Values and Ethics Code of the Department of Justice 2026



INTEGRITY
STEWARDSHIP RESPECT
EXCELLENCE

Department of Justice Canada
Ministère de la Justice Canada

Canada

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Values and ethics code of the Department of Justice
ISSN: 3111-4962

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A unique role

The Department of Justice (the Department) works to ensure that Canada's justice system is as fair, accessible, and efficient as possible. In supporting the dual role of the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, the Department helps shape and uphold Canada's legal framework. It develops policy, drafts and reforms laws, provides legal advice to the Government of Canada, and represents the government in court.

This mandate is carried out by a multidisciplinary workforce across regional offices and Headquarters, in close collaboration with other federal government departments and agencies. Legal professionals, including counsel, notaries, paralegals and legal assistants, draft legislation, advise on policies, manage legal risk, and help support decision-making across government. Their work is strengthened by colleagues in corporate and specialised functions, whose expertise helps foster a respectful, inclusive, and healthy workplace culture and enables the Department to effectively deliver on its mandate.

A diverse community

The Department is defined by a diverse and inclusive workforce, representing the broad range of identities, experiences and perspectives across Canada's population, including people who are Black, persons with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, people who are racialized, women, and members of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.

This diversity is central to the Department's work and culture. The Department recognizes that everyone in Canada has the right to fully participate in society and acknowledges the adverse impact that government decisions can have on marginalized communities. It is further committed to building a more positive relationship with Indigenous peoples, including First Nations, Inuit and Métis, and supporting Reconciliation. The Department has made commitments intended to address these impacts on equity-deserving groups, both within our workforce and in Canada's justice system. These commitments will remain a priority.

Commitment

At the Department of Justice, all employees are committed to the highest standards of conduct. We hold ourselves and each other accountable for demonstrating these values and respecting the rules set out in this Code as well as all policies, legislation and professional obligations, where applicable. This includes a commitment to anti-racist and anti-discriminatory behaviours and consulting with departmental experts when unsure about how to approach a particular issue of this nature. Managers are also committed to exercising their authority fairly and equitably, and to addressing inappropriate behaviours as defined by relevant policies and legislation, including this Code. In all interactions, we recognize that every person deserves to be treated with respect.

Chapter 1 – Values

Introduction

The Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that the federal public sector remains professional, non-partisan and ethical, and worthy of the trust and respect of Canadians. As public servants, we contribute to good governance, to democracy and to supporting the well-being of Canadian society. We are committed to respecting the law and to upholding the highest standards of integrity and fairness and the Charter principle of substantive equality.

In accordance with section 6 of the *Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act* (PSDPA), the Values and Ethics Code of the Department of Justice (the Code) sets out the values and ethics that guide employees at the Department in all their professional activities. It also provides a set of guidelines and principles to support ethical behaviour and decision-making. Developed in consultation with employees and bargaining agents, the Code reflects our shared values and serves as a common foundation for ethical conduct across the Department.

Employees at the Department are proud to work together, drawing on the richness of its diverse staff. As a group, we are conscious of the fact that Canadians expect transparency and respect for the principle of accountability from employees at all levels.

This firm commitment to the values and ethics enshrined in the Code will allow us to carry out the mandate of the Department and build a healthy, safe, and productive work environment that fosters excellence, while at the same time meeting the high expectations of Canadians. This is our collective commitment, and it is our individual responsibility.

Objectives

The Code outlines the values and expected behaviours that guide employees in all activities related to their professional duties. By committing to these values and adhering to the expected behaviours, you strengthen the ethical culture of the public sector and contribute to public confidence in the integrity of all public institutions.

The Code provides guidance for common situations involving our work. In all circumstances, each employee is expected to adhere to the highest ethical standards that are to be expected from a public servant.

Application

The Code is inspired by the Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector and integrates the Treasury Board's Policy on People Management and Directive on Conflict of Interest. It has been adapted to reflect the distinct culture and procedures of the Department and to provide its employees with guidance in matters of values and ethics[1].

[1] The Code first came into effect on February 26, 2013, and was administratively updated on April 24, 2020, to align with the Treasury Board's Policy on People Management and Directive on Conflict of Interest. It was updated on September 23, 2026, following the work of the Clerk of the Privy Council Office's Deputy Ministers' Task Team on Values and Ethics.

The Code applies to all employees at the Department. Acceptance of the values and adherence to the expected behaviours set out in the Code is a condition of employment for every employee, regardless of their level or position. Breaching these values or behaviours may result in disciplinary measures, up to and including termination of employment.

In addition to the requirements set out in the Code, employees must also comply with any specific codes and standards applicable to their profession.

The role of public servants

Public servants have a fundamental role to play in serving Canadians, their communities, and the public interest under the direction of the elected government and in accordance with the law. As professionals whose work is essential to Canada's well-being and the enduring strength of Canadian democracy, public servants uphold the public trust.

