

Guest exception to the prohibited gifts provision Complimentary Lunch

A UNT System Enterprise employee asked the UNT System Administration Ethics & Compliance Program to sign a vendor's form certifying that receipt of a complimentary meal in connection with a briefing presented by the vendor does not violate the letter or spirit of any UNT System gifts and ethics rules. The request states that the vendor with whom the UNT System conducts more than nominal business represents that the meal has a market value of \$50.00, it is not offering the meal in return for favorable treatment, and the UNT System Enterprise is not under any obligation to acquire or use its product or services by accepting the meal.

Opinion

The component's ethics policy generally prohibits a System Administration employee who exercise[s] discretion in connection with contracts, purchases, payments, claims, and other pecuniary transactions of government from soliciting, accepting, or agreeing to accept any benefit from any person the employee knows is interested in or is likely to become interested in any contract, purchase, payment claim, or transaction involving the employee's discretion. However, this prohibition generally does not apply to food when the employee is a guest of a vendor who offers a meal, a representative of the vendor is present when the meal is accepted. This exception applies even when the employee kn