

## NON-FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT AND OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

A WORD  
ABOUT  
ETHICS

### Are there any limits on my activities or non-Federal employment?

- Yes. You can engage in outside work or activities, but only if they do not conflict with your Government duties. An activity is not allowed if it:
  - is barred by law (such as work for a foreign government or representing others before Federal agencies);
  - will require disqualification from important Government duties; or
  - creates the appearance of using your public office for private gain.
- If you are a political appointee, you also cannot be a registered lobbyist and (if a Presidential appointee or SES) are subject to limits on outside earned income and work or affiliation with firms with fiduciary relationships.

### When am I disqualified from participating in Federal duties because of an outside activity?

- You must disqualify yourself from working on any agency matter:
  - that would affect the financial interests of an outside employer or an organization in which you serve as an officer or director or
  - in which a client, a recent former employer or client, or an organization in which you are active, is a party (or represents a party).

### Are there restrictions on outside teaching, speaking, and writing?

- Yes. You cannot receive any payment (except travel reimbursement) for teaching, speaking, or writing related to your Government duties, including if:
  - the activity was part of official Government duties,
  - the payment is from someone who could be affected by performance of the employee's duties, or
  - the subject matter of the teaching, speaking, or writing concerns the programs or operations of the Department of Commerce.
- If you are a political appointee who is in the SES or a Presidential appointee, you also cannot receive payments (including travel reimbursement) if the topic concerns the general subject area of a component of the Department of Commerce; you must also receive approval from an ethics official.

### Are there any exceptions to the rules on outside teaching?

- Yes; you may be paid for teaching a course that is part of a school's regular curriculum, even if related to official duties. However, the general rules on incompatible outside employment apply.

Ethics Law and Programs Division – Office of the General Counsel – United States  
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