The Constitution of Canada and the principles of responsible government provide the foundation for the role, responsibilities and values of the federal public sector. Constitutional conventions of ministerial responsibility prescribe the appropriate relationships among ministers, parliamentarians, public servants, and the public. A professional and non-partisan federal public sector is integral to our democracy.

The role of ministers

Ministers are also responsible for preserving public trust and confidence in the integrity of public sector organizations and for upholding the tradition and practice of a professional non-partisan federal public sector. Furthermore, ministers play a critical role in supporting public servants' responsibility to provide professional and non-partisan advice.

Statement of values and expected behaviours

The following values guide employees at the Department in everything they do. They cannot be considered in isolation from each other as they often overlap. The Code is an important source of guidance for employees and its values will guide us in our decisions, actions, policies, and processes. Similarly, employees can expect to be treated in accordance with these values:

1. Respect for democracy
2. Respect for people
3. Integrity
4. Stewardship
5. Excellence

The Code also describes specific behaviours that, while not exhaustive, help employees uphold these five values.

1. Respect for democracy

The system of Canadian parliamentary democracy and its institutions are fundamental to serving the public interest. Employees recognize that elected officials are accountable to

Parliament, and ultimately to the Canadian people, and that a non-partisan public sector is essential to our democratic system.

At the Department, we support democracy by helping to make Canada's justice system as accessible, fair, and efficient as possible, and ensuring that public sector institutions we advise are acting in compliance with the law and the Constitution.

Expected behaviours
Employees shall uphold the Canadian parliamentary democracy and its institutions by:

1.1 Respecting the rule of law and carrying out their duties in accordance with legislation, policies and directives in a non-partisan and impartial manner
1.2 Loyally carrying out the lawful decisions of their leaders and supporting ministers in their accountability to Parliament and Canadians
1.3 Subject to certain exceptions recognized under law, employees must be loyal to their employer and avoid public criticism of their employer in alignment with their Duty of Loyalty, including criticisms on social media platforms
1.4 Providing decision makers with all the evidence-based information, analysis and advice they need, always striving to be open, candid and impartial

2. Respect for people
Treating all people with respect, dignity and fairness is fundamental to our relationship with the Canadian public. This contributes to creating a safe and healthy work environment that is free from harassment and discrimination. It also promotes engagement, openness, and transparency. The diversity of our people and their ideas and beliefs are the source of our excellence. We are also an inclusive and accessible workplace that recognizes the importance of the principle of substantive equality in the Charter.

In our Department, we recognize that our greatest asset is our employees, who are committed to working in an atmosphere of confidence, cooperation, and mutual respect.

Expected behaviours
Employees shall respect human dignity and the value of every person by:

2.1 Treating every person with respect and fairness, regardless of race, colour, national or ethnic origin, residency, citizenship, age, sex, gender-identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital or family status, mental or physical disability, or religion
2.2 Valuing equity, diversity, and inclusion, and making the best use of the knowledge, skills, and expertise of all employees, including all equity group members
2.3 Creating and maintaining safe and healthy workplaces that are free from harassment and discrimination
2.4 Recognizing and addressing personal and systemic biases by working to establish an inclusive and accessible workplace for all employees while supporting efforts in the Department and broader public service to address systemic issues

2.5 Within the scope of their roles and responsibilities, supporting the implementation of all initiatives that promote a healthy and safe workplace for all, including for equity group members
2.6 Working together in a spirit of openness, honesty, and transparency that encourages engagement, collaboration and respectful communication while respecting diversity of opinions
2.7 Fostering a workplace culture in which all employees, in all positions, work together in good faith to prevent the escalation of conflicts and resolve or manage them as early as possible in a respectful, constructive, transparent, and creative manner

3. Integrity

Integrity is the cornerstone of good governance and democracy. By upholding the highest ethical standards, we conserve and enhance public confidence in the honesty, fairness, accountability, and impartiality of the federal public sector and the Crown.

At the Department, we are committed to respecting the law and maintaining the strictest rules of integrity and fairness.

Expected behaviours

Employees shall serve the public interest by:

3.1 Always acting with integrity and in a manner that will bear the closest public scrutiny, an obligation that may not be fully satisfied by simply acting within the law
3.2 Never using their official roles to inappropriately obtain an advantage for themselves or to advantage or disadvantage others
3.3 Taking all possible steps to prevent and resolve any real, apparent or potential conflicts of interest between their official responsibilities and their private affairs in favour of the public interest
3.4 Always acting in such a way as to maintain their employer's trust
3.5 Maintaining the confidentiality of information obtained through their position and respecting the rules governing information management
3.6 Always conducting themselves in a manner that does not harm the reputation of the Department, the Government of Canada, or the departments and agencies they support
3.7 Exercising good judgment in how they engage on social media or online so that their professionalism and their ability to perform their duties in a professional and non-partisan way are not called into question
3.8 Limiting themselves to authorized and lawful uses of the Department's systems, devices, and electronic networks
3.9 Limiting their use of external artificial intelligence tools to authorized purposes to prevent the disclosure of protected or confidential information and using internal artificial intelligence tools responsibly and in accordance with established guiding principles

4. Stewardship

Employees are entrusted to use and care for public resources responsibly.

