GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

DOING BUSINESS WITH INTEGRITY

Introduction

You are receiving this because you are a contractor or a vendor who does repeated business with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO), Government of the District of Columbia, or you are an organization or individual outside the OCFO with whom we frequently interact.

Our purpose is to advise you of the high expectation of integrity that we strive to bring to bear in all of our business relationships.

Environment of Trust

The Office of the Chief Financial Officer is committed to maintaining working relationships that are founded on fair and honest exchanges in all of our business interactions. Our employees are held to high standards of ethical behavior in the conduct of their official business.

We want to share these expectations of ethical business practices with you to ensure that our business relationships are conducted with the highest level of honesty and integrity.

OCFO Code of Conduct for Employees

The OCFO Code of Conduct imparts three fundamental values for employees:

- Employees should conduct themselves in such a manner as to maintain and enhance the integrity and professional reputation of the OCFO organization
- Employees should not use their position to secure unwarranted privileges, awards, or exemptions for themselves or others
- Employees should avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest between the employee's private interest and the employee's official duties.

For your reference, the OCFO Code of Conduct can be accessed electronically at www.cfo.dc.gov. Go to Information, click on Integrity and Oversight, then click on Integrity Documents to reach the Code of Conduct.

Confidentiality of Financial and Other Information

We expect our employees to maintain absolute confidentiality concerning all information that they obtain, observe, or create relating to the financial affairs of those we do business with. We vigorously investigate any compromise of confidentiality by employees or any attempts to improperly obtain such information by private parties or businesses.

Bribery and Conflict of Interest

In addition to our standards of conduct, there are certain criminal statutes in the federal criminal code relating to bribery and conflict of interest that apply not only to employees of the federal government, but also to employees of the District of Columbia.

- The offer of anything of value in expectation of specific performance by a government employee is a crime, and even the appearance of such activity should be avoided.

- Employees may not accept anything of value (other than their government salaries) for the performance of their duties. This is outlined below under Gratuities and Other Gift Rules.

- Our employees are required to report all offers of bribes and gratuities to us, and we ensure that these matters are investigated and addressed. Likewise, we encourage anyone who believes they may have been solicited for a bribe or gratuity by an OCFO employee to report the matter immediately, as indicated at the end of this document.

- We also expect our employees to avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts of interest. A particularly sensitive issue for government employees is the offer of employment with a company doing business with the OCFO. At any point when a government employee is considering employment with a private company that has a business relationship with the government, that employee must discontinue work on any assignment involving that company or face the very real possibility of violating conflict of interest statutes. This could also jeopardize the company's eligibility to be awarded government contracts.

- Employees are also expressly forbidden from performing official duties in situations involving friends, relatives or persons or businesses with whom they, or their family members, have a financial relationship. At any point where such a relationship is discovered or develops, the employee must discontinue their involvement in the official matter. For the employee and the business entity to continue to conduct official business after such a conflict is evident, would be inappropriate and possibly illegal.

Gratuities

It is always gratifying to hear that our staff has provided exemplary service to those with whom we do business. Sometimes, however, the expression of appreciation is made in a form that is inappropriate for government employees to accept.

OCFO employees are prohibited by law from accepting money or other things of value as an appreciation for a job well done. Sometimes even the mere offer of something of value may violate bribery and gratuity statutes. A more appropriate expression of gratitude for the service rendered is a letter to the employee's supervisor. If you don't know who that is, you may simply send your letter to the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, and it will be routed to the proper official.

Other Gift Rules

Gifts of food and/or beverages, even during holiday seasons and other celebratory occasions, are not acceptable if the giver has a business relationship of any kind with the D.C. Government. Such offers, while well-intentioned, tend to give the impression of a special relationship between the giver and the government employee.

This rule does not apply to the offer and acceptance of an insignificant item, such as a soft drink, coffee, donuts and other modest items of food and refreshments when not offered as part of a meal. Additional information on gift rules and exceptions is contained in OCFO Code of Conduct, which can be accessed electronically at www.cfo.dc.gov. Go to Information, click on Integrity and Oversight, then click on Integrity Documents to reach the Code of Conduct.

Compliance with Contracting Rules and Regulations

Ensuring compliance with the provisions of contracts is an important expectation of government employees. Even so, we have seen examples where the rules were not followed, usually based on the "need to get the job done." Such behavior puts both the government employee and the contractor in jeopardy.

If modifications to existing contracts are necessary, they should be formally pursued in accordance with OCFO contracting rules and regulations. No work outside the specifications of a contract should be performed without an approved contract modification. Performing work outside of contract specifications or beyond authorized funding, could result in a default for the contractor and denial of payment for such work. In the more extreme cases, failure to comply with contracting regulations could be considered fraud and may be investigated as a criminal violation.

Reporting Misconduct, Fraud, Waste and Abuse

The OCFO has a zero tolerance policy for fraud and misconduct involving its employees and programs. Similarly, we do not tolerate attempts to corrupt our employees.

The Office of Integrity and Oversight is an independent entity of the OCFO with responsibility for protecting the integrity of the OCFO and preventing fraud and other misconduct in OCFO programs. OIO conducts investigations of alleged employee misconduct and works closely with federal and District law enforcement agencies in investigating criminal offenses affecting the integrity of the OCFO.

We all want the government's business to be conducted fairly, impartially, and with the highest degree of integrity. The best way to ensure this is to report any indication that illegal acts or administrative misconduct may have occurred. Here is how you can report such matters, by telephone, in person, mail, or electronically:

OCFO Office of Integrity and Oversight

1100 4th Street, S.W.; Suite 750-E
Washington, DC 20024
(202) 442-6433

In addition to receiving your report, investigators are available to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about the matter. Reporting can also be done electronically at the OCFO website: www.cfo.dc.gov. Under Information, click on the Integrity and Oversight link, and then click on Reporting Incidents and Concerns.

OCFO Confidential Hotline

In order to address any concern about reporting anonymously, the OCFO has contracted with an independent, third-party organization that provides a confidential hotline service. This hotline is available for reporting allegations of OCFO employee misconduct, and fraud, waste and abuse involving OCFO programs.

Reports can be made by telephone to this toll-free hotline, which is staffed 24 hours a day, at 1-877-252-8805, or it can be accessed at www.ocfo.ethicspoint.com.

District of Columbia Office of the Inspector General

Reports of fraud, waste and abuse may be reported to the Office of the Inspector General by telephone at 1-800-521-1639, or electronically at www.oig.dc.gov.

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