

Gifts and Offers

It's summertime in Milwaukee County and the fairs and events are ramping up. During your course of business, you may be offered tickets to events all around the city and county, but can you accept them? There are plenty of situations where you can, but here are a couple of questions to ask yourself when considering whether you should:

1. **“Am I receiving this gift because of my County role?”**
2. **“Could it appear that this gift was given to influence or reward me?”** Here, consider who the giver is. Are they a contractor or potential contractor with Milwaukee County? Are they a client, representative, or other individual or organization that uses your department's services? Simply put, the factor is not if the gift will influence you, *but if someone else might reasonably think that it could influence you.*

If the gift is not given because of your County role and the giver is not a County contractor or does not have the potential to be, then there is likely no issue with accepting the offer, but you can still seek advice on whether there are any reporting requirements related to the specific gift.

If you can answer **YES** to question 1 or 2, or both, then you should reach out to the Ethics Board's office to discuss the details if you have continued interest in accepting the gift.

What a Gift is Not...

- Expenses and fees covered by the County;
- Fees, expenses, and honorariums permitted by the Ethics Code;
- Certain reported political contributions;
- Hospitality that is unrelated to County business and that is given by an individual or a government.

The last exception is the most common. If you were invited to a private event, it would not be considered a gift under the code as long as (1) the hospitality is based on something other than County business or your County position (i.e., pre-existing friendships, family, etc.) and (2) the hospitality provided is not from an organization.



**MILWAUKEE
COUNTY**

Who do I reach out to for help?

Do you have questions on the topic?

Think you may be facing an ethics issue?

To request a confidential advisory opinion, contact us:

E: ethics@milwaukeecountywi.gov

P: 414-278-5332