At the Department, we recognize that the responsible use of resources is the duty of every employee, and we are committed to reflecting this in our daily activities.

Expected behaviours
Employees shall use resources responsibly by:

4.1 Effectively and efficiently using the public money, property and resources managed by them
4.2 Considering the present and long-term effects that their actions have on people and the environment
4.3 Acquiring, preserving, and sharing knowledge and information as appropriate
4.4 Respecting policies, directives, guidelines and directions related to the workplace, including work hours, whether teleworking or in any other designated workplace

5. Excellence
Excellence in the design and delivery of public sector policy, programs and services is beneficial to every aspect of Canadian public life. Engagement, collaboration, effective teamwork, and professional development are all essential to a high-performing organization.

At the Department, we strive to create a workplace where employees at all levels and from all backgrounds work toward common goals and support the Department's mandate.

Expected behaviours
Employees shall demonstrate professional excellence by:

5.1 Providing fair, timely, efficient, and effective services that respect Canada's official languages
5.2 Continually improving the quality of the policies, programs, and services they provide
5.3 Fostering a work environment that promotes teamwork, learning and innovation
5.4 Consistently applying the policies and directives of the Department and central agencies
5.5 Recognizing the diversity of our workforce as a strength and continually improving practices that support inclusion and accessibility

Avenues for resolution

The expected behaviours identified above are not intended to address every possible ethical issue that may arise during an employee's daily work. When ethical issues arise, you are encouraged to discuss and address them with your manager. You can also seek advice and support from other resources within the Department, including the Ombuds and Informal Resolution Services Office (available on the Government of Canada network only), the Human Resources Branch and the office responsible for values and ethics (available on the Government of Canada network only), the Designated Recipient for Harassment, Violence or Discrimination notice of occurrences (available on the Government of Canada network only) or your union representative.

Employees at all levels are expected to address issues fairly and respectfully, while being mindful of diversity, equity and inclusion principles. When appropriate, they should consider informal processes, such as dialogue or mediation.

As provided by section 12 and subsection 13(1) of the *Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act* (PSDPA), if public servants have information that could indicate wrongdoing as defined under the PSDPA, they can bring the matter, in confidence and without fear of reprisal, to the attention of their immediate supervisor, the Senior Officer for Internal Disclosure of wrongdoing or the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner.

The Senior Officer for Internal Disclosure of wrongdoing is responsible for supporting the Deputy Minister in meeting the requirements of the PSDPA. They help promote a positive environment for disclosing wrongdoing, and deal with disclosures of wrongdoing made by employees of the organization. Further information on the duties and powers of the Senior Officer for Internal Disclosure of wrongdoing can be found under Annex A.

Members of the public who have reason to believe that a public servant has not acted in accordance with the Code can bring the matter to the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner to disclose wrongdoing as defined under the PSDPA.

Other requirements, policies, and legislation

Justice employees are required to observe this and any specific conduct requirements contained in the statutes governing the Department and their profession, where applicable. Employees are encouraged to access information and resources available on the departmental intranet and on federal government websites and seek their manager's advice when questions or a need for clarification arise. They are also encouraged to consult policies, collective agreements and legislation as needed.

Chapter 2 – Conflict of interest and post-employment

Purpose

The objectives of this chapter of the Code are to:

- ensure that, in situations of real, apparent or potential conflict of interest and situations where there is a conflict of duties, decisions are made in a way that upholds the public interest
- facilitate ethical decision-making within organizations and by employees to resolve conflicts between private and public interests
- establish measures to help employees prevent, manage, and resolve conflict of interest and post-employment situations that could impair either the integrity of the public service and the Crown or the public's perception of their integrity

Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest is a situation in which an employee has private interests that could influence the performance of their official duties and responsibilities or in which the person employed uses their office for personal gain.

A **real** conflict of interest exists at the present time, an **apparent** conflict of interest is a situation that could be perceived as a conflict of interest by a reasonable observer to exist, whether or not it is the case, and a **potential** conflict of interest could reasonably be foreseen to happen in the future.

Conflict of duties

A conflict of duties arises not because of the private interests of a person employed in the core public administration, but because of one or more concurrent and competing official responsibilities.

For example, these roles include their primary public service employment and their responsibilities in an outside role that is part of their official duties, such as an appointment to a board of directors, or other outside function.

Requirements for preventing and dealing with conflict of interest and post-employment situations

The following are the conflict of interest and post-employment requirements that are a condition of employment for employees at the Department. These requirements are grounded in and serve to uphold the values contained in the Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector, and repeated in this Code. By upholding these ethical standards, you conserve and enhance public confidence in the honesty, fairness, and integrity of the public service. These requirements also form part of Canada's commitments as a signatory to international agreements on values and ethics.

