



# Ethics Briefing For New Employees



**The People's Department**



# The Most Important Points:

- ▶ Federal Ethics Rules involve criminal statutes.
- ▶ These rules can seem difficult, particularly for new Federal employees.
- ▶ The Office of Ethics is here to assist you and help provide answers to your questions.

## **USDA Office of Ethics**

(202) 720-2251

Daeo.Ethics@usda.gov

[www.usda.gov/ethics](http://www.usda.gov/ethics)



# The Office of Ethics (OE)

- ▶ Located within the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM), Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration.
- ▶ OE has a HQ Office and 4 Branches: Farm, Marketing, Forest Service and Science.
- ▶ The OE website at [www.usda.gov/Ethics](http://www.usda.gov/Ethics) is a great resource which is used by USDA employees and those at over 26 other Federal agencies.



# OVERVIEW

- ✓ 14 Principles of Ethical Conduct
- ✓ Conflict of Interest Statutes
- ✓ Using Government Property & Official Time



# 14 Principles of Ethical Conduct for Federal Employees





# Principles of Ethical Conduct for Federal Employees

## 1. Public Service:

Is a public trust, requiring employees to place loyalty to the Constitution, the laws and ethical principles above private gain.

## 2. Conflicting Financial Interest:

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



# Principles of Ethical Conduct for Federal Employees

## 3. Nonpublic Information:

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



# Principles of Ethical Conduct for Federal Employees

## 4. Gift Restrictions:

An employee shall not solicit or accept any gift or other item of monetary value from any person or entity who:

- seeks official action from the agency
- does business with the agency...



# Principles of Ethical Conduct for Federal Employees

## Gift Restrictions (continued)

- Conducts activities regulated by the employee's agency; or
- Has interests that may be substantially affected by the performance or nonperformance of the employee's duties.



# Principles of Ethical Conduct for Federal Employees

## 5. Performance of Duties:

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



## 6. Unauthorized Commitments:

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



# Principles of Ethical Conduct for Federal Employees

## 7. Private Gain:

Employees shall not use public office for private gain.

## 8. Preferential Treatment:

Employees shall act impartially & not give preferential treatment to any private organization or individual.



# Principles of Ethical Conduct for Federal Employees

## 9. Federal Property:

Employees shall protect & conserve Federal property & shall not use it for other than authorized activities.



# Principles of Ethical Conduct for Federal Employees

## 10. Outside Employment/Activities:

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



# Principles of Ethical Conduct for Federal Employees

## 11. Waste, Fraud, Abuse & Corruption:

Employees shall disclose waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption to authorities.

## 12. Obligations as Citizens:

Employees shall satisfy in good faith their obligations as citizens, including all just financial obligations, such as Federal, State or local taxes – that are imposed by law.

If you spot  
instances of fraud,  
waste and abuse  
contact:

OIG Hotline:  
(202) 690-1622



# Principles of Ethical Conduct for Federal Employees

## 13. Equal Opportunity:

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



# Principles of Ethical Conduct for Federal Employees

## 14. Appearance of Conflicted Public Service

Employees shall endeavor to avoid any action creating the appearance that they are violating the law or the ethical standards set forth in this part.



# Conflict of Interest Statutes





# Statutes

**18 U.S.C. 201 – Prohibition Against Bribery**

**18 U.S.C. 203 – Representation (for compensation)**

**18 U.S.C. 205 – Representation (no compensation)**

**18 U.S.C. 207 – Post Federal Employment Rules**

**18 U.S.C. 208 – Prohibition Against Conflicting Financial Interests**

**18 U.S.C. 209 – Prohibition Against Supplementation of Salary**



# Brief Summary of Statute §201

## Prohibition Against Bribery

Prohibits a Federal employee from seeking, receiving or agreeing to accept anything of value for themselves or others in return for being influenced in an official act; being influenced to aid in the commission of a fraud on the United States; or being induced to do or omit any action in violation of official duty.

Example of violation: A Federal employee who works as an inspector for the Immigration & Naturalization Service accepted \$75,000 in return for allowing smugglers to import cocaine into the US across the border with Mexico.



# Brief Summary of Statute §203

## Ban on Representation (for compensation)

Bars employees from seeking or accepting compensation for representing or assisting someone else before the Executive Branch or the Federal courts.

Example of Violation: A Federal attorney from the Office of the Inspector General accepts pay for representing (on his personal time) his next door neighbor's cousin in a civil case against the Department of Interior.



