



# ETHICS POLICY

## Preface

This policy was written by, and for, the employees of the Department of Public Health (“DPH”) to provide guiding principles to accomplish our agency’s mission and support our agency’s core values. The overriding purpose of an ethics policy is to encourage ethical conduct. The exercise of responsibility under this policy is best achieved while maintaining core values as follows:

All employees are expected to:

- Respect the rights and dignity of all individuals, both employees and members of the public.
- Adhere to the principles of fair treatment, regardless of an individual’s economic or educational status, race, color, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, religious creed, age, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, learning disability, past or present history of mental disability, genetic information, or prior conviction of a crime.
- Deliver services in a timely, objective, consistent and appropriate manner.
- Communicate relevant and significant information to employees, our public health partners, and the public in a timely manner. Recognize that communication is a shared responsibility and includes listening to the concerns of others, respecting their needs and differences, and responding accordingly.
- Respect the privacy rights of employees and members of the public.
- Adhere to the department’s confidentiality pledge and all DPH policies.
- Be conscientious in their attendance and in the performance of their duties. Comply with applicable statutes, regulations, and agency policies.
- Recognize that professional development is an ongoing process. Pursue relevant educational and training opportunities and support other employees in such efforts.
- Exercise care regarding their own health and safety and the health and safety of other employees and members of the public. Report safety concerns to their supervisor or other appropriate authorities.
- Properly utilize, maintain and care for state facilities, vehicles and assigned equipment.
- Project a positive image of the department through their appearance, attitude and actions.

## ETHICS POLICY

This policy is derived from the State of Connecticut Code of Ethics, *Conn. Gen. Stat.* §§ 1-79 -1-90a. While the Code of Ethics is applicable to all state employees, including DPH employees, certain provisions within this policy are more stringent to facilitate the needs of our agency and maintain the standards required to attain our mission.

**Financial Gain:** Employees shall not use his/her DPH position to obtain personal financial gain or financial gain for his/her spouse, child, child's spouse, parent, sibling or business with which the employee is associated.

**Use of State Time, Equipment and Materials:** Employees shall not use state time, equipment or materials for any outside employment, political activities, or any personal purposes.

**Gifts:** Employees shall not accept or solicit any gift or gratuity, either directly or indirectly, from any individuals or entities regulated by, doing business with, or seeking to do business with the agency, or from any registered lobbyist. Soliciting or receiving gifts or gratuities from any member of the public, as an inducement or in exchange for agency services, is not permitted.

**Gifts Between Supervisors and Subordinates:** Permitted up to a value of \$99.99 per gift (including pooled funds). Permitted up to a value of \$1000 for a major life event - birth or adoption, wedding, funeral, induction into religious adulthood, or retirement. (No value limit for gifts between co-workers).

**Gifts to the State:** Employees may accept goods and services from regulated and non-regulated entities that support participation of employees at an event (e.g., conference, site tour, training), so long as the event facilitates state action or functions.

**Meals:** Employees shall not accept or solicit meals or refreshments *while engaged in any regulatory activity*. Meals or refreshments may be accepted when consumed at a professional meeting, training or conference if they do not exceed the statutory gift limit (for additional guidance [Press Ctrl and Left Mouse Click Here](#) ) and are made available to agency employees and non-employees on an equal basis.

**Necessary Expenses for Appearance at a Function:** Employees may accept necessary expenses as a DPH employee if they are actively participating in an event (speaker, panelist, participating in workshop, etc.). Necessary expenses are allowed for travel, lodging, meals and related conference expenses.

**Out-of-State Functions:** Employees must report to the Office of State Ethics all necessary expenses that were paid or reimbursed for their active participation at an out-of-state event. Such report must be made within 30 days of receiving the reimbursement. If expenses were paid directly, then the expenses must be reported within 30 days of the event. (Form is found on the Office of State Ethics website). Necessary expenses do not have to be reported for in-state functions or for expenses paid directly by a federal, state, or local government.

Employees shall not accept: entertainment costs; expenses paid for family members or other guests; or fees and honorariums for their appearance.

**Employment of Friends or Relatives:** Employees shall not use their state position to attempt to influence the appointment or terms and conditions of employment of any friend or relative.

