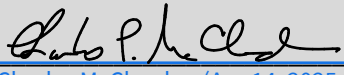


CITY OF CATHEDRAL CITY ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY			HR-AP -25
TOPIC	CITY EMPLOYEE ETHICS AND GIFT POLICY		
Approved by:  Charles McClendon, City Manager		Distributed by Human Resources	Original Date 04/14/2025
			Revised

Purpose and Scope

This policy establishes guidelines for ethical conduct and managing conflicts of interest for all city employees, with specific emphasis on the receipt of gifts. This policy applies to all full-time, part-time, temporary, and contract employees of the City.

Definitions

- **Gift:** Anything of monetary value, including but not limited to money, services, loans, travel, entertainment, hospitality (accommodation, food, drinks, or other services), items, or discounts.
- **Conflict of Interest:** A situation in which an employee's personal interests could compromise their ability to act in the best interest of the City.

General Ethical Standards

1. City employees shall perform their duties impartially and diligently, placing public interest above personal gain.
2. Employees must avoid actual or apparent conflicts of interest in their official duties.
3. Employees shall not use their positions to secure special privileges or exemptions for themselves or others.

Gift Restrictions

Prohibited Gifts

City employees shall not accept:

1. Gifts from parties engaged in or seeking to engage in business with the City
2. Gifts from parties regulated by or seeking permits/licenses from the City
3. Cash or cash equivalents of any amount
4. Gifts that could reasonably be perceived to influence official actions
5. Any gifts other than those specifically listed as permitted in this policy.

Permitted Gifts

The following items may be accepted:

1. Promotional items of nominal value (under \$25)
2. Light refreshments at business meetings
3. Gifts intended for and shared by an entire department, division, or office are generally permissible when: a) They are primarily consumable items b) They represent goodwill from the community c) They do not create an actual or perceived obligation to provide special treatment d) They are reported to supervisors when exceeding typical values

Safety Personnel Special Considerations

The following guidelines apply specifically to safety personnel (police and fire):

1. Restaurant and Retail Discounts: - Discounts offered broadly to all safety personnel (not specifically to our department) may be acceptable if: a) The discount is modest in nature (typically 10-15%) b) The discount is advertised publicly and available to all safety personnel c) The business does not have pending matters before the City - All discounts exceeding \$25 in value must be disclosed to supervisors
2. Safety Personnel Appreciation Events: - Free or discounted admission to theme parks, sporting events, or similar venues offered broadly to all safety personnel may be acceptable if: a) The benefit is advertised publicly to all safety personnel b) There is no expectation of reciprocity or special treatment c) Attendance is not during duty hours unless officially approved d) The sponsoring organization does not have pending matters before the City
3. Special Event Invitations: - Must be disclosed to supervisors for case-by-case review - Will generally not be permitted if from entities doing business with the City - May be permitted if they serve a clear public purpose (e.g., community relations) - Value limitation and reporting requirements still apply
4. Documentation Requirements: All safety personnel discounts or special event attendance that provide a benefit exceeding \$25 in value must be: 1. Reported to immediate supervisors 2. Included in annual gift disclosure forms 3. Evaluated for potential conflicts of interest
5. Visitors and Ride-Alongs: - Modest consumable items (such as homemade goods, cookies, or donuts) brought by ride-along, students, or visitors to share with all personnel on duty are permissible and do not require formal disclosure if below \$25 in value.

For any scenario not clearly covered by these guidelines, please consult with your Department Head before accepting any discount or invitation.

Relationship to Form 700 Requirements

This policy establishes ethical standards for all city employees regarding gifts and conflicts of interest. Those designated employees that are required to file a Statement of Economic Interest (Form 700) must also comply with separate reporting requirements established by the California Fair Political Practices Commission. Compliance with this policy does not relieve any employee from their Form 700 filing obligation, which may include different thresholds for gift reporting and limitations.

Disclosure Requirements

1. Employees must disclose any offered gift exceeding \$25 in value to their department supervisor
2. Annual disclosure forms must be submitted listing all gifts received during the calendar year

3. Potential conflicts of interest must be disclosed immediately upon recognition
4. Any gift not clearly falling within the permitted categories must be disclosed to supervisors for determination

Procedures for Gift Acceptance/Rejection

1. Upon receiving a gift offer, employees must:
 - Determine if it falls under prohibited categories
 - Verify it qualifies as either a promotional item under \$25 or light refreshments at a business meeting
 - Consider potential conflicts of interest
 - Consult with supervisors when uncertain
2. If a prohibited gift is received:
 - Return it immediately if possible
 - Submit it to the Department Head or designee for proper disposal
 - Document the receipt and disposition

Conflicts of Interest

Identification

Employees must be alert to situations that may present conflicts, including:

- Financial interest in city contracts
- Outside employment affecting city duties
- Family members seeking city benefits
- Personal investments affecting official decisions

Management

When conflicts arise:

1. Immediately disclose the conflict to supervisors
2. Recuse from related decision-making processes
3. Document the conflict and recusal

Enforcement

1. Violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination
2. Serious violations may be referred to law enforcement
3. Retaliation against those reporting violations is prohibited

Training and Resources

1. Ethics training is mandatory for all employees every two years
2. Updated policies and procedures will be distributed as needed

Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect applicable laws and regulation changes.






HR-AP 25 City Employee Ethics and Gift Policy

Final Audit Report

2025-04-14

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