Ethics in Public Service

Washington State University 9/28/18

What is Ethics in Public Service?

Doing the right thing...
Using resources correctly
Morals...principles...

• Understand basic ethical standards
• Know where to find out more
• Identify violations

OBJECTIVES

What is Ethics in Public Service?

Doing the right thing... Using resources correctly Morals...principles...

• Code as set forth in the law
Executive Ethics Board

Interpret Ethics Act
Publish Advisory Opinions
Provide Training
Adjudicate complaints

Board jurisdiction and Case Sanctions

Complaints and Investigations
- Public
- Agency
- Whistleblower Investigations
- Co-worker
What causes unethical behavior?

- Lack of Training and Understanding of the law.

Conflicts of interest involve the concepts of Benefit and Bias.

Abuse of Time has become an issue!

TRENDS

Doing the Right Thing.
Test Your Knowledge
You know that your agency will be surplussing some computer equipment next month. You and a friend run a small business and your friend asked that you let him know when the equipment is to be surplussed and available for bid. The general public will be informed of the surplused property next week given them only two days to determine if they want to bid on the property. You have lunch with your friend and business partner today and give him the list of equipment. **Is this a violation?**

Test Your Knowledge
You are a Professor in the Mechanical Engineering Department at WSU. You also own a automotive repair shop. During the summer, your auto repair business gets very busy and you need to hire extra help to get the work done. Several students from your current summer class want to work part-time for you. **Can you hire your students?**

Conflicts of Interest
You cannot:

◦ Have direct or indirect financial interest
◦ Engage in a business or transaction or professional activity
◦ Incur any obligation

With anyone you regulate or contract with
Types of Conflict

Private business transactions
Volunteer activities
Professional conflicts

Financial interest in a transaction

You cannot:
◦ Have direct or indirect financial interest
◦ Engage in a business or transaction or professional activity
◦ Incur any obligation

With anyone you regulate or contract with

How to handle a conflict

Abstain
Disclose
Procedures
Screening Memo
Confidential information
Personal Information
Banking accounting #’s
Investigative Records
Trade Secrets
Test/interview questions

Use of State Resources
RCW 42.52.160(1) – Use of persons, money, or property for private gain, states:
No state officer or state employee may employ or use any person, money, or property under the officer’s or employee’s official control or direction, or in his or her official custody, for the private benefit or gain of the officer, employee, or another.

Test Your Knowledge
One of your employees sells Pampered Chief products on the side to coworker. The employee hands out catalogues in the work place, and takes and distributes orders during the lunch hour and during break times.
Is this a violation?
Test Your Knowledge
You are a Professor in the Mechanical Engineering Department. You also own an automotive repair shop. During the course of your workday you log on to your repair shop's website and respond to a few of your customers' complaints. The response only takes a few minutes of time and does not interfere with the normal performance of your job.
Is this an ethics violation?

What exactly is a “Private Benefit or Gain”? ...

- Can range from avoiding a cost or expense by the use of resources to support your outside business or paying a discounted government rate for a personal phone call.
- There are some uses that do not appear to have a cost but may result in private benefit or gain.

- Any use occurs infrequently
- Any use is brief
- No interference with official duties
- Little or no cost to the state
- Not done to support an outside organization or a private business
- Does not support an outside organization
- Does not compromise the security or integrity of state property, information, or software.
No use for political campaigns or lobbying

Test Your Knowledge

You work in the Provost office and have decided to run for a local office. During your lunch break at work, you send your work friends a quick e-mail to announce your candidacy and to let them know how they can help you. You only send three e-mails and none of them talk about the specific political issues.

Would this be a violation?
How do you receive a special privilege?

Discount Criteria

• Broad-based
• Occupational group
• Employee group

Can be anything of economical value, i.e., Gift, Gratuity, or Favor
Are you a “Section 4” employee?

- Are you employed by a regulatory agency or an agency that seeks to acquire goods or services?
- Does your agency regulate or contract with the person giving the gift?
- Did you participate in the regulatory or contractual matters with that person?

Section 4 employees can ONLY accept:

- Flowers
- Travel expenses
- Food & beverages

Section 4 employees may NOT accept:

- Expenses
- Gifts
$50 Rule

EXCEPTIONS

Tokens of appreciation, plaques and items.

What do I do?

- Do not accept the gift
- Return to Sender
- Donate to Charity
- Contact ethics advisor

Compensation for official duties
Stop and think

Will using the [redacted] either add costs or other disadvantages to the state?

Questions