Department of Economic and Community Development

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DECD Ethics Statement

The mission of the Department of Economic and Community Development ("DECD") is to provide leadership and service to enhance the state's economy and to expand opportunities for individuals, business and community prosperity, promote the state's cultural and tourism assets, and improve the quality of life for Connecticut citizens. As Department of Economic and Community Development employees, we share responsibility to administer millions of tax dollars, we work with confidential information that is extremely sensitive and we have financial relationships with the private and public sectors. Given this responsibility, it is important to reiterate a strong code of ethics for all department employees.

The "Code of Ethics for Public Officials" is set forth in Connecticut General Statutes, Chapter 10, Part 1, Sections 1-79 through 1-90a as may be amended from time to time (the "Code"). These sections prescribe proper conduct for state employees and officials in the discharge of their employment. This ethics statement, in accordance with Conn. Gen. Stat. sec. 1-83(b)(2), is to draw your attention to the Code of Ethics statutes and to clearly define the policies of the department concerning outside employment or business involvement, the solicitation or acceptance of gifts and gratuities and the proper handling of confidential and sensitive information.

In order that we may all avoid possible violations of the Code of Ethics, it is necessary for the department to be aware of any situations in which there is a real, potential, or apparent conflict of interest involving its employees.

Prohibitions

- **Confidential Information.** No employee of the DECD shall use, disclose, or distribute confidential information gained in state service, and in particular, from a client of the agency, for personal financial benefit or to financially benefit a family member, or a business which they or a family member are associated. No employee of the DECD shall use state equipment or materials for other than state business purposes. Much of the information used by the agency is confidential. Employees may not use any information available from computer printouts, computer terminals, records, verbal communications with clients or co-workers or from any other source except in the appropriate administration of our programs. Any misuse of information may result in disciplinary action.

- **Financial Benefit.** No employee of the DECD shall use his or her official position for personal financial benefit or to financially benefit a family member, or a business with which they or a family member are associated.
- **Gifts.** No employee of the DECD shall directly or indirectly solicit or accept any gift or gratuity from restricted donors, who include: (1) any registered lobbyist, (2) any contractor pre-qualified by the Department of Administrative Services, or (3) from any person or organization with whom the DECD has, has had, or may expect to have, a business relationship which could cause, or create the appearance of, a conflict with or influence the performance of the employee's duties with the DECD.

"Gift" is defined in the Code, and generally refers to something of value that you (or in certain circumstances a member of your family) receive directly and personally unless you provide consideration of equal or greater value (as in, pay for the item). There are certain items that are excluded from the definition of "gift" under the Code. The complete list of exemptions is found in Conn. Gen. Stat. sec. 1-79(e) (1)-(18).

While the Code includes certain exemptions for gifts of small value, including food and drink, it is the policy of the DECD that its employees decline all gifts from persons in the categories identified above or which are otherwise given because of an employee's position at the DECD. Any gift or gratuity that a person or organization attempts to give an employee of the DECD shall be immediately returned. You are permitted to participate in events, such as dinners, as long as there is compliance with the gift exemption in the Code. That exemption limits a public official or state employee to under $50.00 aggregate in food and beverage per year from a restricted donor, provided the donor or his/her representative is in attendance when the food and beverage
is being consumed.

DECD employees are also prohibited from contracting for goods and services, for personal use, with any person doing business with or seeking to do business with the DECD, unless it is on the same terms that such goods or services are available to other members of the public.

- **Outside Employment & Conflict of Interests.** No employee shall accept employment with any consultant, contractor, appraiser, or any other organization or individual nor shall any DECD employee have, directly or indirectly, a financial interest in any business, firm, or enterprise doing business with this agency that would cause, or create the appearance of, a conflict with or influence the performance of the employee's duties with DECD. Any situations that an employee believes or expects may represent a substantial or potential conflict of interest shall be immediately reported to and discussed with their manager.[1] Upon request by the

[1] A "substantial" conflict of interest exists if a public official or state employee has reason to believe or expect that he or she, his or her spouse, a dependent child, or an associated business will derive a direct monetary gain or suffer a direct monetary loss by virtue of his or her official activity. (It does not exist if any benefit or detriment accrues to any such person as a member of a profession, occupation or group to no greater extent than any other member of such profession, occupation or group.)
A "potential" conflict of interest exists if a public official or state employee, in the discharge of his or her official state duties, would be required to take an action that would affect his or her financial interest, or the financial interest of his or her spouse, parent, brother, sister, child, spouse of the child, or an associated business. Unlike a "substantial" conflict of interest, there is no requirement that the financial impact be direct or that it affect the

manager, the employee will put the matter in writing for review. This notification will provide an opportunity for a further review by departmental officials of the degree of potential conflict of interest, if any, and permit appropriate actions, if necessary.

Other employment is generally barred if the other employer can benefit from the state employee's official actions. For example, such other employment would be barred if the individual in his or her state capacity has regulatory or contractual authority over the other entity. An agency employee is not prohibited, however, from using his or her expertise for private gain, as long as no provision of the Code of Ethics is violated in the process.

No employee of the Department of Economic and Community Development shall allow any private obligation of employment or enterprise to impair their independence of judgment with respect to their official duties or to take precedence over his/her responsibility to the department.

If there is deemed to be a violation of the Code of Ethics, the employee may be required to give up either his or her outside employment or state position or take other appropriate steps in order to resolve the Code of Ethics violation.

The foregoing policies apply to all employees of the Department of Economic and Community Development, and it shall be the responsibility of each employee to be familiar with them and to comply with them. To that end, each employee will be given a copy of the policy and will be asked to sign a form indicating its receipt and review. Employees who do not comply with the above policies or who are found to have violated the Code of Ethics for Public Officials, C.G.S. Sections 1-79 to 1-90a, as may be amended, may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from state service.

This is an excellent department with a dedicated and competent staff and these measures simply reiterate what is the norm for responsible and professional conduct. It is important for us to maintain the highest professional standards in the discharge of our duties.

If you have any questions or would like to read the full text of the Ethics Code, please visit the Office of State Ethics' website at http://www.ct.gov/ethics/site/default.asp .

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individual differently from other members of his or her profession, occupation, or group. However, there still must be a reasonable expectation on the part of the state employee or public official that there will be some financial impact based on his or her actions. A "potential" conflict of interest does not exist if the financial interest is "de minimus" (under $100) or if the interest is not distinct from that of a substantial segment of the general public (e.g., all taxpayers).