

Gift Acceptance

Resource Page - What You Need to Know in Less than 5 Minutes

What is a gift?

Anything with monetary value, including vendor giveaways. Illinois law is more specific, defining gifts as:

- Gratuities
- Cash
- Loans
- Fee Waivers
- Entertainment
- Discounts
- Food and Drink
- Honoraria for speaking engagements related to your university position

Where can I find guidance?

Per the [Illinois State Officials and Employees Ethics Act \(5 ILCS 430/10-10\)](#), University employees and those family members living in their household, are restricted from soliciting or accepting gifts of any sort from prohibited sources. Prohibited sources are people or businesses that do business or seek to do business with the University. In most instances, but not all, prohibited sources are vendors. This restriction is commonly referred to as the "Gift Ban." [Illinois Executive Order 15-09 \(January 13, 2015\)](#), further restricts gift acceptance.

Exceptions to the gift ban include:

- The gift is given under the same conditions as the general public; e.g., a discount offered by a local retailer is acceptable if offered to all university employees.** (Green box, green bow)
- The gift is from an inheritance or other transfer at death.** (Light green box, pink bow)
- The gift is from a relative.** (Yellow box, blue bow)
- The gift is given to you by another university or government employee. Holiday, wedding, retirement, and other related gifts from co-workers are allowable.** (Dark blue box, purple bow)
- Educational Materials and Missions. This important exception addresses gifts from prohibited sources related to official university business in the form of travel, conferences, or speaking engagements. *video coming soon** (Grey box, red polka-dot bow)
- The gift is given to you on the basis of personal friendship.** (Purple box, gold bow)

What about food and/or beverages?

Food or beverages may not be accepted from a prohibited source unless they are: 1) of minimal value and, 2) are served at a business meeting or reception attended in the course of official university duties. Can this gift be accepted if:

- There is a speaker or presentation during the meal, and the food is of minimal value. → **YES**
- The event is a reception or meal off-site before, during, or after a conference and there is no speaker or business agenda, or the meal is of more than minimal value → **NO**

Options if you accept an unallowable gift:

- Return the gift.
- Donate the gift itself to a tax-exempt charity.
- Keep the gift and make a monetary donation to a tax-exempt charity equal to the gift's market value.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

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EthicsLine

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COMMON SENSE!

Never accept a gift offered in an attempt to influence your official actions as an employee, or a gift that might create the appearance of influence.