Prevention of conflict of interest

An employee maintains public confidence in the objectivity of the public service by preventing and avoiding situations that could give the appearance of a conflict of interest, result in a potential for a conflict of interest or result in an actual conflict of interest. Conflict of interest does not relate exclusively to matters concerning financial transactions and the transfer of economic benefit. While financial activity is important, conflicts of interest in any area of activity can have a negative impact on the perceived objectivity of the public service. With the permanent and pervasive nature of information technology, employees should be particularly sensitive to real, apparent or potential conflicts of interest that may arise from messages and information transmitted via social media, online and through other media.

It is impossible to foresee every situation that could give rise to a real, apparent, or potential conflict of interest. When in doubt, refer to the requirements found in this Code for guidance. Employees can also seek guidance from their manager and, if necessary, from another senior manager in their reporting structure. If after this step there is still doubt as to whether the activity

or situation raises a conflict of interest, the employee must consult the office responsible for values and ethics (available on the Government of Canada network only).

In addition to the requirements outlined in this chapter, employees are also required to observe any specific conduct requirements contained in the statutes governing the Department and their profession, where applicable.

1. General responsibilities and duties of an employee

Employees have general responsibilities and duties, including the following:

a) taking all possible steps to recognize, prevent, report, and resolve any real, apparent or potential conflicts of interest between their official responsibilities and any of their private affairs
b) unless otherwise permitted in this chapter, refraining from having private interests, which would be unduly affected by government actions in which they participate, or of which they have knowledge or information
c) not knowingly taking advantage of, or benefiting from, information that is obtained in the course of their duties that is not available to the public
d) refraining from the direct or indirect use of, or allowing the direct or indirect use of government property of any kind, including property leased to the government, for anything other than officially approved activities
e) not assisting private entities or persons in their dealings with the government where this would result in preferential treatment of the entities or persons
f) not interfering in the dealings of private entities or persons with the government to inappropriately influence the outcome
g) maintaining the impartiality of the public service and not engaging in any outside or political activities that impair or could be seen to impair their ability to perform their duties in an objective or impartial manner
h) ensuring that any real, apparent or potential conflict of interest that arises between their private activities and their official responsibilities as an employee is resolved in the public interest

2. Requirements for preventing and dealing with situations of conflict of interest

Employees are required to report in writing to the Deputy Minister, via the office responsible for values and ethics, all outside activities, assets and interests that may give rise to a real, apparent or potential conflict of interest in relation to their official duties. Such a report must be made within 60 days of their initial appointment. However, no matter what form these outside activities take, employees must ensure beforehand that they are not likely to result in a real, apparent or potential conflict of interest or that it can be managed effectively to reduce associated risks to an acceptable level as determined by management and the Delegated Authority under this Code.

On a regular basis thereafter, and every time a change occurs in their personal affairs or official duties, every employee is required to review their obligations under the Code. If a real, apparent or potential conflict of interest exists, they are to file a report as soon as possible.

When negotiating financial arrangements with outside parties, employees are to comply with the requirements listed in this chapter as well as other related directives or policies issued by the Treasury Board. When in doubt, employees are to immediately report the situation to their manager to seek advice or direction on how to proceed.

The Department encourages employees to participate in outreach activities and personal and professional development promoted by their respective professional associations or relevant to their areas of private interest. No matter what form these outside activities might take, the employee must ensure that they also comply with the requirement of the Code related to conflict of interest.

In general, conflicts of interest may arise in relation to the following:

- owning assets
- receiving gifts, hospitality, and other benefits
- participating in outside activities, such as:
    - speaking at a conference
    - offering legal services outside the federal public service
    - volunteer work
    - other paid employment
    - participation on a board
    - political activities
    - teaching
    - publishing
    - other educational activities
- organizing fundraising activities or solicitation
- owning or operating a business
- employees who have a contract, whether competitive or sole-sourced, with a federal government department, agency, or crown corporation

Furthermore, if an outside individual or entity with whom the Government of Canada has past, present or potential official dealings offers a commission, reward, advantage or benefit of any kind to an employee or the Department, they are to consider whether any real, apparent or potential conflict of interest exists, and obtain the consent in writing of the Deputy Minister or their delegate prior to accepting any such offers. This provision is designed to ensure that employees comply with paragraph 121(1)(*c*) of the *Criminal Code*.

2.1 Assets

Employees are required to evaluate their assets, taking into consideration the nature of their official duties and the characteristics of their assets. If there is any real, apparent or potential conflict of interest between the carrying out of their official duties and their assets, they are to report this matter to the Deputy Minister, via the office responsible for values and ethics, in a timely manner.

