

## Office of Government Ethics

## § 2635.101

- 2635.103 Applicability to members of the uniformed services.
- 2635.104 Applicability to employees on detail.
- 2635.105 Supplemental agency regulations.
- 2635.106 Disciplinary and corrective action.
- 2635.107 Ethics advice.

### Subpart B—Gifts From Outside Sources

- 2635.201 Overview.
- 2635.202 General standards.
- 2635.203 Definitions.
- 2635.204 Exceptions.
- 2635.205 Proper disposition of prohibited gifts.

### Subpart C—Gifts Between Employees

- 2635.301 Overview.
- 2635.302 General standards.
- 2635.303 Definitions.
- 2635.304 Exceptions.

### Subpart D—Conflicting Financial Interests

- 2635.401 Overview.
- 2635.402 Disqualifying financial interests.
- 2635.403 Prohibited financial interests.

### Subpart E—Impartiality in Performing Official Duties

- 2635.501 Overview.
- 2635.502 Personal and business relationships.
- 2635.503 Extraordinary payments from former employers.

### Subpart F—Seeking Other Employment

- 2635.601 Overview.
- 2635.602 Applicability and related considerations.
- 2635.603 Definitions.
- 2635.604 Disqualification while seeking employment.
- 2635.605 Waiver or authorization permitting participation while seeking employment.
- 2635.606 Disqualification based on an arrangement concerning prospective employment or otherwise after negotiations.

### Subpart G—Misuse of Position

- 2635.701 Overview.
- 2635.702 Use of public office for private gain.
- 2635.703 Use of nonpublic information.
- 2635.704 Use of Government property.
- 2635.705 Use of official time.

### Subpart H—Outside Activities

- 2635.801 Overview.
- 2635.802 Conflicting outside employment and activities.
- 2635.803 Prior approval for outside employment and activities.

- 2635.804 Outside earned income limitations applicable to certain Presidential appointees and other noncareer employees.
- 2635.805 Service as an expert witness.
- 2635.806 Participation in professional associations. [Reserved]
- 2635.807 Teaching, speaking and writing.
- 2635.808 Fundraising activities.
- 2635.809 Just financial obligations.

### Subpart I—Related Statutory Authorities

- 2635.901 General.
- 2635.902 Related statutes.

AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 7301, 7351, 7353; 5 U.S.C. App. (Ethics in Government Act of 1978); E.O. 12674, 54 FR 15159, 3 CFR, 1989 Comp., p. 215, as modified by E.O. 12731, 55 FR 42547, 3 CFR, 1990 Comp., p. 306.

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## Subpart A—General Provisions

### § 2635.101 Basic obligation of public service.

(a) *Public service is a public trust.* Each employee has a responsibility to the United States Government and its citizens to place loyalty to the Constitution, laws and ethical principles above private gain. To ensure that every citizen can have complete confidence in the integrity of the Federal Government, each employee shall respect and adhere to the principles of ethical conduct set forth in this section, as well as the implementing standards contained in this part and in supplemental agency regulations.

(b) *General principles.* The following general principles apply to every employee and may form the basis for the standards contained in this part. Where a situation is not covered by the standards set forth in this part, employees shall apply the principles set forth in this section in determining whether their conduct is proper.

(1) Public service is a public trust, requiring employees to place loyalty to the Constitution, the laws and ethical principles above private gain.

(2) Employees shall not hold financial interests that conflict with the conscientious performance of duty.

(3) Employees shall not engage in financial transactions using nonpublic Government information or allow the improper use of such information to further any private interest.

(4) An employee shall not, except as permitted by subpart B of this part, solicit or accept any gift or other item of monetary value from any person or entity seeking official action from, doing business with, or conducting activities regulated by the employee's agency, or whose interests may be substantially affected by the performance or non-performance of the employee's duties.

(5) Employees shall put forth honest effort in the performance of their duties.

(6) Employees shall not knowingly make unauthorized commitments or promises of any kind purporting to bind the Government.

(7) Employees shall not use public office for private gain.

(8) Employees shall act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any private organization or individual.

(9) Employees shall protect and conserve Federal property and shall not use it for other than authorized activities.

(10) Employees shall not engage in outside employment or activities, including seeking or negotiating for employment, that conflict with official Government duties and responsibilities.

(11) Employees shall disclose waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption to appropriate authorities.

(12) Employees shall satisfy in good faith their obligations as citizens, including all just financial obligations, especially those—such as Federal, State, or local taxes—that are imposed by law.

(13) Employees shall adhere to all laws and regulations that provide equal opportunity for all Americans regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or handicap.

(14) Employees shall endeavor to avoid any actions creating the appearance that they are violating the law or the ethical standards set forth in this part. Whether particular circumstances create an appearance that the law or these standards have been violated shall be determined from the perspective of a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts.

(c) *Related statutes.* In addition to the standards of ethical conduct set forth in this part, there are conflict of inter-

est statutes that prohibit certain conduct. Criminal conflict of interest statutes of general applicability to all employees, 18 U.S.C. 201, 203, 205, 208, and 209, are summarized in the appropriate subparts of this part and must be taken into consideration in determining whether conduct is proper. Citations to other generally applicable statutes relating to employee conduct are set forth in subpart I and employees are further cautioned that there may be additional statutory and regulatory restrictions applicable to them generally or as employees of their specific agencies. Because an employee is considered to be on notice of the requirements of any statute, an employee should not rely upon any description or synopsis of a statutory restriction, but should refer to the statute itself and obtain the advice of an agency ethics official as needed.

#### § 2635.102 Definitions.

The definitions listed below are used throughout this part. Additional definitions appear in the subparts or sections of subparts to which they apply. For purposes of this part:

(a) *Agency* means an executive agency as defined in 5 U.S.C. 105 and the Postal Service and the Postal Rate Commission. It does not include the General Accounting Office or the Government of the District of Columbia.

(b) *Agency designee* refers to any employee who, by agency regulation, instruction, or other issuance, has been delegated authority to make any determination, give any approval, or take any other action required or permitted by this part with respect to another employee. An agency may delegate these authorities to any number of agency designees necessary to ensure that determinations are made, approvals are given, and other actions are taken in a timely and responsible manner. Any provision that requires a determination, approval, or other action by the agency designee shall, where the conduct in issue is that of the agency head, be deemed to require that such determination, approval or action be made or taken by the agency head in consultation with the designated agency ethics official.