

170516

COUNCIL CHAMBER

March 22, 2017

**WHEREAS**, the City Council believes that employment with the city should not be used for personal gain and that city employees should conduct themselves and operate with integrity in a manner that merits the trust and support of the public; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council has adopted a Code of Ethics, Chapter 12A, Dallas City Code, as amended, that provides general rules for the solicitation and acceptance of gifts by city officials and employees; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to state law, public servants may solicit and accept certain benefits, such as gifts, tickets, meals, travel, entertainment and honoraria, under limited circumstances and conditions; provided the benefit is not being offered, solicited, or accepted as consideration for the public servant's decision, opinion, recommendation, vote, or other exercise of discretion as a public servant; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Resolution Nos. 08-1723 and 08-2506, the City Council has adopted policy guidelines regarding the solicitation and receipt of gifts, tickets, travel, lodging, entertainment and honoraria by City Councilmembers and members of boards and commissions to provide practical guidance clarifying the circumstances under which the acceptance of certain benefits by city officials is permissible in the performance of their city duties; and

**WHEREAS**, it is necessary to provide practical guidance clarifying the circumstances under which the acceptance of certain benefits by city employees is permissible in the performance of their city duties; **Now, Therefore,**

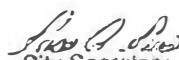
**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DALLAS:**

**Section 1.** That the attached policy guidelines regarding the solicitation and receipt of gifts, tickets, travel, entertainment and honoraria by city employees is hereby adopted.

**Section 2.** That this resolution shall take effect immediately from and after its passage in accordance with the Charter of the City of Dallas, and it is accordingly so resolved.

APPROVED BY  
CITY COUNCIL

MAR 22 2017

  
City Secretary

## GIFT POLICY FOR CITY EMPLOYEES

This is the policy governing the acceptance of gifts given to city employees, including gifts of tickets, meals, travel, lodging, entertainment, and honoraria. It is the policy of the City of Dallas to provide and promote a professional and ethical environment for its employees. This policy applies to all City of Dallas employees. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, in accordance with the Personnel Rules, up to and including termination of employment with the City of Dallas.

### **GENERAL GUIDELINES**

1. See Dallas City Code Section 12A-2(6) for the definition of “benefit.” See Dallas City Code Section 12A-2(21) for the definition of “gift.” In this policy, the term “gift” includes “benefits.” “Honoraria” are payments or in-kind gifts made for a service, such as making a speech.

a. Gifts should be distinguished from donations. Gifts are given to individual employees and used by that employee. Donations are given to the city and used by the city. This policy does not apply to donations. See Dallas City Code Chapter 12A for rules for donations.

2. The following items are not considered gifts, and are not subject to reporting requirements:

a. A loan from a lending institution if it is made in the regular course of business and on the same terms generally available to the public.

b. A scholarship or fellowship based on the same criteria and awarded on the same terms applied to other applicants.

c. Gifts from a family member or a person with whom the employee has a personal, professional, or business relationship that is completely independent of the employee’s status with the city. The gift can be accepted only if the gift would have been given even if the city employee did not work for the city.

3. Whenever possible, gifts should be approved in advance by the employee’s supervisor. Also, if an employee has questions about whether a gift may be accepted, the employee should discuss it with their supervisor. If the supervisor is uncertain about a gift, the supervisor should contact the City Attorney’s Office. An employee who disclosed all relevant facts, and who reasonably and in good faith relied on the supervisor’s good faith determination, will not be found to have violated this policy.

4. Ceremonial and protocol gifts received by a city employee on behalf of the city must be delivered to the city manager within 30 days after receipt and inventoried as city property in accordance with Section 12A-22 of the Dallas City Code.

5. Employees must also comply with departmental rules regarding gifts, if any. If there is a conflict between this gift policy and a departmental rule, this gift policy controls.
6. Any gift that could be perceived by the public as an attempt to influence or reward the employee in the performance of their duties should be politely declined. When in doubt, it is better to politely decline a gift.
7. An employee who does not wish to accept a gift in order to avoid the appearance of impropriety can return the gift to the giver; donate the gift to the city; donate the gift to another governmental entity with authority to accept the gift; or donate the gift to a recognized tax-exempt charitable organization. A description of the gift, the estimated value, and the disposition of the gift must be documented and retained by the department.
8. Employees should never solicit gifts for themselves or for the employee's parent, child, spouse, domestic partner, or family member of the first degree of consanguinity or affinity.
9. Gifts, including tickets, meals, travel, lodging, and entertainment, that cannot be accepted by an employee cannot be given to another person, including family members, as a means to circumvent this gift policy.
10. The following gifts, including tickets, meals, travel, lodging, or entertainment, shall not be accepted:
  - a. Any gift that reasonably tends to influence or reward official action, or that the employee knows is intended to influence or reward the discharge of official duties.
  - b. Any gift that the employee knows is given in exchange for taking official action, refraining from taking official action, or exercising official discretion.
  - c. Any gift from a person that the employee knows is interested in a matter that is currently pending with the employee's department.
  - d. Any gift from a person that the employee knows is currently subject to enforcement proceedings, inspections, or investigations by the employee's department.
  - e. An employee who conducts inspections, investigations, provides advice, or renders decisions in quasi-judicial hearings shall not accept any gift from a person that the employee knows is an interested party, an agent of an interested party, or a representative of an interested party in that quasi-judicial hearing.

