

Washington State Executive Ethics Board

360.664.0871

ethics@atg.wa.gov

Can I Accept the Gift?

As a state employee or officer, you are limited in the types of gifts you may receive. The general rule is that you cannot accept a gift from any one source during a calendar year in which the aggregate exceeds \$50.

There are circumstances in which you can accept gifts that exceed that limit. You may accept the following:

- Unsolicited flowers, candy and such, promotional items, awards of appreciation such as a plaque or trophy;
- Items received for evaluation purposes, if no personal beneficial interest exists;
- Informational material, publications or the like if it is related to your official duties;
- Food and beverages consumed at a hosted reception;
- Admission to and food and beverages consumed at events sponsored by a civic, charitable, governmental or community organization;
- Unsolicited gifts from foreign dignitaries;
- Items from family members and friends;
- Items from businesses that are customary, such as pens, note pads or refrigerator magnets;
- Items exchanged between co-workers;
- Payments made for reasonable expenses in connection with a speech or presentation;
- Payments of enrollment and course fees and reasonable travel expenses attributable to seminars and educational programs sponsored by a nonprofit professional, educational, trade or charitable association;
- Campaign contributions;
- Discounts available to broad based groups;
- Awards in recognition of academic or scientific achievement.

You may also receive gifts in the form of food and beverage that is served “during the ordinary course of meals” while performing your official duties, so long as it is on infrequent occasions that you do so.

If you are an employee or officer who works for a regulatory agency or an agency that seeks to acquire goods or services, and you participate in those regulatory or contractual matters, you are further limited. You may accept:

- Unsolicited advertising or promotional items of nominal value;
- Unsolicited tokens of appreciation such as a plaque or trophy;
- Items received for evaluation purposes, if no personal beneficial interest exists;
- Informational material, publications or the like if it is related to your official duties;
- Food and beverages consumed at a hosted reception;
- Admission to and food and beverages consumed at events sponsored by a civic, charitable, governmental or community organization;
- Items from family members and friends;
- Items from businesses that are customary, such as pens, note pads or refrigerator magnets;
- Items exchanged between co-workers;
- Campaign contributions;
- Discounts available to broad based groups;
- Awards in recognition of academic or scientific achievement.

You may NOT accept:

- Flowers, plants, or floral arrangements;
- Candy;
- Payments made for reasonable expenses in connection with a speech or presentation;
- Payments of enrollment and course fees and reasonable travel expenses attributable to seminars and educational programs sponsored by a nonprofit professional, educational, trade or charitable association;
- Food and beverage served in the ordinary course of meals even if attendance is related to the performance of your official duties.

November 2014