

## **Code of Ethics**

### *Stewardship for America with Integrity and Excellence*

Our workforce is comprised of dedicated professionals who carry out their responsibilities with commitment and the utmost integrity. We hold our positions as a matter of public trust and we take this responsibility very seriously. American citizens have the right to expect that we place loyalty to the Constitution, laws, and the Executive Branch ethical principles above any private gain.

We fulfill this trust by adhering to our own standards of personal integrity, as well as specific ethical guidelines and regulations. We recognize that we must be knowledgeable of these regulations. We strive to avoid even the slightest appearance of impropriety. We emphasize an ethics culture that is beyond reproach. It is the responsibility of each employee to ensure that the Bureau maintains its reputation of integrity, honesty, and fairness and that we are perceived with the utmost respect. We will work to improve the knowledge and understanding of those with whom we do business so that they are fully aware of our high ethical standards and therefore respect our ethical code.

To ensure that the public has complete confidence in the integrity of the employees of our Bureau, each employee shall adhere to the fundamental principles of ethical conduct as prescribed by law and regulation, to include the following:

Employees will recognize that public service is a public trust requiring them to place loyalty to the Constitution, the law, and to ethical principles above private gain. Employees will put forth honest effort in the performance of their duties. The American people must have no reason to question the loyalty, reliability, or integrity of our employees.

Employees will make no unauthorized commitments or promises of any kind intending to obligate the Government. Employees may not function beyond their delegated level of authority. Employees will also not engage in financial transactions using nonpublic Government information or allow the improper use of such information to further any private interest. Employees will not hold financial interests that conflict with the conscientious performance of duty. Employees will not use public office for private gain. This means for the gain of the employee or any other person or entity.

Employees shall not solicit or accept a gift or other item of monetary value from any prohibited source or one that is given because of the employee's official position. A prohibited source includes any person or entity that: 1) is seeking official action by our Bureau; 2) does business or seeks to do business with our Bureau; 3) conducts activities regulated by our Bureau; 4) has interests that may be substantially affected by the performance or the nonperformance of the employee's official duties; or 5) is an organization a majority of whose members are described in items 1 through 4 above. This prohibition applies to any gift, regardless of value or nature. Gifts include, but are not limited to,

items such as a: gratuity, favor, discount, entertainment, hospitality, loan, forbearance, or any other item having monetary value. This prohibition also includes services, as well as gifts of training, transportation, local travel, lodging and meals, whether provided in-kind, by purchase of a ticket, payment in advance, or reimbursement after expenses have been incurred. The receipt of a gift is not made acceptable by comparable reciprocation such as that which might occur at a social event. Regulatory exclusions and exceptions concerning gift rules are located at 5 CFR 2635 Subpart "B". In addition, even if a regulatory exclusion or exception may apply, it is never inappropriate and frequently prudent for an employee to decline a gift offered by a prohibited source or because of his official position. Employees should decline otherwise permissible gifts when accepting them would raise concerns about the appearance of impropriety.

Employees will act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any private organization or to any individual. If an employee's actions become the subject of scrutiny, they will be viewed after-the-fact with the benefit of hindsight. Therefore, an employee should carefully consider how others might view their actions. Employees must always strive to maintain transparency of operations.

Employees will protect and conserve Federal property and shall not use it for other than authorized purposes. Bureau policy provides for the limited personal use of various kinds of office equipment and supplies. Limited personal use of certain office equipment is authorized under DOI Policy as long as it occurs on non-duty time, does not interfere with official business, is not a commercial gain activity or otherwise prohibited, is of negligible expense, and is in compliance with applicable policy.

Employees will not engage in outside employment or activities, including seeking or negotiating for employment, that conflict with their official Government duties and responsibilities. Employees of the Bureau must request prior written approval to engage in outside work or activity that is related to the employee's official duties with the Bureau; is related to the mission of the Department of the Interior; or that is performed for a prohibited source. This request must be submitted regardless of whether or not the employee receives compensation. An employee seeking outside employment is responsible for ensuring that no real or apparent conflict of interest exists and that a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts would have no cause to question the integrity of the Bureau's programs. Outside employment and activities may not negatively impact the employee's work with the Bureau.

Employees will 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. Employees will adhere to all local, state and Federal laws. Employees must also adhere to all regulations uniquely applicable to Federal employees while on federally owned or leased property and in the performance of their official duties. Illegal activity will neither be condoned nor tolerated. Employees will adhere to all laws and regulations that provide equal opportunity for all Americans regardless of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, or disability.

Employees will disclose waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption to appropriate authorities. Notifications may be made anonymously but should contain as much specific detail as possible to allow for an adequate investigation into the matter. The Bureau is committed to compliance with the Whistleblower Protection Act, safeguarding the rights of anyone coming forward in this manner.

Employees will endeavor to avoid any actions creating the *appearance* that they are violating the law or ethical standards. Often even the appearance of impropriety is as significant and damaging to the reputation of the employee and to the Bureau as an actual infraction. Employees must be mindful of their responsibility to ensure that their high level of ethical standards is clearly evident to the American people. Employees are encouraged to contact their ethics office when faced with an ethical dilemma.

Compliance with the law and ethical standards are conditions of employment and violations will result in disciplinary action which may include termination of employment. Violation of the ethics laws may also result in criminal penalties.

Working together and understanding that each of us has a great responsibility to the American people will enable us to ensure the continued integrity of our bureau.