THE ADVISOR

High moral and ethical standards are essential to assure the trust, respect, and confidence of the people of Alaska.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE ETHICS

Gifts to Legislators and to Legislative Employees

AS 24.60.080 restricts legislators and legislative employees from soliciting, accepting, or receiving gifts. In general, legislators and legislative employees:

- May not solicit, accept, or receive gifts totaling \$250 or more in a calendar year from the same person.
- May not solicit, accept, or receive a gift from a lobbyist.

There are a number of exceptions in to the general gift acceptance rules detailed in AS 24.60.080(c). The gift rules chart on the next page is a handy one-page document you can print and save for reference. **Call the Ethics Office for individualized advice about accepting gifts.**

Common questions about accepting gifts

May I accept a gift card for \$25 for a coffee shop as thank you for a "job well done"?

No. AS 24.60.030(a)(1) states that a legislative employee may not solicit, agree to accept or accept a benefit other than official compensation for the performance of public duties. Do not accept cash, gift cards, or digital currency for doing your job.

Important: Form matters A \$10 book is allowed; \$10 in cash is not

May our office accept the gift of food for immediate consumption as a thank you for our work?

Yes. Gifts of an incidental nature such as candy, cake, flowers, a beverage, and a fruit basket, are permitted.

May I accept a book from a constituent valued at \$10?

It depends on the reason for the gift. The book may be accepted if the giver does so knowing that the legislative employee has an interest in the material. It may not be accepted as compensation for doing their job. No disclosure is required for a single gift of a \$10 book.

May I accept a gift for going above and my job description? An example might be by helping a constituent jumpstart their car.

Yes, you may accept a thank you gift with a value of less than \$250 for going above and beyond your job description.

What if I receive a prohibited gift?

You will have to say, "No, thank you" to the donor and return the gift unless the gift falls within one of the exceptions listed in AS 24.60.080 (c)(1) through (c)(10).



Committee Members

Skip Cook, Chair Deb Fancher Jerry McBeath Conner Thomas Joyce M. Anderson Sen Gary Stevens Sen Löki Tobin Rep DeLena Johnson Rep Sara Hannan

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Hmm...Can I accept this gift?

Better Call Jerry

For informal advice 907-201-0125

In This Issue

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Remember the Two General Gift Rules!

RULE #1

May not solicit, accept, or receive gifts totaling \$250 or more in a calendar year from the same person.

Exceptions to Rule 1

- Hospitality at a residence within the state or at a social event or meal (No disclosure required)
- Discounts generally available to the public or benefits the state (No disclosure required)
- Culturally shared food (No disclosure required)
- Travel and hospitality primarily for the purpose of obtaining information on matters of legislative concern (Disclosure required within 60 days)
- Gifts from an immediate family member per AS 24.60.080(a)(5) (No disclosure required)
- Gifts not associated with the recipient's legislative status (Confidential disclosure required within 30 days)
- "Welcome to Juneau" gifts or discounts during session (No disclosure required)
- Legal services for legislative matter (Disclosure required within 30 days)
- Gift of transportation from a legislator or a legislative employee to a legislator or legislative employee (No disclosure required)
- Charitable contribution or ticket to a sanctioned charity event (Disclosure required within 60 days)

RULE #2

May not solicit, accept, or receive a gift from a lobbyist.

Exceptions to Rule 2

- Food and non-alcoholic beverage for immediate consumption with a value of \$15 or less OR if the food and beverage is provided as part of an event open to all legislators or legislative employees (No disclosure required)
- A contribution, ticket, or ticket-related gift to a sanctioned charitable event with an annual cumulative total value of less than \$250 from an individual lobbyist (No disclosure required)
- A gift unconnected with legislative status and is from immediate family member (Lobbyist spouse, no disclosure required)
- A gift delivered on the premises of a state facility and accepted on behalf of a recognized non-political charitable organization (No disclosure required)
- A compassionate gift (Preapproval and disclosure required within 30 days)

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Here's a tip!

You may not solicit, accept, or receive gifts totaling \$250 or more in a calendar year from the same person. Keep a gift log to track donors, the gifts you receive, and



the value of the gifts. Go to https://ethics.akleg.gov/ disclosures.php to download a gift log.

DISCLAIMER

Information provided is a general overview. Your circumstances may require specific information and advice.

Contact Ethics Committee Administrator Jerry Anderson (The Ethics Guy) at 907-269-0150 or 907-201-0125 to make sure your intended action complies with the Ethics Act AS 24.60.

Disclosure Notes

Remember:

New

Associations

= New

Disclosures

Disclosures must be filed within 30 days of the beginning of an association regardless whether it's during session, a recess, or the interim. If you are unsure if you need to file a disclosure, contact the Ethics Office at 269-0150 or 269-8179.

File within 30 days of the beginning of the association

- Board memberships
- Close economic associations
- State Benefit and Loan Programs
- State Contracts, Leases, and Grants
- Representation of a client for pay before a state agency
- Gift of legal services for legislative matters
- Gift for compassionate reasons

File within 60 days of the beginning of travel

- Gift of travel/hospitality for obtaining information on a matter of legislative concern or for a sanctioned charity event
- Gift to a family member of travel/hospitality or to a sanctioned charity event

File Ethics Disclosures Online. It's Easy!

- 1. Go to http://intranet.akleg.gov/ & scroll down to click on *Login* in the *File an Ethics Disclosure* section.
- 2. Enter the filer's computer login (not email address) and password. NOTE: If the filer is a legislator, use the legislator's computer login and password.
- 3. Click on *Sign in*.
- 4. Choose on the type of disclosure you want to file.
- 5. Complete the form using drop down menus when available. (Remember, gifts of travel are for the purpose of obtaining information about matters of legislative concern. Provide complete information about the donor, a one or two sentence narrative that addresses how the information obtained is a matter of legislative concern, and attach a copy of the agenda.)
- 5. Check your completed disclosure and click "Proceed."
- 6. Review your disclosure and if correct, press "Submit."

When filing travel and/or hospitality disclosures, provide adequate information so the public will understand.

- Avoid the use of acronyms, such as NCSL.
- Provide complete information about the donor.
- Include a description of the topics discussed, forums attended, or other pertinent agenda items.
- Attach a copy of the event agenda.

Need More Help Filing Your Disclosure?

Download a four-page detailed instruction handout at https://ethics.akleg.gov/disclosures.php or contact the Ethics Office at 907-269-0150 or 907-269-8179 if you need more information.

Contact the Select Committee on Legislative Ethics

Mailing Address: PO Box 90251 Anchorage, AK 99509-0251 **Physical Location:** Anchorage Legislative Office Building 1500 W Benson Blvd Suite 220 Anchorage, AK 99503 Phone: 907-269-0150 FAX: 907-269-0152 Email: Ethics.Committee@akleg.gov Website: http://ethics.akleg.gov/