**Employment of Subordinates or Supervisors:** Employees shall not employ his/her subordinate or supervisor for outside employment. This restriction does not apply only to an immediate supervisor, but goes up and down the chain of command.

**Outside Employment:** Employees shall not accept employment or business, while employed at DPH, which: 1) impairs his/her independence of judgment in their state employment; 2) encourages the disclosure of confidential information gained in his/her state position; 3) involves the use of his/her state position for financial gain; or, 4) involves the use of state time or any other state resources.

**Post Employment:** Employees shall not accept a position after leaving DPH that requires the employee to:

- 1) Disclose any confidential information gained during their state service at DPH for any purpose;
- 2) Represent any person or entity before DPH within one year of leaving DPH;
- 3) To represent any person or entity in a particular matter that such DPH employee was involved in substantially and personally during service with DPH; and,
- 4) Be employed with a contractor within a period of one year after leaving state service if the DPH employee participated substantially in, or supervised, the negotiation or award of a contract valued at \$50,000.00 or more and the contract was signed within one year before the DPH employee left DPH.

**Contracts with the State:** Employees, his/her immediate family, or business with which an employee is associated with, shall not enter into any contract with the state valued at \$100 or more, unless the contract has been awarded through an open, public and competitive process. (Immediate family is spouse, child, and dependent relative in an employee's household).

**Confidential Information:** Employees shall not access or attempt to access any personal or confidential information not required to perform their assigned agency responsibilities. Employees shall not disclose personal or confidential information in any manner prohibited by the agency's confidentiality pledge.

**Data:** Employees shall not alter or falsify any data or information. All DPH data and information must be kept stored and secured in accordance with the DPH Information Security Policy.

**Legal Proceedings:** Employees shall not use his/her employment status in an attempt to interfere with, or influence the outcome of, proceedings involving the application of any law.

**Retaliation:** Employees shall not retaliate against any individual who reports any potential violation of this policy or other misconduct.

**Conflicts of Interest:** Employees must report to an immediate supervisor any interest that he/she, or the employee's spouse, child, sibling, parent, or a business with which the employee is associated has that is in conflict with the proper discharge of his/her duties in employment.

**Appearance of Impropriety:** Employees will make every effort to foster and preserve public trust in the Department and therefore shall avoid any actions creating the appearance that they are violating laws or the ethics policy. Employees shall not use their title or the Department's name in a manner that suggests impropriety, favoritism, or bias. Additionally, employees who serve on any Board or Commission as part of their role at DPH shall avoid the appearance of impropriety when reviewing a funding application from DPH.

**Statement of Financial Interests (SFIs):** Any employee identified by the Commissioner, or by his/her supervisor through the Commissioner's authority, as an employee required to file a SFI, *must file his/her SFI by May 1 of each year.* If May 1 falls on a legal holiday or weekend, then the SFI must be filed on the first business day after May 1.

All designated employees are personally responsible to file his/her SFI accurately, completely, and timely. Failure to do so will subject the individual to fines imposed by the Office of State Ethics of up to \$10 per day for each day the statement is late (up to \$10,000 per violation), and may also subject the individual to disciplinary action by DPH.

**Discipline:** The Office of State Ethics has jurisdiction to interpret and enforce the Code of Ethics. Violations may result in a formal complaint proceeding filed against an employee and sanctions up to \$10,000 per violation. The Office of State Ethics may refer matters to the Chief State's Attorney for criminal prosecution. An intentional violation of the Code is a misdemeanor for the first violation, unless the individual has derived a financial benefit of at least \$1,000. In that case, the violation is a class D felony.

DPH retains the right to review independently and respond administratively to any violation. Noncompliance with this policy could result in disciplinary action, up to and including, termination.

**CONTACT:** Employees should direct questions to their supervisor, manager, agency human resource administrator, agency ethics liaison, or the Office of State Ethics.

**Agency Ethics Liaison(s)**

Stacy Schulman or Alfreda Gaither (back-up): (860)509-7566

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**Office of State Ethics**

Staff Attorneys: (860)263-2400

<http://www.ct.gov/ethics>