



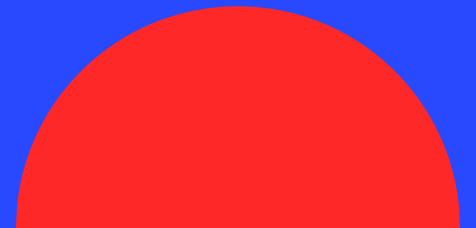
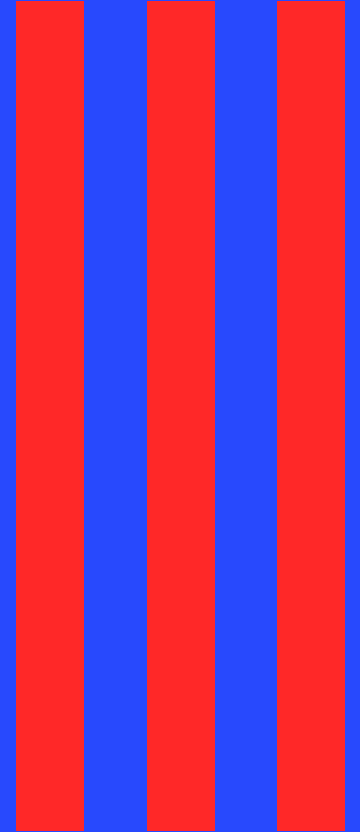
# **Let's Get Ethical**

## **The Ethics of Public Speaking and Engagement**

### **ACE Capstone Project**

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Andrew Sassoon, Denise Walker, and Lisa Yeoman**

**September 2024**



# Agenda

- **Introduction**
- **Legal Requirements**
- **Financial Interest Concerns**
- **Impartiality Concerns**
- **Partisan Activity and Preferential Treatment**
- **Do's and Don'ts**
- **Process**
- **Final Tips & Takeaways**
- **Questions?**



# Introduction

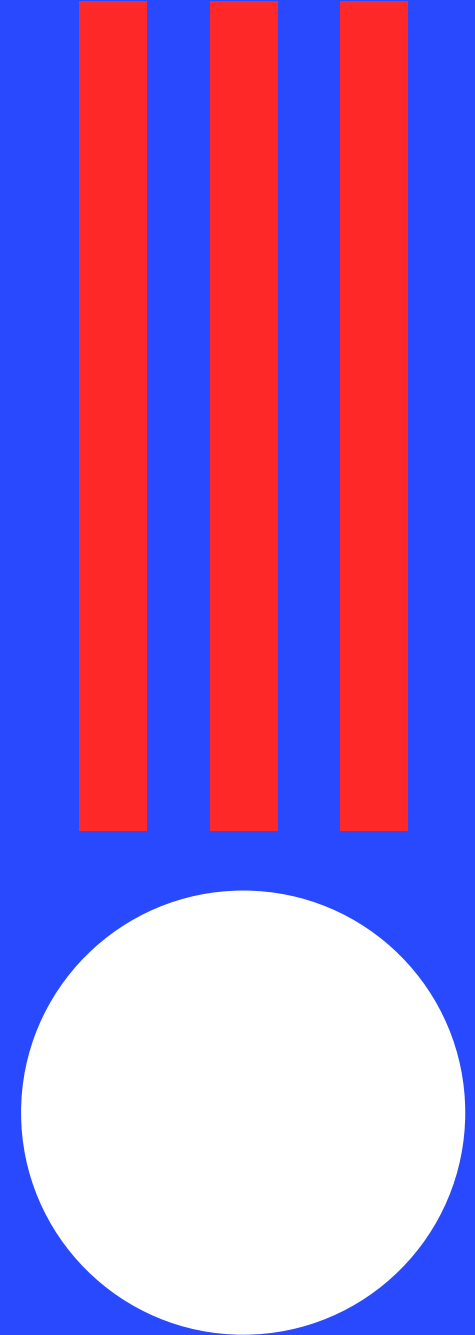
- **AMH Speaker Bureau**
  - **Policy Memorandum Public Speaking Opportunities**
- **Partnership between AMH Ethics Office & AMH Office of Public Affairs**
- **Audience: all government employees**





# Legal Requirements

- **5 CFR Part 2635: Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch**
  - **5 CFR 2635.201, *et. seq.* Gifts from Outside Sources**
- **18 U.S.C. § 208, Acts affecting a personal financial interest**
  - **5 CFR §§ 2635.402 & 403, prohibited and disqualified financial interests**
- **5 CFR § 2635.502, Impartiality in Performing Official Duties**



