

Common Gift Questions

May a legislative employee accept a gift card for \$25 for a coffee shop as a thank you for helping a constituent?

No. AS 24.60.030(a)(1) states a legislative employee may not solicit, agree to accept or accept a benefit other than official compensation for the performance of public duties.

May a legislative employee accept a book, valued at \$10, from the public?

The employee works for the LAA Information Offices. Informed the employee the book could be accepted since it was not a gift for a 'job well done' but a book on a topic the employee has an interest in. A legislative employee (and a legislator as well) may receive a gift that has a value of less than \$250 in a calendar from the same person. Suggested the employee record the gift on a gift log.

May an office accept the gift of a cake from a constituent as a thank you gift for work on the constituent case?

A gift of a cake is permitted. The cake has no "personal" value to either the office in general or staff in the office.

May a LIO office accept a gift of two smoked salmon filets?

Determined the value of the salmon was approximately \$80 to \$100. The person occasionally visits the LIO office to testify on issues relating to Alaska resources. The gift was to be shared with the legislative offices at the location as well. The gift of the smoked salmon filets could be categorized as similar to a fruit basket or some other type of gift given to LIO staff. The gift may be accepted since the value is less than \$250. LIO staff asked if it was OK to give the name of the constituent if asked by legislative offices. There was no ethical reason why the name could not be provided.

Is a gift disclosure required for a gift of immediate consumption of popcorn received by a legislative office?

No gift disclosure is required for an office gift of an incidental gift such as popcorn for immediate consumption.

Is receiving incidental gifts, like candy and oranges, okay for a legislative employee?

The items you have described and received are indeed considered incidental gifts and are acceptable to receive. You have described that each time you receive such a gift you tell the donor that such a gift is not necessary to assist with any problem the donor may have that would involve the LIO. This is a good ethical practice to avoid even the appearance of the conflict stated in AS 24.60.030(a)(1). Your practice of recording each and every one of these incidental gifts is also a good but not required practice.

May a \$40 thank-you gift be provided for legislative employees who have worked on issues related to a specific legislative office?

This is probably an "incidental gift" given the \$40 suggested price tag. There is a prohibition against a legislative employee accepting a benefit other than official compensation for the performance of public duties under AS 24.60.030(a)(1). "Incidental gifts" were identified in the ethics training sessions as candy, flowers, fruit basket or similar items. These are okay. A gift certificate to Nordstrom's or a restaurant gift certificate was identified as not being appropriate to give or for the legislative employee to accept. If you have a specific idea for your gifts I may be able to assist further.