

# GIFTS

## ETHICS AT A GLANCE

Personal Gifts to Employees – Commerce employees generally cannot accept a gift from someone who has interests in matters before the Department or if offered because of the employee’s Federal position or, if a supervisor, from a subordinate, but some exceptions apply.

GIFTS FROM SOMEONE WITH INTERESTS BEFORE COMMERCE		GIFTS FROM SUBORDINATES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- plaque or other item of little intrinsic value</li> <li>- a discount for all Federal employees</li> <li>- gift from a friend or relative</li> <li>- meal in connection with a speaking engagement</li> <li>- social invitations if offered because of your Government position from someone with no matters before Commerce</li> <li>- gift from a foreign government of \$375 or less (if more than \$375, can be accepted on behalf of the U.S. Government)</li> </ul>	<p><b>OK TO ACCEPT</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- gift of \$10 or less</li> <li>- gift for a major life event (wedding, serious illness, new child, etc.)</li> <li>- personal hospitality at a home</li> <li>- host/hostess gift</li> <li>- food shared in the office</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- gift of \$20 or less</li> <li>- a public service award (with approval from an ethics official)</li> <li>- gift based on an outside business</li> <li>- invitation to a “widely-attended gathering” (with supervisor’s approval)</li> <li>- business meals overseas (if a non-U.S. citizen is present and less than <i>per diem</i>)</li> </ul>	<p><b>OK TO ACCEPT IF <u>NOT TO A POLITICAL APPOINTEE FROM A LOBBYIST*</u></b></p>	<p><i>* but OK to accept from a lobbying organization that is a 501(c)(3) organization or a media company</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a bribe</li> <li>- payment for performing Federal duties (unless to a special Government employee)</li> <li>- a gift that was solicited</li> </ul>	<p><b>NEVER OK TO ACCEPT</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- payment for performing Federal duties</li> <li>- a loan or on-going financial dealing</li> </ul>

Gifts to Commerce – Gifts to an agency may be accepted if they support agency activities and acceptance is will not create an appearance problem (not from a contractor, grantee, licensee, regulated entity, or with controversial matters pending). Travel gifts cannot be solicited.

**Ethics Law and Programs Division – Office of General Counsel –Department of Commerce**  
 202-482-5384 – [ethicsdivision@doc.gov](mailto:ethicsdivision@doc.gov) – [www.commerce.gov/ethics](http://www.commerce.gov/ethics)  
 January 4, 2016