Where the Deputy Minister or their delegate determines that any of these assets result in a real, apparent or potential conflict of interest in relation to their official duties, employees may be

required to divest those assets, or to take other measures to resolve the conflict. Employees may not sell or transfer assets to family members or anyone else for the purpose of circumventing the compliance requirements.

The types of assets that should be reported and the procedures for reporting and managing such assets are set out in Annex B, assets, liabilities and trusts of this Code and Appendix B of the Directive on Conflict of Interest.

2.2 Outside employment or activities

Justice employees may engage in employment outside the federal public service and take part in outside activities unless the employment or activities are likely to give rise to a real, apparent or potential conflict of interest or would undermine the impartiality of the public service or the objectivity of the employee.

Employees are required to provide a report to the Deputy Minister, via the office responsible for values and ethics, when their outside employment or activities might subject them to demands incompatible with their official duties or cast doubt on their ability to perform their duties or responsibilities in a completely objective manner. The Deputy Minister or their delegate may require that the outside activities not be undertaken, or be terminated or modified if it is determined that a real, apparent or potential conflict of interest exists.

The Directive on External Practice of Law (available on the Government of Canada network only), which applies to Law Practitioners working at the Department of Justice Canada, provides the foundational basis and guiding principles when seeking approval to practice law outside of their employment at Justice. As per the Directive, these requests must be approved by the Deputy Minister prior to undertaking that external practice. Any related leave request must also await the approval of the Deputy Minister, regardless of the leave type.

2.3 Contracting with the Government of Canada

Employees who expect to receive a benefit or income either directly or indirectly from a contract with the Government of Canada are required to report to the Deputy Minister, via the office responsible for values and ethics, on such contractual or other arrangements and obtain a decision prior to the contract being accepted. The Deputy Minister or their delegate will determine whether the arrangement presents a real, apparent or potential conflict of interest, and may require that the contract be modified or terminated.

2.4 Political activities

Non-candidacy political activities[2]

[2] The PSEA defines “political activities” as “any activity in support of, within or in opposition to a political party; carrying on any activity in support of or in opposition to a candidate before or during an election period; or, seeking nomination as or being a candidate in an election before or during the election period.”

Employees must seek the advice of their manager and the Designated Political Activities Representative before participating in non-candidacy political activities. If there is any real, apparent or potential conflict of interest situation, or if there is any question as to whether the situation might exist, it must be reported to the Deputy Minister, via the office responsible for values and ethics.

Candidacy

Employees must get permission from the PSC before publicly declaring their intention to become a candidate in a federal, provincial, territorial, or municipal election, according to Part 7 of the *Public Service Employment Act* (PSEA). The employee must contact the designated official in the Department, who will seek the input of senior management and work closely with the person making the request and the PSC to process the request.

Any employee who wishes to engage in a political activity not covered by Part 7 of the PSEA that could create a conflict of interest must report the proposed activity to the Deputy Minister via the office responsible for values and ethics.

Also, any employee who is subject to the Treasury Board's Directive on Conflict of Interest but who is not subject to Part 7 of the PSEA, including casual and part-time workers, who wishes to engage in any political activity that could create a real, apparent or potential conflict of interest must report the proposed activity to the Deputy Minister via the office responsible for values and ethics.

2.5 Gifts, hospitality, and other benefits

Public servants are expected to use their best judgement to avoid situations of real, apparent or potential conflict of interest. This includes considering the following criteria for gifts, hospitality, and other benefits.

Employees must not accept any gifts, hospitality or other benefits that may have a real, apparent or potential influence on their objectivity when carrying out their official duties and responsibilities or that may place them under obligation to the donor. This includes free or discounted admission to sporting and cultural events, travel or conferences.

Accepting gifts, hospitality and other benefits is permissible, provided that they do not compromise or appear to compromise the integrity of the employee or the Department. For example, this could be the case if they are:

- infrequent and of minimal value
- within the normal standards of courtesy or protocol
- arise out of activities or events related to the official duties of the employee

Employees must seek written direction from the Deputy Minister, via the office responsible for values and ethics, where it is impossible to decline gifts, hospitality or other benefits that do not meet the principles set out above, or where it is believed that there is sufficient benefit to the Department to warrant acceptance of certain types of hospitality.

2.6 Solicitation

Employees may not solicit gifts, hospitality, other benefits, or transfers of economic value from a person, group or organization in the private sector who has dealings with the government, except when fundraising for officially supported activities such as the Government of Canada Workplace Charitable Campaign (GCWCC). When fundraising for such official activities, employees need prior written authorization from the Deputy Minister or their delegate to solicit donations, prizes, or contributions in kind from external organizations or individuals.

The solicitation of employees, or external persons, groups or organisations can only be authorized for charitable purposes. Authorized activities are usually limited to those that benefit a registered charity.

The Deputy Minister or their delegate may require that the activities be modified or terminated where it is determined that there is a real, potential, or apparent conflict of interest or an obligation to the donor.

