



STATE OF WYOMING
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

JIM GERINGER
GOVERNOR

STATE CAPITOL BUILDING
CHEYENNE, WY 82002

STATE OF WYOMING
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
INTERIM EXECUTIVE ORDER

1997-4

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Office of the Governor of the State of Wyoming, I, Jim Geringer, Governor of the State of Wyoming, hereby issue this Executive Order adopting the following Executive Branch Code of Ethics in the interest of better serving the citizens of the State of Wyoming through the provision of ethical standards applicable to all public officials, elected officials, appointees, and employees of the Executive Branch of the State of Wyoming.

STATE OF WYOMING
EXECUTIVE BRANCH CODE OF ETHICS

1. **Purpose.** Those who serve the people of the State of Wyoming should do so with integrity. Neither impropriety nor the appearance of impropriety should occur. This Code of Ethics is intended to serve as a yardstick by which the conduct

of all who serve in the Executive Branch of the State of Wyoming can be measured.

2. **Scope.** This Code of Ethics is applicable to all employment-related activities of public officials, elected officials, appointees and employees of the Executive Branch of the State of Wyoming. The term "public employee" shall be used in this Code of Ethics to include all public officials, appointees (whether or not they receive compensation) and employees of the Executive Branch. This Code of Ethics extends, but does not supersede, those duties and standards of conduct which are delineated in constitution, statute, or rule. In the event of any conflict between this Code of Ethics and any applicable constitution, statute, or rule, the constitution, statute or rule shall prevail.

3. **Statement on Gender Pronouns.** Throughout this Code of Ethics, gender pronouns are used interchangeably. In cases where there is one individual holding a particular office, the gender pronoun applicable to the person holding that office as of the date of this writing has been used. In all other instances, the drafters have attempted to utilize each gender pronoun in equal numbers, with random distribution.

4. **Administration of this Code of Ethics.** This Code of Ethics shall be administered by each agency of the State of Wyoming in accordance with the following:

A. No agency shall delete any part of this Code of Ethics.

B. An agency head who receives an allegation of a violation of this Code of Ethics shall promptly investigate to determine whether the allegation is true. Allegations which are found to be *de minimis* in nature shall be handled accordingly. If the allegation is true, the agency head shall take appropriate action. For permanent employees, such actions shall be in accordance with the State of Wyoming Personnel Rules.

C. Allegations concerning violations of this Code of Ethics by an agency head or appointee shall be investigated by the Governor or his designee. Allegations which are found to be *de minimis* in nature shall be handled accordingly. If the allegation is true, the Governor or his designee shall take appropriate action.

5. General Responsibilities. All public employees shall:

- A. Uphold the Constitutions of the United States and of the State of Wyoming.
- B. Abide by the laws of the United States and of the State of Wyoming.
- C. Carry out the policies and objectives of the State of Wyoming established by statute, executive order, or rule, while adhering to established standards for work and performance.
- D. Work in cooperation with other public employees, and act within the scope of the authority delegated to them.
- E. Protect and conserve all property owned, held by, or leased to the State of Wyoming, including public records. [See Wyo. Stat. §§ 16-4-201 through 205.]
- F. Be honest and fair in performing public service.
- G. Strive to be honorable, courteous, and dedicated to advancing the public good.
- H. Avoid conduct that compromises the integrity of the public office or creates the appearance of impropriety.

6. Prohibited Activities. Except as provided in Section 7, no public employee shall engage in:

- A. Any activity which constitutes a conflict of interest with her employment. Such prohibited conduct includes, but is not necessarily limited to:
 - i. Using public office or public employment for personal gain.

ii. Taking official action in a matter in which the public employee has a close personal or financial relationship to a party.

iii. Engaging in activities which conflict with the public employee's official position of employment.

iv. Except as allowed by state law or State of Wyoming Personnel Rules, giving preferential treatment to any person.

v. Except when functioning as an advocate for a client or an agency, making decisions which are not independent and impartial.

B. Conduct which constitutes an abuse of authority. [See Section 7G (Allowed Activities) of this Code of Ethics, for a discussion of activities such as fund raising for recognized organizations which take place on the public employee's own time, which generally do not constitute an abuse of authority.] Conduct which constitutes an abuse of authority includes, but is not necessarily limited to:

i. Using or allowing the use by any private party of official information obtained through or in connection with the public employee's employment by the State of Wyoming, unless such information is available to the general public or unless dissemination is permitted by law.

ii. Awarding, participating in a decision to award or participating in the administration of a State of Wyoming contract, if the employee or any person with whom the employee has a close personal or financial relationship [this includes all members of the public employee's immediate family] is a party to the contract.

iii. Except as provided for in Sections 7A and 7B (Allowed Activities) of this Code of Ethics, acceptance or solicitation by a supervisor of contributions or gifts

from subordinate employees. A supervisor may neither solicit nor accept gifts directly or indirectly, for herself or for another person.

iv. Accepting meal expense, lodging or reimbursement for travel or expenses incident to travel on official business from any source other than the State of Wyoming without approval of the agency head. Under no circumstances should a state employee accept items of this nature or gifts if the employee or his agency is involved in an adversarial proceeding with the outside contributing source.