# Brief Summary of Statute §205

## Ban on Representation (Even if no \$\$\$)

Bars employees from representing another before the Executive Branch or the Federal courts in situations even where the employee does not receive any compensation.

Example of Violation: A Federal attorney from the Office of the Inspector General for no fee represents (on his personal time) his next door neighbor's cousin in a civil case against the Department of Interior.



# Brief Summary of Statute §207

## Post Employment – 2 Basic Prohibitions

### Lifetime bar

Prohibits representing a 3<sup>rd</sup> party back to the government on a particular matter involving specific parties in which you personally and substantially participated.

### 2-year bar

Prohibits representing a 3<sup>rd</sup> party on matters under your official responsibility during your last year of service.

Example of violation: An IRS collection officer is assigned to two collection cases. After the IRS employee leaves the IRS, he represented both taxpayers before the IRS in connection with the collection cases to which he had been assigned as an IRS employee. (Lifetime bar) The People's Department



# Brief Summary of Statute §208

## Prohibition on Conflicting Financial Interests

Bars an employee from participating personally and substantially in an official capacity in any particular Government matter that would have a direct and predictable effect on his own financial interest or on the financial interests imputed to him.

Example of violation: An employee of USDA, who works in procurement, recommended the awarding of a contract to a company in which he owned stock.



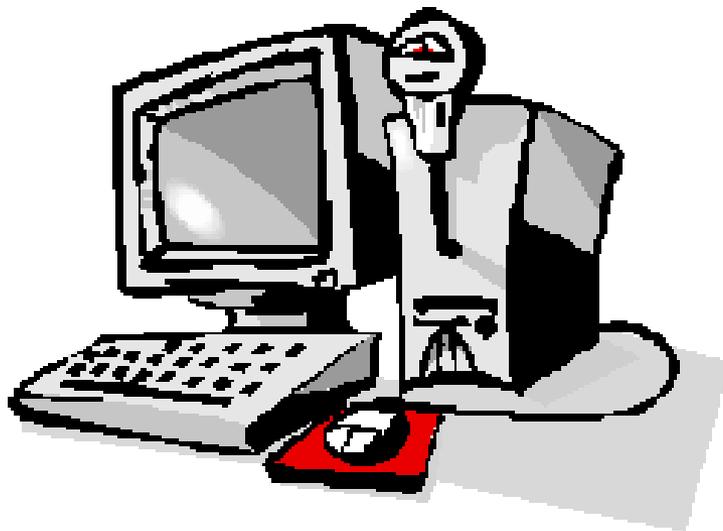
# Brief Summary of Statute §209

## Prohibition on Supplementation of Salary

Prohibits an employee from receiving any salary or contribution to or supplementation of salary from any source other than the U.S. as compensation for services as a Government employee.

Example of violation: A Federal scientist conducting official research on killer bee reproduction, accepts money from a private company for giving a speech on his official research.

# Using Government Property & Official Time





# Using Government Property

An employee has a duty to protect and conserve Government property and shall not use such property, or allow its use, for other than authorized purposes.





# Definition: Government Property

Any form of real or personal property in which the Government has an ownership, leasehold, or other property interest as well as any right or other intangible interest that is purchased with Government funds, including the services of contractor personnel.



# Government Property

The term includes:

- ✓ Supplies
- ✓ Telephones
- ✓ Other telecommunications equipment and services
- ✓ Government mail
- ✓ Automated data processing capabilities
- ✓ Printing and reproduction facilities
- ✓ Government records
- ✓ Government vehicles



# Limited Use of Government Property

An Exception to the rule:

Employees are permitted, under rules set out by the Chief Information Officer, to use Government office equipment for personal needs if the use does not interfere with official business and involves minimal additional expense to the Government.



# Using Government Official Time

An employee shall put forth an honest effort their performance of their official duties.



You've heard the saying "Put in an honest days work for an honest day's pay."



# Using Government Property – Permissive Personal Use



Permissive use is limited to occasional personal use that does not affect the performance of your official duties. It's not a right. It is provided at the discretion of your supervisor.



# Questions?

## USDA Office of Ethics

(202) 720-2251

[Daeo.Ethics@usda.gov](mailto:Daeo.Ethics@usda.gov)

[www.usda.gov/ethics](http://www.usda.gov/ethics)



The People's Department