2.7 Avoidance of preferential treatment

Employees are responsible for demonstrating objectivity and impartiality in the exercise of their duties and in their decision-making, whether related to staffing, financial awards or penalties to external parties, transfer payments, program operations or any other exercise of responsibility.

This means that they are prohibited from granting preferential treatment or advantages to family, friends or any other person or entity. They are not to offer extraordinary assistance to any entity or person already dealing with the government without the knowledge and support of their supervisor. They also are not to disadvantage any entity or person dealing with the government because of personal antagonism or bias.

Providing information that is publicly accessible is not considered preferential treatment.

2.8 Social media, disinformation and misinformation

Employees, like all Canadians, have the right to freedom of thought, belief, opinion, association and expression under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. As an inclusive public service that strives to be representative of the public we serve, our diversity and varied lived experiences enrich our overall ability to deliver excellence for Canada and Canadians.

However, we also have responsibilities because of our role as public servants. Our work is essential to Canada's well-being, and a professional, non-partisan, and impartial federal public service that understands and appreciates the diverse experiences of all Canadians is integral to our democracy.

Department of Justice employees are expected to exercise caution and consider their specific role to uphold the trust and confidence of Canadians in the government and the public service. This means ensuring their personal social media use complies with this Code as well as aligns with principles related to the Duty of Loyalty, an obligation, with some exceptions, to not be

critical of the Government of Canada where such criticisms could impact an individual employee's impartiality, that of the Department, of the Crown, or of the public sector more generally.

Employees also have an obligation not to knowingly share or post misinformation or disinformation as we provide non-partisan evidence-based advice. In some cases, this may require some due diligence to ensure a post is from a credible source. Sharing this type of information can impact one's credibility or create a real, apparent or potential conflict of interest, particularly if an individual is more visible on social media or in the public sector.

2.9 Use of artificial intelligence

Employees should only use external artificial intelligence (AI) tools for work purposes when the information is publicly available, not protected or classified. This can include tasks such as synthesizing large volumes of information from the internet.

Employees must evaluate the risks associated with using internal artificial intelligence tools for official purposes in the workplace. They must also consider the guiding principles and best practices for using these tools.

These tools can provide institutional and public benefits, if used correctly and in a way that protects corporate information and mitigates risk.

3. Requirements for preventing post-employment conflict of interest situations and after leaving office

All employees have a responsibility to minimize the possibility of a real, apparent or potential conflict of interest between their most recent responsibilities within the federal public service and their subsequent employment outside the public service.

3.1 Before leaving employment

Before leaving their employment with the public service, all employees are to disclose their intentions regarding any future outside employment or activities that may pose a risk of a real, apparent or potential conflict of interest with their current responsibilities and discuss potential conflicts with their manager, or the Deputy Minister or their delegate.

3.2 Post-employment limitation period for public servants in designated positions

The Deputy Minister is responsible for designating positions of risk for post-employment conflict of interest situations in accordance with the Directive on Conflict of Interest.

The following are designated as positions of risk at the Department of Justice: EX, LC, LP-04 and LP-05.

Employees in these designated positions are subject to a one-year limitation period after leaving office. Before leaving office and during this one-year limitation period, these employees are to

report to the Deputy Minister in writing, via the office responsible for values and ethics, all firm offers of employment or proposed activity outside the public service that could place them in a real, apparent or potential conflict of interest with their public service employment. They must also immediately report if they accepted any such offer. Additionally, during this one-year period, these employees cannot do the following without the Deputy Minister's authorization:

a) Accept appointment to a board of directors of, or employment with, private entities with which they had significant official dealings during the period of one year immediately prior to the termination of their service. The official dealings in question may either be directly on the part of the public servant or through their subordinates;
b) Make representations on behalf of persons or entities outside of the public service to any government organization with which they had significant official dealings, during the period of one year immediately prior to the termination of their service. The official dealings in question may either be directly on the part of the public servant or through their subordinates; or
c) Give advice to their clients or employer using information that is not publicly available concerning the programs or policies of the Department or organizations with which they had a direct and substantial relationship.

3.3 Waiver or reduction of limitation period

An employee or former public servant may apply to the Deputy Minister, via the office responsible for values and ethics, for a written waiver or reduction of the limitation period. The employee is to provide sufficient information to assist the Deputy Minister or their delegate in making a determination as to whether to grant the waiver taking into consideration the following criteria:

a) the circumstances under which the termination of their service occurred
b) the general employment prospects of the employee or former public servant
c) the significance to the government of information possessed by the employee or former public servant by virtue of that individual's position in the public service
d) the desirability of a rapid transfer of the employee's or former public servant's knowledge and skills from the government to private, other governmental or non-governmental sectors
e) the degree to which the new employer might gain unfair commercial or private advantage by hiring the employee or former public servant
f) the authority and influence possessed by that individual while in the public service
g) any other consideration at the discretion of the Deputy Minister

4. Resolution

With respect to the arrangements necessary to prevent a real, apparent or potential conflict of interest, or to comply with the requirements set out above, it is expected that situations will be resolved through discussion and agreement between the employee and the Deputy Minister or their delegate. When an employee and the Deputy Minister or delegate disagree on the appropriate arrangements to resolve a real, apparent or potential conflict of interest, the

disagreement will be resolved through the grievance procedures (available on the Government of Canada network only) established by the Department.

