**Section 600.662 Employee Conduct**

a) Standards of Conduct

Employees of the Office shall obey the rules of conduct of the Office and shall be aware that the absence of a specific published rule of conduct covering an act tending to discredit an employee, the Office or the State of Illinois does not mean the act is condoned or permissible or would not call for, and result in, disciplinary action.

b) Conflicts of Interest

1) General Provisions

No employee shall violate any law, rule, regulation, policy or standard concerning conflicts of interest, nor shall any employee engage in any conduct in which the employee's private interests or involvements are, or may reasonably be construed to be, in conflict with or detrimental to the objective performance of his or her official duties and responsibilities.

2) Disclosure Statement to the Auditor General

A) The purpose of the Disclosure Statement required by this subsection (b)(2) is to aid the Auditor General in maintaining the objectivity and impartiality of the conduct of the activities of the Office and, when a potential conflict is unavoidable, to provide for the full disclosure of the facts and circumstances involved.

B) Disclosure Statements shall be confidential. The Auditor General shall designate a custodian who shall be responsible for the safekeeping of Disclosure Statements. The Auditor General, a Deputy Auditor General, the custodian, and others designated by the Auditor General on an as-needed basis may review Disclosure Statements.

C) Each employee shall file with the custodian a Disclosure Statement indicating involvements or relationships that could affect the employee's performance of his or her official duties.

D) Employees shall file their Disclosure Statements with the custodian immediately upon employment and shall refile their Statements by May 1 annually. Employees shall be under a continuing duty to advise the custodian promptly, in writing, of any change that would affect an answer given on their current Disclosure Statements or that might affect the objective or efficient performance of their duties.

c) Political Activities

1) Participation in Public Campaigns

An employee may participate in public campaigns while in the employment of the Office provided that the employee's official position is not used, shown or advertised in connection with the campaign and that the employee does not violate any prohibitions of this subsection (c).

2) Prohibited Activity

Employees shall not, at any time, engage in the following actions:

A) Use, threaten to use, or offer to use the influence or authority of his or her position to coerce or to persuade any person to follow any course of political action or to make any contribution to a political cause.

B) Use State time, position, money or property for the purposes of political activity.

C) Hold an elective or appointive office in any political party or other organization whose primary function is to promote and encourage the election of certain individuals to public office.

D) Participate in or contribute to any public campaign that involves a candidate who is running for, currently employed by, or on leave from, an office or agency over which the Auditor General has audit authority.

E) Hold any elective or appointive office that would require attention to duties during the Office's working hours.

d) Official Conduct

1) Criticism of Agencies

No employee shall make use of any information gained in the course of his or her employment with the Office to publicly criticize any State, local or private agency.

2) Handling Antagonism or Refusals

When an employee is faced with a situation in which the agency's representative appears antagonistic or refuses to release information or documentation, the employee shall report that fact to his or her supervisor. Employees shall at no time threaten or coerce any person.

3) Self-disqualification from Certain Assignments

When an employee receives an assignment involving a person acting as a representative for any public or private agency with whom he or she has had business or other relationships of a nature that might impair, or give the appearance of impairing, the employee's impartiality or independence, the employee shall discuss with his or her supervisor the possible need to have the matter reassigned.

4) Agencies Under Audit

If an audit team member is approached about possible employment with an agency under audit, he or she will notify his or her supervisor promptly. An employee may not initiate or pursue employment activities with an agency for which the employee is currently participating in an audit.

5) Use of Identification

Credentials issued to employees are for use only in establishing identity or authority in connection with official duties. Employees shall not allow the use of their credentials by any other person.

e) Use of State Time, Position and Property

1) Personal Use Prohibited

Employees are forbidden to use State time, position or property for personal purposes.

2) Protection and Inspection of Property

Employees have a responsibility to protect and conserve all State property. Consistent with applicable laws, the Office retains the right to control or inspect property that it owns or maintains, including, but not limited to, items such as desks, lockers, desk and cabinet drawers, vehicles, and computers.

