**NEO PART 2—ILLUSTRATIVE SAMPLE QUESTIONS**

**(These questions and answers should be modified to reflect your agency’s mission, work, programs, priorities, policies and preferences.)**

**1. Public Service Concepts**

**On your first day of service you took an *Oath of Office*. We all do.**

**We freely choose to uphold the Constitution and *to treat our public service as a public trust.***

**What does that look like in practice? (Choose all that apply)**

* Respecting and following any laws that apply to the work I’m assigned to do
* Making sure I’m being fair and impartial in any decisions, suggestions, or recommendations I make
* Taking advantage of my position to benefit people I know personally
* Being transparent with my co-workers and supervisors about any personal interests I may have in the work I’m assigned
* Accepting favors and tokens of appreciation from our agency’s stakeholders
* Being careful about not disclosing information I learn at work with people outside of work

**2. Federal Government Culture**

**Working for the United States Government is not the same as working for a private employer.**

**What may be customary practice outside of Government is sometimes not acceptable for Government employees because it may be (or look like) you are using your Government position to unfairly benefit yourself or others.**

**For each situation below indicate whether you believe it is an acceptable or unacceptable practice for government employees.**

* Seeking or creating opportunities for your former colleagues, clients, friends to have special access to agency decision-makers or “inside” information. (Acceptable/Unacceptable)
* Giving this same group a heads up once business opportunities or opportunities to comment on rulemakings are publicly announced or become publicly available. (Acceptable/Unacceptable)
* Asking administrative staff to assist you with personal tasks. (Acceptable/Unacceptable)
* (Other topics for consideration, outside activities, travel, sharing information, using your position to help people with personal government matters…)

**3. Program/Position-Tailored Questions**

**In the Forest Service our collaboration with communities and our partners is a critical part of our care for the land and our service to people. Our reputation among these groups must be one of fairness and impartiality in all that we do.**

Open-ended question:

What are things you could do and things you should avoid doing so that your fairness and impartiality will not be questioned by the communities and partners we serve?

Multiple-choice:

Which of the following actions might raise questions about your fairness and impartiality? (Choose all that apply)

a. I give some but not all stakeholders advance notice of opportunities, rulemakings, policies, etc.

b. I work most closely with those communities and groups I personally have affiliations with

c. I participate in decisions that can affect members of my family or their businesses

d. (Other agency/mission specific examples)

**4. Duty-Specific Questions**

**Your team has been assigned a new grant program to launch and manage. You know already that your spouse’s employer is likely going to be eligible for the program and interested in applying.**

**What actions would be ethically acceptable for you to take? Choose all that apply.**

a. I tell no one and just keep working on the program because I don’t file a financial disclosure report.

b. I tell my spouse about the specifics of the program to confirm whether their employer would be likely to apply.

c. I work on the program until we begin to receive applications, and then I inform the team to keep me out of any application from my spouse’s employer.

d. I immediately tell my supervisor about the situation and ask her how to proceed.

e. I don’t tell my supervisor but I call the ethics office and stop working on the program.

**5. Agency Policy/Process**

**The agency takes pride in attracting and maintaining a highly qualified professional staff. We value your expertise and we encourage and support your continuous professional development.**

**Having an outside activity or even employment may not be prohibited, but sometimes it will require agency prior approval. (See page XX for details).**

**Prior approval allows us to help you identify ethical concerns and to provide you advice.**

**What concerns do outside activities and employment present? (Choose all that apply)**

a. In our profession, outside activities and employment are sometimes closely related to our government work. Divided loyalties can become an issue, even if there are shared goals or perspectives.

b. When I’m doing my government work I’m speaking on behalf of the United States Government and I’m allowed to identify myself as an employee of the agency. When I am doing personal activities I’m not speaking on behalf of the Government even if the activities are professionally related. How I identify myself in those situations matters.

c. It would be a misuse of my position and authority to speak or act on behalf of my outside organization or employer when performing my work for the agency.

d. The people and organizations I am affiliated with personally and professionally outside of Government shouldn’t receive special access to agency opportunities, staff or information, and I shouldn’t be involved in any agency business that involves or affects them.

**6. Seeking Advice-Red Flagging**

**Sometimes wanting to be helpful and having good intentions can have not so good results, especially if you aren’t yet familiar with all of the authorities that govern our daily work.**

**In which of the situations below would you seek advice from the ethics office or your supervisor before acting?**

a. You are authorized to have access to several administrative data bases. A colleague asks you to search the data base for information about another employee. The need for and use of the information isn’t clear.

b. You always strive to provide superior customer service to agency stakeholders. Now some of the people you deal with seek your help with other matters they are facing in other program areas or even in other agencies. You want to help.

c. You are a volunteer on your own time with a charitable organization that also does advocacy. You offer to organize a “group run” fundraiser and hope to have a team from our agency represented in it. You also want to be an active advocate for the organization and its work.

**7. Telework-Related**

**Working from our homes presents certain challenges, among them distinguishing between official duty time and personal time and having your personal phone and/or computer also serve as your official one.**

**Below are descriptions of situations that we all face when working from our homes. For each some potential ethics issues have been identified.**

**What actions would you take to avoid an ethics problem? (You can present this as an open-ended question or create possible courses of action in multiple choice responses)**

Situation 1: Your personal cell phone is now your official phone. It has not ceased to be your personal phone. During work hours you receive the following types of non-work-related calls:

* family and friends checking in on your well-being *(Learning points could include: use of time, agency personal use policy);*
* charitable organizations asking you to renew your membership, make a donation, or call your Senator *(Learning points: fundraising in the workplace)*;
* fundraising solicitations from a political party or candidate *(Learning points: Hatch Act).*

Sample multiple choice responses:

1. I take my family and friends’ calls but I put a time limit on them during work hours.

2. I tell my family and friends to only call me during lunch breaks or after work.

3. I take the calls and just make up the time later.

4. It’s impossible to identify who’s calling so I let everything go to voice mail and sort from there.

5. It’s impossible to know who’s calling so I take all calls and deal with whoever is on the other end.

6. I take all calls but non-official business gets told to call back when I’m off the clock.