

## A Word About Ethics

### NON-FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT AND OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

#### ARE THERE ANY LIMITS ON MY ACTIVITIES OR NON-FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT?

- Yes. You may 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 may not 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 may not 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 may not 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  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

202-482-5384 – [ETHICSDIVISION@DOC.GOV](mailto:ETHICSDIVISION@DOC.GOV) – [WWW.COMMERCE.GOV/ETHICS](http://WWW.COMMERCE.GOV/ETHICS)

JANUARY 11, 2017