Overview
Public officials are held personally responsible for complying with the provisions in the Oregon Government Ethics law. This means that each public official must make a personal judgment in deciding such matters as the use of official position for financial gain, what gifts are appropriate to accept, or when to disclose the nature of conflicts of interest. If a public official fails to comply with the operative statutes, a violation cannot be dismissed by placing the blame on the public official's government employer or the governing body represented by the public official.

Key Points
Who is covered
• Public officials
• Volunteers with regular duties
• Relatives, members of the household, and businesses with which you are associated

Prohibited Uses
• Using or attempting to use an official position to obtain financial gain, or avoidance of financial detriment, which would not otherwise be available, but for the holding of your official position or office
• Solicitation or promise of future employment based on decisions made or actions taken
• Use of confidential information for personal gain
• “Actual” or “potential” conflict of interest
• Exceptions (partial list)
  ▪ Reimbursement of expenses
  ▪ “Honorarium” up to $50
  ▪ “Gifts” from sources that have an “administrative or legislative interest” up to $50 per calendar year
  ▪ “Gifts” from sources with no legislative or administrative interest in an unlimited amount

Conflict of Interest
• “Actual conflict of interest” which would result in private pecuniary benefit or detriment:
  ▪ Must announce publicly the nature of the conflict and refrain from participation in discussion, debate, or voting on the issue
• “Potential conflict of interest” which could result in private pecuniary benefit or detriment:
  ▪ Must announce publicly the nature of the potential conflict prior to taking any action

Resources
SWCD Program Contacts:
Eric Nusbaum 503-510-8930
Sandi Hiatt 503-986-4704
Marganne Allen 503-986-4718

Oregon Government Ethics Commission
503-378-5105
http://www.oregon.gov/ogec


Applicable Laws and Rules
Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) Chapter 244 can be found at:
https://oda.fyi/ORS244

Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) Chapter 199 can be found at:
https://oda.fyi/OAR199

Definitions
Who is a public official?
• Elected or appointed to an office with the state, county, local government, or special district
• An employee of the state, county, local government, or special district
• An unpaid volunteer of the state, county, local government, or special district

Who is a “relative” of a public official? (Partial list; this list has been expanded)
• Spouse
• Your children or spouse’s children
• Siblings
• Your parents and spouse’s parents
• Any person for whom you have a legal support obligation