- f. An employee who makes recommendations on, grants, or denies applications shall not accept any gift from a person that the employee knows is an applicant, agent of that applicant, or representative of that applicant.
- g. Any cash, check, gift card, negotiable instrument, or security.
- h. Honoraria given in consideration for services the employee was required to provide as a part of the employee's job duties.

## **GIFTS**

11. If gifts with monetary value are given to employees because of their employment with the city, the gifts may be accepted by employees under the following conditions, unless prohibited under Section 6 or Section 10:

- a. Individual employees may accept gifts with a nominal estimated value. Gifts have a nominal estimated value if they have an estimated value of less than \$25 or a cumulative estimated value of less than \$50 from a single source in a calendar year. Examples include items such as plaques, caps, key rings, mugs, tee shirts, flowers, and small amounts of food, if these gifts are given infrequently.
- b. A public award for meritorious service or professional achievement if the award is reasonable in light of the occasion.

## **TICKETS**

12. If tickets with monetary value are given to employees because of their employment with the city, the tickets may be accepted by employees under the following conditions, unless prohibited under Section 6 or Section 10:

- a. Tickets to events where the employee is performing ceremonial duties or attending as an official representative of the city.
- b. Tickets to fundraiser and charity events that benefit city facilities and programs under the jurisdiction of the employee's department.
- c. Tickets to events at city-owned facilities for which the employee has oversight responsibilities.
- d. No more than two tickets per event may be accepted. One of the tickets must be used by the employee.
  - i. This rule does not apply if an entire city department or all employees are given tickets to an event, such as discount tickets for all employees to State Fair.

- ii. This rule does not apply if a category or section of employees are given tickets to an event, such as tickets given to all department directors or tickets given to all employees with a department section.
- iii. This rule does not apply to blocks of complimentary tickets given to a department director for distribution to the general public in accordance with any requirements of the event sponsor, if the department director does not give employees and their family members priority access to the tickets.
- e. Tickets shall not be transferred or sold, except that tickets may be transferred to another employee from the same department who can also represent the city, if the transfer is approved in writing by the employee's supervisor.
- f. Complimentary annual memberships and season tickets shall not be accepted.
- g. If the employee knows that the tickets are offered to the employee at a reduced price or under different conditions from tickets purchased by members of the public because of the employee's employment with the city, employees shall not purchase those tickets as a means to circumvent this gift policy. This provision does not prohibit the city from making discount tickets available to employees.

## **MEALS, TRAVEL, LODGING, OR ENTERTAINMENT**

13. Meals, travel, lodging, and entertainment may be accepted, unless prohibited under Section 10, in connection with a conference, seminar, trade show, or event that is related to the employee's job duties; where the employee is a speaker or presenter; or for training or education that is also being given to other groups who are not employees. Attendance must be approved in accordance with the City's Administrative Directive on travel. Costs must be reasonable and comparable to the costs incurred by other persons attending who are not employees.

## **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

14. These reporting requirements are in addition to any reporting requirements for city employees set out in the Dallas City Code or state law.

15. Employees must file an annual gift disclosure statement with the City Manager or his designee itemizing each ticket, meal, travel, lodging, or entertainment accepted with an estimated value of \$50 or more, or cumulative tickets, meals, travel, lodging, or

entertainment from a single source in a calendar year with an estimated value of \$100 or more. Nominal value gifts described in Section 11 do not need to be reported.

- a. The annual gift disclosure statement must be on a form provided by the City Manager and filed with the City Manager or his designee by no later than 5:00 p.m. on April 30. If April 30 is a Saturday, Sunday, city holiday, or furlough day, the deadline is extended to 5:00 p.m. of the next business day.
- b. The annual gift disclosure statement must include to whom the gift was given, the date the gift was given, the person or entity giving the gift, a description of the gift, and the estimated value of the gift.
- c. An annual gift disclosure statement is not required if the city employee did not receive any reportable gifts.