5. Consequences

The Department fully trusts its employees to carry out their professional duties properly and expects each employee to comply with this Code and the related policies and guidelines.

Employees who do not comply with the requirements set out in this Code may be subject to disciplinary measures, up to and including termination of employment. Any disciplinary measures will be based on the seriousness of the breach.

Annex A: Duties and obligations

Employees

An employee or public servant is a person employed in the core public administration and by the organizations that make up the core public administration as defined in section 11 of the *Financial Administration Act*. This includes indeterminate and term employees, employees on leave without pay, students participating in Student Employment Programs, casual, seasonal, and part-time workers.

Although individuals on incoming Build Canada Exchange assignments may not be employees, they are expected to comply with the requirements of the Directive on Conflict of Interest. Volunteers are also expected to respect these requirements. Order-in-Council appointees, such as Deputy Ministers, are subject to the *Conflict of Interest Act*, and are not subject to the Directive on Conflict of Interest.

Employees are expected to abide by this Code and demonstrate the values of the Department as well as the core competencies of the public sector in their actions and behaviour.

As provided by section 12 and subsection 13(1) of the *Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act* (PSDPA), if employees have information that could indicate wrongdoing as defined by the PSDPA, they can bring this matter, in confidence and without fear of reprisal, to the attention of their immediate supervisor, the Senior Officer for Internal Disclosure of wrongdoing or the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner.

Every employee is responsible for regularly reviewing the Code – at least once a year and more often if their circumstances change (e.g. when changing positions or undertaking a new activity) – and to be familiar with their duties and obligations.

Managers

Employees who are also managers are in a position of influence and authority that gives them a particular responsibility to exemplify the values of the public sector and the Department. Managers are expected to:

- promote a culture based on the values of the public sector and of the Department, and encourage dialogue on related issues
- provide advice and guidance as needed to employees under their supervision on issues related to values and ethics, including occasions where employees find themselves faced with a situation that could give rise to a conflict of interest
- review submissions from employees and provide input as requested by the office responsible for values and ethics for the purpose of making a decision relating to conflict of interest and post-employment
- monitor employees' compliance with decisions or other measures established to prevent or minimize risks related to conflict of interest
- notify the office responsible for values and ethics of breaches under this Code and non-compliance with established measures to prevent conflict of interest

- advise employees departing from the public service of their post-employment obligations, including discussing their intentions for future outside employment or activities that may give rise to a real, apparent or potential conflict of interest situation

Deputy Minister

The Deputy Minister has specific responsibilities under the PSDPA, including establishing a code of conduct for the Department and an overall responsibility for fostering a positive culture of values and ethics. The Deputy Minister ensures that employees are aware of their obligations under this Code. The Deputy Minister also ensures that employees can obtain appropriate advice within the Department on ethical issues, including possible conflicts of interest.

The Deputy Minister ensures that this Code and the internal disclosure procedures are implemented effectively within the Department, and that they are regularly monitored and evaluated.

The Deputy Minister is responsible for ensuring the non-partisan provision of programs and services by the Department.

The Deputy Minister is subject to the Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector and to the *Conflict of Interest Act*.

Delegated authority under the Code

The Deputy Minister has delegated responsibility for overseeing activities relating to values and ethics at the Department to the Senior Director of the Organizational Health and Employee Relations Division, who in turn supports the Deputy Minister by playing a central role in leading the Department in matters of values and ethics.

In particular, the Senior Director is responsible for managing the office responsible for values and ethics and, in accordance with the authority delegated to them, for reviewing and dealing with requests for advice and submissions related to conflict of interest and post-employment on behalf of the Deputy Minister.

Office responsible for values and ethics

The Values and Ethics Office, within the Human Resources Branch is responsible for values and ethics. It supports the Deputy Minister, the Senior Director of the Organizational Health and Employee Relations Division, managers and all Department employees. It is responsible for:

- providing advice to employees and managers on issues related to this Code and values and ethics in general
- processing and providing recommendations on submissions under this Code related to conflict of interest (available on the Government of Canada network only), post-employment (available on the Government of Canada network only) and political activities (available on the Government of Canada network only)
- providing information, tools, and training so that employees understand their duties and obligations

- working in partnership with key stakeholders and partners on issues related to values and ethics

Senior Officer for Internal Disclosure of wrongdoing

The Senior Officer for Internal Disclosure of wrongdoing (SOID) helps promote a positive environment for disclosing wrongdoing and deals with disclosures of wrongdoing made by employees in the Department. They are responsible for supporting the Deputy Minister in meeting the requirements of the *Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act* (PSDPA).

