



# THE VOICE OF ETHICS

## MAY 2013

## The Ohio Ethics Law and Gifts

At last, summertime has arrived! Warm sunny days, outdoor concerts, and golf outings are just a few reasons to love this time of year!

As the weather warms up, the Ohio Ethics Commission often notes an increase in questions about gifts or outings offered to public servants. As a reminder, the Ethics Law prohibits a public employee or official from soliciting or accepting "anything of value," if the thing of value could have a substantial and improper influence on the performance of public duties. "Anything of value" is defined in state law to include, essentially, anything with any monetary value. Gifts, golf outings, theater or



sporting event tickets, vacations, and jewelry are all items that the Commission has specifically identified as things of substantial value.

Entering public service means recognizing that some gifts and entertainment are prohibited. If a public official or employee is offered a gift, golf outing, or other item of substantial value, the public servant

must determine whether it is acceptable. Individuals and other parties that are doing or seeking to do business with, interested in matters before, or regulated by a public agency are improper sources of substantial gifts and entertainment to public servants. However, gifts of nominal value or gifts from personal

friends who are not improper sources are allowed.

To assist public servants in making this determination, the Ethics Commission issued a gift bulletin which provides guidance and explains when the law permits or prohibits acceptance of gifts.

### Ethics Commission Webinars – Registration Information!

The Ethics Commission is pleased to announce the 2013 Webinar schedule! Beginning in July, one webinar per month will provide an overview of the Ohio Ethics Law. These one-hour sessions can be "attended" at your desk, using your own telephone and computer.

Webinar dates are listed below. [Click here to register](#) for a webinar. Participants will receive an email at the conclusion of the webinar verifying attendance.

#### Ohio Ethics Commission 2013 Webinars

- August 6, 2013 – 1 p.m.
- September 3, 2013 – 10 a.m.
- October 11, 2013 – 10 a.m.
- November 5, 2013 – 1 p.m.
- December 18, 2013 – 1 p.m.

**Need more  
information or  
have an idea for an  
article?**

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