# Legal Requirements (Continued)

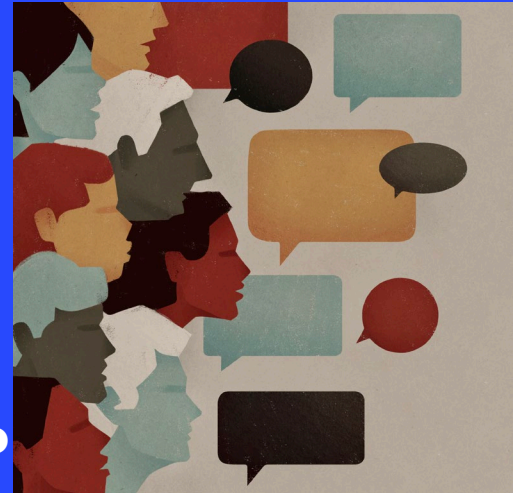
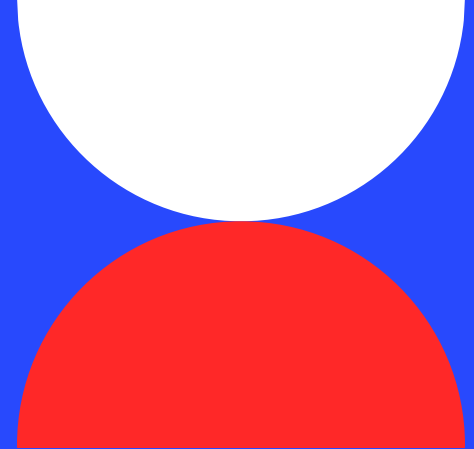
- **5 CFR Subpart G, Misuse of Position**
  - **5 CFR § 2635.702, Use of office for private gain**
    - **Endorsement/sanction concerns**
  - **5 CFR § 2635.703, Use of nonpublic information**
  - **5 CFR § 2635.705, Use of official time**





# Financial Interest Concerns

- **Are you offered a gift to speak at an event?**
  - A gift is anything having monetary value, such as donations of space for AMH events, food, or other goods or services.
  - Political appointees are prohibited from taking gifts from lobbyists and lobbying organizations.
  - **Employees may not solicit or accept a gift given because of your official position or from a prohibited source.**
  - Gifted travel: may be permissible but seek ethics office advice
- **Are you asked by a prohibited source to speak at an event?**
  - A prohibited source is anyone doing business with AMH, seeking to do business with AMH, or whose interests would be impacted by the work of AMH.



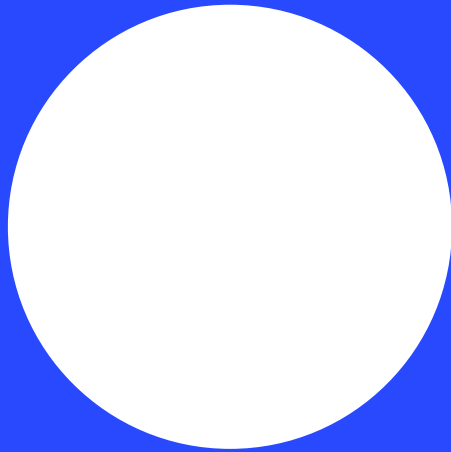
# Financial Interests (Continued)

- **As a requested speaker, do you:**
  - **Own stock or other equity interest in the speaking requester or host?**
  - **Serve as an employee, consultant, officer, director, or has a business relationship with the host or requester?**
  - **Seek employment or a business relationship with the host or requester?**





# Impartiality Concerns



- **Do you have a personal relationship (i.e., close friend, relative, or member of household) with the requester or host?**
- **Are you an active member of the organization (i.e., more than simply paying dues) of the requester/host?**
- **Are you a former employer or client within the last year (2 years from date of appointment for *Political Appointees*) of the requester/host?**
- **Is your spouse/parent/dependent child/household member employed by the requester/host?**
- **Does your spouse/dependent child/parent seek an employment/financial relationship with the host or requester?**



# Partisan Activity and Preferential Treatment

- **Would speaking at the event trigger any potential partisan activity or appearance of preferential treatment?**
- **Is the host/requester/event partisan?**
- **Has AMH or the speaker declined similar invitations in the past?**
- **Do circumstances suggest potential preferential treatment (i.e., requested speaker has a personal or professional relationship with the host, the invitation is extended by a prior AMH employee, or the speaker has participated in several prior engagements with the same host)?**



# Do's and Don'ts

## DO:

- **Treat similarly situated groups/people similarly. Use objective criteria to decide who gets invitations to events/access to officials.**
- **Scrutinize involvement with non-federal entities who have business before AMH.**
- **Make official statements/speeches on behalf of AMH that have a connection to your official duties.**
- **Use AMH resources or make official statements to promote only that part of an event where AMH is involved.**



# Do's and Don'ts (Continued)

## DON'T:

- **Use or permit the use of your government position or title or any authority associated with your public office to endorse any product, service, or enterprise.**
- **Use personal connections/friendships to make decisions about who gets invitations to events/access to officials.**
- **Allow non-federal entities to imply or outright state AMH sanctions or endorses their products, services or events.**
- **Make official statements/speeches that have no connection to your official duties.**
- **Use AMH resources or making official statements to promote an entire event, even parts where AMH is not involved.**



# Process

- **Obtain supervisory approval.**
- **Review the policy memorandum.**
- **Timeline:**
  - **Submit your request at least 2 weeks prior to an event.**
- **Complete Speaker's Bureau Request Package.**
  - **Speaker Checklist**
  - **Approval Form**
- **Wait until you receive approval to proceed with speaking engagement.**
- **Coordinate with Travel Office if applicable.**



# Questions?

**The AMH Ethics Office is always  
here to help!**

**AMHethics@amh.gov**

**SpeakersBureau@amh.gov**

**202-300-1234**