The SOID's duties and powers also include the following, in accordance with the internal disclosure procedures established under the PSDPA:

1. providing information, advice, and guidance to employees regarding the Department's internal disclosure procedures, including the making of disclosures, the conduct of investigations into disclosures, and the handling of disclosures made to supervisors
2. receiving and recording disclosures and reviewing them to establish whether there are sufficient grounds for further action under the PSDPA
3. managing investigations into disclosures, including determining whether to deal with a disclosure under the PSDPA, initiating an investigation or ceasing an investigation
4. coordinating the handling of a disclosure with the senior officer of another federal public sector organization, if a disclosure or an investigation into a disclosure involves that other organization
5. notifying the person(s) who made a disclosure in writing of the outcome of any review or investigation into the disclosure and on the status of actions taken on the disclosure, as appropriate
6. reporting the findings of investigations, as well as any systemic problems that may have given rise to wrongdoing, directly to the Deputy Minister, with recommendations for corrective action, if any

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat – Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer

In support of the Treasury Board President's responsibilities under section 4 of the PSDPA, the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer (OCHRO) is responsible for promoting ethical practices in the public sector. The OCHRO will work with all relevant partner organizations to implement and promote the Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector (VECPS) and will provide advice to Deputy Ministers and designated departmental officials with respect to its interpretation.

The Chief Human Resources Officer may issue directives, standards and guidelines related to the VECPS, such as the Policy on People Management and the Directive on Conflict of Interest.

The OCHRO will monitor the implementation of the VECPS in organizations with a view to assessing whether the stated objectives have been achieved.

Public Service Commission

In accordance with the *Public Service Employment Act*, the Public Service Commission is responsible for conducting staffing investigations and audits to safeguard the integrity of the public service staffing system. It is also responsible for administering certain provisions related to political activities to maintain the non-partisanship of the public service. This includes approving political candidacy requests at the municipal, provincial, territorial, and federal levels. It also supports the Department's Designated Political Activities Representative.

Designated Political Activities Representative

The Department's Designated Political Activities Representative (DPAR) is responsible for providing advice and guidance to employees in the Department who wish to engage in non-candidacy political activities. They also support employees, managers and the Public Service Commission with the process related to political candidacy requests.

Although some questions about lower-risk activities may be solely addressed through advice, there may also be instances where it will be necessary to obtain a formal conflict of interest determination for non-candidacy related political activities at the discretion of the DPAR. Candidacy requests are under the sole jurisdiction of the Public Service Commission and are not subject to the conflict of interest process.

Annex B: Assets, liabilities, and trusts

Reportable assets and liabilities

The following is a list of examples of assets and liabilities that must be reported **if they do, or could, constitute a conflict of interest**. **This list is not exhaustive**.

a) Publicly traded securities of corporations and foreign governments, and self-administered Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs), self-administered Registered Education Savings Plans (RESPs), tax free savings accounts, and Registered Disability Savings Plans (RDSPs), or similar tax-related saving vehicles, that are composed of these securities, where these securities are held directly and not through units in mutual funds or Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs)
b) Interests in partnerships, proprietorships, joint ventures, private companies, and family businesses, in particular those that own or control shares of public companies or that do business with the government
c) Interests in labour-sponsored venture capital corporations or similar entities
d) Commercially operated farm businesses
e) Real property that is not for the private use of employees or their family members
f) Commodities, futures, and foreign currencies held or traded for speculative purposes
g) Assets placed in trust or resulting from an estate of which the employee is a beneficiary
h) Secured or unsecured loans granted to persons other than to members of the employee's immediate family
i) Any other assets or liabilities that could give rise to a real, apparent or potential conflict of interest due to the nature of the employee's official duties or the non-public information to which they have access
j) Direct and contingent liabilities in respect of any of the assets described in this section

Non-reportable assets

Assets and interests for the private use of employees and of their family members, as well as non-commercial assets, are **not** subject to the compliance measures.

For example, such assets include the following:

a) Residences, recreational properties, and farms used or intended for use by employees or their families
b) Household goods and personal effects
c) Works of art, antiques, and collectibles
d) Automobiles and other personal means of transportation
e) Cash and deposits
f) Canada Saving Bonds and other similar investments in securities of fixed value issued or guaranteed by any level of government in Canada or agencies of those governments
g) Registered Retirement Savings Plans and Registered Education Savings Plans that are not self-administered
h) Investments in open-ended mutual funds
i) Guaranteed investment certificates and similar financial instruments

j) Annuities and life insurance policies
k) Pension rights
l) Money owed by a previous employer, client, or partnership
m) Personal loans receivable from members of employees' immediate families and small personal loans receivable from other persons where employees have loaned the moneys receivable
n) Any liability, such as a car loan, home renovation loan or credit card account, from a financial institution or business entity granted on terms available to the general public