

SUBCHAPTER 6. ATTENDANCE AT EVENTS, ACCEPTANCE OF HONORARIA, ACCEPTANCE OF COMPENSATION FOR PUBLISHED WORKS, AND ACCEPTANCE OF THINGS OF VALUE

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19:61-6.1 Applicability

The rules in this subchapter apply to all State officials in the Executive branch of State government.

19:61-6.2 Definitions

The following words and terms, as used in this subchapter, shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

"Allowable entertainment expenses" means the costs for a guest speaker, incidental music and other ancillary entertainment at any meal at an event, provided they are moderate and not elaborate or excessive, but does not include the costs of personal recreation, such as being a spectator at or engaging in a sporting or athletic activity which may occur as part of that event.

"Approval" means, for the purposes of N.J.A.C. 19:61-6.4 and 6.5, written permission from the department head to attend and/or participate in an event; and/or to accept direct or indirect benefits in connection with attendance.

"Department head" means the administrative or executive head of the State official's agency or his or her designee.

"Direct benefit" means acceptance by a State official from the sponsor of an event or any other person of travel, meals, accommodation, waiver of conference or event fee or any other costs associated with attending the event for which no payment is made by the State but is not intended to mean nominal refreshments such as nonalcoholic beverages and snacks (doughnuts, pastries and cookies).

"Event" means a meeting, conference, seminar, speaking engagement, symposium, training course, ground-breaking, ribbon-cutting, meal, open house, cocktail party, fundraiser, holiday party, social function, or similar event that takes place in the

"Indirect benefit" means acceptance by a State official from the event sponsor or any other person of reimbursement for costs of travel, meals, accommodation, event fees, or any other costs associated with attending the event for which no reimbursement is made by the State but is not intended to mean nominal refreshments such as nonalcoholic beverages and snacks (doughnuts, pastries and cookies).

"Interested party" means:

1. Any person, or employee, representative or agent thereof, who is or may reasonably be anticipated to be subject to the regulatory, licensing or supervisory authority of the State official's agency;
2. Any supplier, or employee, representative or agent thereof;
3. Any organization that advocates or represents the positions of its members to the State official's agency; or
4. Any organization a majority of whose members are as described in paragraphs 1 through 3 above.

"Personal funds" means funds of a State official. It does not include funds that are loaned, advanced, promised or reimbursed to a State official for any purpose by an interested party.

"Published work" means any tangible medium of expression, including, but not limited to, literary, pictorial, graphic and sculptural matter; sound recordings; and software.

"Reasonable expenditures for travel or subsistence" means commercial travel rates directly to and from an event and food and lodging expenses which are moderate and neither elaborate nor excessive.

"Supplier" means any person that is providing or is seeking to provide or may reasonably be expected to provide goods and/or services to the State official's agency, including, but not limited to, consultants, vendors and lessors.

"Thing of value" includes, but is not limited to, compensation; money; a stock, bond, note or other investment in an entity; employment, offer of employment; gift; reward; honorarium; favor; goods, service; loan; forgiveness of indebtedness; gratuity; property or real property; labor; fee; commission; contribution; rebate or discount in the price of any thing of value; an automobile or other means of personal transportation; entertainment; meal; or any other thing of value offered to or solicited or accepted by a State official in connection with his or her official position.

19:61-6.3 Granting of approval

(a) For the purposes of N.J.A.C. 19:61-6.4 and 6.5, when a department head grants approval to attend an event, the department head shall determine whether a legitimate State purpose will be served by attendance and shall consider the provisions of the Conflicts of Interest Law, the uniform ethics code and the agency code of ethics, any applicable Executive Orders, the guidelines and rules of the Commission, any departmental administrative policies and any other relevant considerations. Relevant considerations include, but are not limited to:

1. The identity of the sponsor;
2. The purpose of the event;
3. The identity of other expected participants;

4. Whether attendance and/or participation in the event will assist the State official in carrying out his or her official duties and support the mission of the agency; and
 5. The monetary value and character of the costs and benefits provided by the sponsor, including whether the costs and benefits are comparable to those offered to or purchased by other attendees.
- (b) Approval shall be requested in writing on the form provided in N.J.A.C. 19:61-6.8. Such forms shall be retained by the State agency for a period of five years from the date of approval of the form.

- iii. Any agency of the federal government, any agency of another state or of two or more states, or any political subdivision of another state.
- (d) If an actual conflict or the appearance of a conflict could arise under the application of (c) above, (b) above shall govern.
- (e) Approvals granted under (c) above must be forwarded to the Commission for review.
- (f) The State official may pay his or her own expenses with his or her personal funds.
- (g) The State official shall not accept an honorarium or fee for a speech or presentation at an event covered by this section.

Examples

An employee of the Department of Environmental Protection has been invited to attend a conference of the Association of Environmental Authorities and has been asked to present a short program to explain a new series of forms being proposed by the Department. The Association has offered to waive the \$200.00 conference fee; the conference program includes morning and afternoon refreshments and lunch. If the Department head approves the employee's attendance and participation in the conference, the employee may accept the waiver of the fee and the refreshments and meal included in the program. A copy of the Department head's approval must be forwarded to the Commission.

The Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC) is considering the purchase of new pollution testing equipment. One of the companies that plans to submit a bid invites several MVC employees to a demonstration of the equipment to be held at a hotel conference center. A seafood buffet will be served after the demonstration. With proper approval, the employees may attend the demonstration, but because the company plans to submit a bid to provide this equipment and is therefore an interested party with respect to the MVC, the employees may not partake of the seafood buffet at the expense of the vendor. The employees may, however, pay the cost of the buffet personally.

Three employees from different units of the Department of Transportation are responsible for weekly monitoring of a construction project. Each Friday morning, they meet with the contractor's representative at the site field office to review the week's progress and to assess projected schedules. The meetings generally last one to two hours; coffee is available, but no other refreshments or meals are served or offered. Because no direct or indirect benefits are offered or provided and because the meetings are part of the employees' job responsibilities, the meetings are not "events" for the purposes of this subchapter.

19:61-6.5 Attendance at an event sponsored by an entity other than an interested party

- (a) The State official shall secure the prior approval of the department head to attend such an event.
- (b) The State may pay the reasonable expenses of the State official associated with attending the event or may permit the State official to accept direct or indirect benefits. Direct or indirect benefits may include the following:
 1. Reimbursement or payment of actual and reasonable expenditures for travel or subsistence and allowable entertainment expenses associated with attending an event in

(a) A State official shall not accept compensation for published work(s) created as part of his or her official duties on State time utilizing State resources, but may accept compensation for published works not created as part of his or her official duties.

(b) A State official shall secure the permission of the department head to accept compensation for published work(s) not created as part of his or her official duties. In determining whether such approval can be granted, the Department head shall consider the provisions of the Conflicts of Interest Law, the uniform ethics code, the agency code of ethics, any applicable Executive Orders, the Commission's Guidelines Governing Outside Activities, any other applicable guidelines or rules of the Commission, any applicable administrative policies of the agency, and the following conditions:

1. Whether compensation is being paid by an interested party;
2. Whether the published work(s) uses or discloses information not generally available to the public;

(c) The State official shall prepare the published work(s) on his or her own time, without using the services of other State officials or resources owned by the State.

(d) The State official shall not use his or her official title in any way in soliciting compensation.

Examples

As part of his official duties, a Department of Transportation employee evaluates surveying equipment and trains Department employees on its use. The employee recently completed an in-depth evaluation of ten different types of surveying instruments and made a recommendation to the purchasing unit. The employee would like to publish the entire report in Transportation Magazine. He has been offered \$500 for the article. The Department must make a policy decision as to whether the article may be published. The employee is prohibited from accepting compensation for the article, even if the Department grants permission for the publication, since it was created as part of his official duties prepared on State time and utilizing State resources.

An Environmental Technician at the Department of Environmental Protection has been asked to write an article for an environmental journal on how New Jersey's automobile emission standards differ from those of Pennsylvania. He has been offered \$500 for the article. The Environmental Technician is permitted to publish the article and receive compensation since it is on a subject matter related to, but not a part of, his official duties, so long as he prepares the article at home, on his own time, without using any State resources.

19:61-6.8 Approval request form

(a) State officials shall use the following form to request approval to attend events.

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL FOR ATTENDANCE AT EVENT

DEPARTMENT OF _____
Name _____ Division _____

Title _____ Telephone _____ FAX _____
E-mail address _____
Event _____
Sponsor _____
Is the sponsor an "interested party"? Yes ___ No ___
Is the State official a speaker, panel participant or resource person? Yes ___ No ___
Is the sponsor an agency of the federal government, one or more other states or a political
subdivision thereof? Yes ___ No ___
Is the sponsor a nonprofit organization? Yes ___ No ___
If Yes, is the employee or agency a member? Yes ___ No ___
Does the nonprofit organization have any contracts with the State? Yes ___ No ___
Location _____ Date(s) _____
Overnight accommodation required? Yes ___ No ___
Out-of-state travel required? Yes ___ No ___
Estimated cost? \$ _____
Agency to pay cost? Yes ___ No ___
Sponsor to pay cost? Yes ___ No ___
Employee to pay cost? Yes ___ No ___
Reason for attendance: _____

received as a result of mass advertising mailings to the general business public if such use does not create an impression of a conflict of interest or a violation of the public trust. An impression of a conflict may be created, for example, if a State official in a regulatory agency uses a pocket calendar conspicuously marked with the name of a company that it regulates or if an office in a State agency displays a wall calendar from a vendor, creating the impression of endorsement. If circumstances exist which create a reasonable doubt as to the intention with which the gift or benefit was offered, (c) above shall govern. The provisions of (b), (c) and (e) above do not apply to items of trivial value.

(e) The Department head shall keep records of all such occurrences, names of the State officials, individuals, and companies involved, and the final disposition of the thing of value.