and
    Programs Division).*

* except that you may not accept such an invitation if you are a political appointee and the
  invitation is from a lobbyist or from a lobbying organization that is not a 501(c)(3)
  organization or a media company

Are there limits on holiday gifts I may accept?
• Yes; holiday gifts are no different than gifts offered at other times. They may not be
  accepted if given because of your Government position or from someone with interests
  before Commerce, unless an exception applies, such as for:
  - gifts based on a personal relationship or
  - gifts worth $20 or less (and, if you are a political appointee, it is not from a lobbying
    organization).

GIFTS BETWEEN EMPLOYEES

May I exchange gifts with co-workers?
• Yes, if all persons are participating voluntarily. You may exchange gifts, but the value should
  be limited to no more than $10 if subordinates will be exchanging gifts with supervisors. A
  gift to a supervisor must be $10 or less (meaning the value of the gift, not of each
  employee’s contribution).

May contract workers participate in office parties and gift exchanges?
• Yes. They may not be asked for a party contribution but may voluntarily pay for their per
  person costs. You may give a gift to a contractor worker but may only accept gifts totaling
  $20 or less from all workers of the same contractor.

May employees collect money for an office holiday party?
• Yes, but participation must be voluntary—no one may be coerced. Those attending may be
  required to pay a reasonable set amount for the per person costs. Supervisors should not
  request funds and may not require participation.

Ethics Office – Office of General Counsel – U.S. Department of Commerce