A Holiday Reminder from the Board of Ethics

This holiday season, please keep in mind the Louisiana Code of Governmental Ethics and the law concerning food and drink as well as gifts. Remember who is a prohibited source for you and for your colleagues under the Code of Ethics.

According to Louisiana Revised Statutes

Generally, a public employee may not:

1) Receive anything other than his normal salary and benefits because of his position as a public employee (La. R.S. 42:1111A(1))
2) Accept or solicit anything, directly or indirectly, from a company or individual that has a business or contractual relationship with his agency, including vendors and contractors (La. R.S. 42:1115A(1))
3) Accept or solicit anything, directly or indirectly, from a person who is seeking, for compensation, to influence the passage or defeat of legislation by the public servant's agency
4) Accept or solicit anything, directly or indirectly, from a company or an individual that is regulated by his agency (La. R.S. 42:1115B(1))
5) Accept or solicit anything, directly or indirectly, from a company or individual that has an economic interest in the performance of the employee's public job duties (La. R.S. 42:1115B(2)).

Food and Drink Regulations

The Code of Ethics does not prohibit a public employee from accepting complimentary food and drink when the public employee is the personal guest of the giver. *However*, a representative of the company or the individual providing the food and drink must be physically present when you consume the food or drink. Additionally, the public employee may not accept more than $60 in food and/or drink at a single meal or event. This does not include tax or gratuity.

Gifts

Other than food and drink, any other type of gift or donation is generally prohibited. A *limited* exception to this general rule is for promotional items that have no subs tantial resale value. In order to qualify, these items must be permanently imprinted with a company or organization's name or logo and must be of very minimal to little resale value (such as t-shirts, pens, hats, or cups). Items such as money, gift cards, tickets, and other gifts are strictly prohibited. School employees of a prekindergarten, kindergarten, elementary, or secondary school are allowed to receive a gift with a value of $25 or less from students or on behalf of students.