

TOP 10 ETHICS RULES FOR LOCALLY ENGAGED STAFF OF THE U.S. COMMERCIAL SERVICE



1. You, your spouse, or a family member can serve as an officer, director, or trustee of a private organization in your personal capacities only after receiving approval from the Chief of Mission and an ethics official.
2. You can have outside employment in your country of assignment only if the employment does not conflict with your Commercial Service position and the Chief of Mission approves.
3. You can engage in political activities deriving from your non-U.S. citizenship pertaining to elections in your country of assignment but you cannot engage in any political activity while on Government premises or using Government resources and you cannot engage in fund-raising for a United States election.
4. You can accept gifts from a foreign government, but any gift over US\$375 becomes the property of the United States Government.
5. You cannot accept gifts greater than US\$20 in value from anyone (other than a foreign government) with interests before Commerce, except invitations to (1) "widely-attended" events (with approval) or (2) business meals overseas (if there is a citizen from the locality present and the value is less than the city's *per diem*).
6. You cannot give a gift to a supervisor (or accept a gift from a subordinate) unless it is for a significant, infrequently occurring occasion (such as a wedding or recovery from a serious illness) or is of minimal value (US\$10 or less).
7. You can solicit and accept gifts for U.S. Government programs provided that: (1) you do not solicit travel gifts, (2) you do not accept gifts from ITA contractors, grantees, or entities with interests in controversial matters before ITA, and (3) solicitations are conducted fairly and donors do not receive special benefits.
8. You cannot work on any matter affecting your personal financial interests (or those of your spouse or minor children), unless you obtain a conflict of interest waiver (or unless the interest is in U.S. stocks or bonds of minimal value (US\$15,000 or less.))
9. You cannot work on a matter in which one of the parties is (or is represented by) a recent (within 1 year) former employer or client, your parent's or spouse's employer, or an entity in which you are active, unless you receive prior approval.
10. You can serve as an officer or director of, or liaison to, a non-Governmental organization as part of your agency duties with management approval if it serves an agency mission.

Prepared by the Ethics Law and Programs Division, Office of the General Counsel, United States Department of Commerce – 202-482-5384 – ethicsdivision@doc.gov – January 4, 2016