



State of Oklahoma
Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry

Policies and Procedures
Code of Conduct

Effective Date of Policy: 12/31/2018	Next Scheduled Review: 12/1/2019
Last Reviewed: 12/1/2018	Policy Number: ODAFF-03
Approved: Jim Reese	Approval Date: 12/21/2018

Reference: Oklahoma Ethics Rules and Merit Rules.

A. Code of Conduct

All employees are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with ODAFF's core values of service, integrity, and quality and comply with federal and state laws, rules and regulations, and all ODAFF policies. Employees shall avoid actual breaches of ethics as well as the perception of unethical behavior. Employees who violate this policy are subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

It is not possible to draft a code of conduct policy that answers every question, nor is it possible to eliminate every gray area of interpretation. Employees shall identify any personal conduct or interest that might possibly be criticized as a violation of ODAFF's Code of Conduct and communicate with their supervisor and the Office of General Counsel, who will interpret the policy and advise the employee how it should be applied in the employee's specific case.

Conduct that violates the spirit of this policy will not be tolerated merely because an employee states later that he or she did not think the conduct was wrong or technically in violation of this policy. The only safe and sure defense to severe corrective discipline is full disclosure and an opinion by the Office of General Counsel.

Oklahoma Ethics Rules

B. Misconduct

Employees shall fulfill the duties of employment and shall behave at all times in a manner befitting the position the employee holds. Employees shall devote full time, attention, and effort to their assigned duties during work hours. Misconduct including, but not limited to, the violation of any ODAFF rule or policy, will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action.

C. Financial Conflicts and Conflicts of Interest

Employees shall not accept money or other consideration from anyone, other than the state, for the performance of employee's duties. Employees shall avoid preferential treatment for any person, using public office for personal gain, or adversely affecting the confidence of the public in the integrity of ODAFF.

Employees shall not engage in any employment, activity, or enterprise which has been determined to be inconsistent, incompatible, or in conflict with his or her duties at ODAFF. Employees shall not engage in activities that involve the use of state time, facilities, equipment, and supplies; or, the badge, uniform, prestige, or influence of one's state office or employment for private gain or advantage.

Certain employees are required to disclose any personal or financial interest in a business or entity regulated by ODAFF. These employees include the chief administrative officer (Commissioner of Agriculture), the first assistant administrative officer (Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture), public members (members of the State Board of Agriculture), or state employees who determine state policy or make final spending decisions (division directors). Financial disclosure shall be submitted by completing the Statement of Financial Interests form prior to entering service at the Department. The Statement of Financial Interests Form shall be a part of the employee's official personnel file and will be maintained as a confidential employment document.

Statement of Financial Interests Form
Statement of No Change

Employees shall amend this disclosure when a personal or financial interest is obtained subsequent to the initial disclosure under the policy. Such amendment must occur within 30 days of obtaining the personal or financial interest. Any employee found to be in conflict of interest as a result of the initial disclosure required herein shall be given reasonable time to eliminate such interest. Refusal to eliminate such conflict of interest is subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

D. Outside Employment

No employee may accept any other employment from, or sell any goods or services to, any organization or person that might be viewed as impairing their independence or judgment in connection with their responsibilities at ODAFF. Nor shall an employee engage in outside employment that conflicts with their regular work hours at ODAFF or diminishes their effectiveness or energy in addressing job responsibilities. No employee shall accept any commission or other form of compensation from any business regulated by the Department or from anyone who practices before the Department for mediating any issue or for finding a buyer of goods or services or for any other consideration. Employees may request and division directors may grant a waiver from the general rule prohibiting outside employment with a business regulated by the Department after consultation with the Office of General Counsel and a determination that no conflict of interest exists.

Employees may not work for another employer (including any business owned or operated by the employee personally) during normal ODAFF work hours or while on any leave program other than those which can be taken as personal time off (annual leave, compensatory time, and holiday time). Employees shall not use ODAFF issued computers or cellular telephones for private purposes.

E. Community Service

Employees are encouraged to participate in community events and to be active in community projects, e.g. United Way, food drives, preservation programs, and art festivals. Employees are also encouraged to belong to and participate in the affairs of professional organizations and profession-oriented nonprofit service organizations like those dedicated to preserving or protecting agriculture or the environment. However, employees who belong to such organizations should disqualify themselves from participating in any decision-making process within this agency which directly affects the organization to which they belong.

F. Confidential Information

No employee shall disclose any confidential information to which he or she has access to any organization or person not entitled to have the information. No employee may use their access to confidential information for personal gain or profit. This policy does not prohibit the release of records as provided in the Oklahoma Open Records Act and does not diminish any whistleblower protections permitted by law.

G. Accepting Gratuities

No state officer and no state employee shall, directly or indirectly, ask, demand, exact, solicit, seek, accept, assign, receive, or agree to receive anything of value for the state officer or employee or for any other person or entity, in return for being influenced in the performance of an official act; influenced to commit, aid in committing, collude in, or allow fraud, or make an opportunity for the commission of fraud on a governmental entity; or induced to perform or fail to perform an act in violation of the state officer's or state employee's official duty.

H. Photo Identification Card and Other State Property

An employee's photo-ID is the property of ODAFF and should be kept in a secure manner. Upon the termination of employment, employees are expected to return any ID cards, key(s), and other supplies, equipment, and state property issued before receiving a final paycheck. Notify your supervisor immediately if any state property is lost or stolen.

I. Privacy

Office desks, file cabinets, and other furniture and equipment provided by the State are not private. Employees must be sure that other authorized employees have access to any files, forms, or other materials which may be needed to conduct agency business.