3) Liability for Damage or Loss

Employees may be held financially liable for damage to or loss of State property resulting from their negligent, willful or wanton acts, or omissions. Costs for damage to or loss of State property may be deducted from the responsible employee's pay.

4) Reporting Damage or Loss

Employees shall promptly report any loss, theft or damage to State property or documents in their custody to their supervisor.

5) Return of Equipment

Upon leaving their position with the Office, employees shall return all property and credentials assigned to them. At its option, the Office may withhold an employee's final paycheck pending return of State property and credentials assigned to or in the possession of that employee or may deduct the value of any unreturned State property from the departing employee's final paycheck.

f) Disclosure of Official or Confidential Information

1) Testifying and Responding to Subpoenas

When requested or subpoenaed to testify or produce documentation pertaining to confidential information before an executive or legislative commission or a court of law, employees shall notify the Auditor General prior to giving the testimony or producing documentation.

2) Engagements to Speak or Write

A) No employee may accept invitations for public addresses or submit articles for publication that concern the official activities of the Office without obtaining the prior approval of the Auditor General.

B) An employee may not accept compensation from, or permit his or her expenses to be paid by, sources other than the State of Illinois for speaking engagements or writings performed as official duties, except with the prior approval of the Auditor General.

g) Secondary Employment

Employees may not hold secondary employment or be involved in a private enterprise if the employment or enterprise actually does or has the potential to interfere or conflict with his or her State position, or reasonably may be viewed by others as interfering with or conflicting with his or her State position. Employees who engage in secondary employment or private enterprise shall avoid any action that might result in:

1) Any activities that take the employee's time and attention during official working hours or adversely affect job performance;

2) Use of State equipment, facilities, supplies, prestige or one's office of employment for personal use or private gain;

3) Use of any information identified as confidential by the agency or by State or federal law, or the use of any information not available to the public that is gained by being a State employee, for direct or indirect personal advantage or private gain; and

4) Any activity that reflects unfavorably on the Office.

h) Educational Materials and Missions

For purposes of further defining exceptions to the Gift Ban Law, "educational materials and missions" shall mean those materials and missions that:

1) have a close connection to the recipient officer's or employee's State employment or the mission of the Office;

2) predominately benefit the public and not the employee or officer; and

3) are approved by the Office's ethics officer in advance of the mission or receipt of the materials, if practicable. If it is not practicable to obtain advance approval, the mission and materials shall be reported to the Office's ethics officer as soon as practicable and shall contain a detailed explanation of why approval could not be obtained in advance. The following items may be accepted without ethics officer approval:

A) Single copies of academic or professional publications or software in the employee's or officer's area of responsibility or field of study; and

B) Waiver of conference registration fees for officers or employees serving as conference speakers, committee members or invitees of the conference host.

i) Travel Expenses for a Meeting to Discuss State Business

For purposes of further defining exceptions to the Gift Ban Law, "travel expenses for a meeting to discuss State business" shall mean travel that:

1) has a close connection to the recipient officer's or employee's State employment;

2) predominately benefits the public and not the employee or officer;

3) is for travel in a style and manner in character with the conduct of State business; and

4) is approved by the Office's ethics officer in advance of the travel, if practicable. If it is not practicable to obtain advance approval, the travel shall be reported to the Office's ethics officer as soon as practicable and shall contain a detailed explanation of why approval could not be obtained in advance.

j) Harassment/Discrimination/Incivility

Employees are expressly prohibited from engaging in conduct they know or reasonably should know is harassment or discrimination against any person on the basis of his or her actual or perceived race, sex, religion, national origin, color, ancestry, citizenship status, physical or mental disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, military status, pregnancy and childbirth or related medical conditions, or any other legally protected classification, as well as behavior that a reasonable person would view as incivility or bullying. Employees engaging in harassing, discriminatory or uncivil behaviors may be disciplined and, depending upon the circumstances, may be discharged.

(Source: Amended at 44 Ill. Reg. 5873, effective April 1, 2020)