

September 14, 1999  
Re: IO-99-156

You inquired whether you could accept the gift of a golf shirt from Usinternetworking, Inc. in return for your voluntary participation in the USi sponsored Neighborhood Leadership Academy. Your participation included speaking to a class of 12 community citizens about the functions of county government. You indicated that you did not know if USi has or is negotiating a contract with the county, or whether it is a lobbyist with respect to matters within the jurisdiction of the county administration. The fact that the corporation is not registered as a lobbyist is not dispositive; the gift of law, §3-106(b)(4), does not distinguish between properly registered lobbyists and unregistered lobbyists. If USi is a contractor or a lobbyist, you cannot accept a gift from this donor, unless it falls within a permitted exception to the general gift prohibition. A golf shirt, if it is valued at \$25 or less, would be considered a gift of “nominal value”, a permitted exception under 3-106(c)(3).

In the absence of currently pending matters between the corporate donor and the county administration, there is not reason to believe that acceptance of this gift would tend to impair your impartiality or that it is designed to do so. If you determine that the value of the gift does not exceed \$25 and that there are no pending county matters involving USi, the commission concludes that you may accept the gift.

Thank you for your inquiry. If you have any questions, please call.

Sincerely,

Betsy K. Dawson  
Executive Director