

# A WORD ABOUT ETHICS

## GIFTS TO THE GOVERNMENT

### **What is considered to be a gift to the Government?**

○ Anything provided to support agency operations, including airplane tickets and meals, as well as funds.

### **May employees accept gifts to the Government?**

○ Yes, if:

- the gift will benefit an agency program or operation,
- acceptance will not create an appearance of impropriety by giving the impression that the agency will be biased in favor of the giver, and
- approved by an authorized agency official.

### **When does acceptance of a gift create an appearance of impropriety?**

○ This is determined on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration such factors as:

- whether the donor has interests in controversial matters before the agency,
- the value of the gift,
- the usefulness of the gift to the agency,

and

- the circumstances surrounding the offer.

### **From which sources may agencies not accept gifts?**

○ A gift may not be accepted from:

- an agency grantee (or applicant),
- an agency contractor (or bidder), or
- a company in an industry sector regulated by the agency. (Although on rare occasions an exception is granted to these general restrictions.)

### **Are gifts for official travel (i.e. airline tickets, hotel, meals) treated differently than other gifts to the Department?**

○ Yes, unlike other gifts travel gifts *may not be solicited* and must be approved before the travel. Also:

- first class transportation may not be accepted and
- honoraria may not be accepted.

### **How should employees report agency gifts?**

○ On a CD 210 and an SF 326 (if it is a travel gift) (or a CD 210 and a CD 342 if the gift is from a foreign government for travel entirely outside the United States).

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202-482-5384 – [ethicsdivision@doc.gov](mailto:ethicsdivision@doc.gov) – January 2, 2009