C. Outside employment or any other outside activity which is incompatible with the full and proper discharge of the public employee's duties and responsibilities to the State of Wyoming. [For this reason, all honoraria, fees for speaking engagements, and other such compensation received because of the public employee's position with the State of Wyoming must be deposited in the General Fund.] Activities incompatible with the public employee's duties include, but are not necessarily limited to:

i. Accepting any fee, compensation, gift, payment of expense or any other thing of monetary value in circumstances which create the appearance of a conflict of interest or impropriety, whether or not such conflict of interest or impropriety actually exists.

ii. Receiving a salary or any other thing of monetary value from a private source as compensation for the public employee's services to the State of Wyoming.

D. The use of or allowing the use of property owned or held by the State of Wyoming [including leased property] for any purpose other than carrying on the official business of the State of Wyoming. Prohibited activities include:

i. Selling or soliciting for personal gain any product or service such as cosmetics, food items, or household goods and services, during official office hours in or on

property owned or held by the State of Wyoming. The agency head may make written exceptions to this prohibition for solicitation by non-profit organizations.

ii. Transacting personal business during work hours to the extent that it interferes or detracts from the employee's performance of his duties.

iii. Unless required for official business and previously approved by the public employee's supervisor, the use of any facility or building owned or leased by the State of Wyoming as the principal residence or address of any business other than the agency by whom the public employee is employed.

7. Allowed Activities. A public employee may, notwithstanding the provisions of Section 6 above:

A. Solicit or accept voluntary gifts of nominal value or nominal donations made on a special occasion. Permissible gifts include voluntary gifts made upon the occasion of marriage, illness, or retirement, or made for charitable or civic purposes.

B. Solicit or accept any thing of monetary value from a friend, parent, spouse, child or other close relative when it is clear from the circumstances that the motivation for the action is a personal or familial relationship.

C. Accept loans from banks or other financial institutions on customary terms of finance for the proper and usual activities of the public employee, such as home mortgage loans.

D. Accept unsolicited advertising or promotional material of nominal value, such as pens, pencils, note pads, and calendars.

E. Engage in a reasonable amount of communication with family members, day care providers, medical professionals, and similarly situated individuals during the work day. [It is incumbent upon each

public employee to learn from her supervisor what is considered reasonable in a particular situation.]

F. Engage in teaching, lecturing, or writing for compensation, when those activities are not related to the public employee's employment by the State of Wyoming. [Each public employee should seek approval from her supervisor prior to engaging in such teaching, lecturing, or writing for compensation.]

G. In his private capacity, solicit persons or organizations to obtain goods, services, grants, or loans on behalf of a recognized charitable or fraternal organization.

8. Requests for Approval of Activities. In all cases enumerated above where a public employee is advised to consult with his supervisor prior to engaging in an activity, and in every instance where the public employee is not certain whether a particular activity is allowed by the Code of Ethics, he should consult with his supervisor prior to engaging in the questioned activity. If the public employee requests a written response from the supervisor, the supervisor should respond in writing. This Code of Ethics provides that:

A. No public employee shall be penalized for inquiring of her supervisor regarding prior approval of an activity in which she wishes to engage.

B. If a public employee inquires regarding an activity in which he wishes to engage and his supervisor informs him that engaging in such activity would violate this Code of Ethics, and the public employee then engages in such activity, his supervisor may take appropriate disciplinary action. For permanent employees, such actions shall be in accordance with the State of Wyoming Personnel Rules.

9. Elected Officials. Elected officials occupy their positions as a result of political election. As such, they may participate in political activities. Elected officials must disclose items or services received from outside sources¹ which have a value of

¹ Items do not include inherited items. Outside sources do not include family members.

\$250 or more.² The disclosure shall be made by filing a list of the items or services received during each calendar year with the Secretary of State. The filing shall be made by February 15 of the following year. The list shall be divided into items which will be retained by the elected official as a private gift and items which will be left as property of the State of Wyoming when the elected official leaves office.

This Order shall be effective on December 15, 1997, and shall remain in effect until amended.

Given under my hand and the Executive Seal of the State of Wyoming this 3rd day of December, 1997.

Jim Geringer
Governor of the State of Wyoming

²Donations to a political campaign reported pursuant to Wyo. Stat. § 22-25-106 are exempt from this reporting requirement.