



Ethics and Leadership in the time of the Coronavirus - The Ethics Tips You Need to Know

Presenter

**Stuart Bender
Director
Office of Ethics**

**Stuart.Bender@usda.gov
(202) 720-2251**



Goals for this Session

- **Provide context on how Ethics programs work in the Federal government.**
- **Discuss some practices that have been very successful at USDA**
- **Provide you with innovative ideas you can use right away to enhance ethical leadership in your agency.**



What is the role of a Federal Ethics Program?

- Established by the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, which was passed due to the Watergate Scandal.



- Aimed at the proactive prevention of ethics problems (as opposed to investigation and prosecution of violations).

What is the role of a Federal Ethics Program?

- Tools:

- Ethics Training**
- Reviews of Financial Disclosure Reports**
- Advice and Counsel in response to employee questions regarding compliance with Federal Ethics statutes and regulations**
- Ethics Policy development**



Leaders and Ethics

Ethics Affects you in **TWO** ways

- 1) **Your own actions AND**
- 2) The actions of **YOUR staff**



A Case Study on why Leaders Benefit from Robust Ethics Training



- The Foreign Corrupt Practices Act is U.S. criminal law focused on preventing and punishing bribery overseas.

Violations by American citizens can be prosecuted by the Department of Justice and the Securities and Exchange Commission.



Ethics Training = Effective Risk Management



In 2012, Morgan Stanley's senior leadership avoided criminal prosecution for the corrupt actions of its Managing Director in China. **The Reason: Morgan Stanley's Ethics Compliance Program proactively provided 54 ethics trainings over a 5 year period to its employees in Asia during the time when the Managing Director secretly committed his crimes.**



Ethics Training = Effective Risk Management



Starting years before, Morgan Stanley had invested in their Ethics & Compliance Program and employed **500 Ethics Advisors** providing Ethics advice to its 55,000 employees. They also raised the visibility of their Ethics & Compliance Office by having it report directly to Morgan Stanley's **Chief Legal Officer**.



Executives and Ethics

Ethics Affects you in **TWO** ways

- 1) **Your own actions AND**
- 2) **The actions of YOUR staff**



Where Do Leaders Find Risk?

- **Busy offices – especially with increased workload and fast-paced deadlines**
- **Geographic isolation – Much more common During COVID-19 and remote teleworking**
- **Work affects outside entities**
- **Infrequent oversight and isolation from preventative guidance and expertise**



Risk management Strategies for a well-designed ethics program:

- **Appropriately tailored Ethics trainings for political appointees, SES, and managers at all levels.**
- **Ethics information providing practical advice and/or case studies to address real-life situations.**
- **Ethics training that provides guidance on where to go within the agency to obtain ethics advice.**
- **Widely disseminate ethics information to employees in a variety of accessible formats (such as videos, ethics moments, one-pagers, mobile apps, webinars).**



USDA Ethics Program



The USDA Office of Ethics:

- **Limited Resources:** Staffing of just 19 Ethics Advisors servicing 100,000 USDA employees geographically dispersed across the country (1:5,200 ratio).
- **Real-life case study:** We strategically leveraged innovative training techniques and long-distance technology as a cost-effective “force multiplier” to proactively obtain effective results.



USDA Ethics Program



The USDA Ethics Program is a real-life case study of how we strategically leveraged limited resources to proactively obtain the maximum positive effect

USDA Case Study: “Ethics Moments” with “Ethics One-Pagers”

Make Your Message:

- Short (3 minutes or less)**
- Relevant – Tailor to their specific needs with examples.**
- Informative**
- Visually interesting**



Be Bold, Innovate!

Look for ways to be innovative

- Small things can have a HUGE impact.
- **Reframe** Ethics training from one 60 minute annual training to 3 minute Ethics briefings every week (52 times) – Regular Reminders are Powerful!
- Recognize that Ethics Training can be more than just an annual event and – to be memorable – must be on going in a *micro-learning format*.



Be Visible



USDA Case Study: [“Ethics Moments”](#) presented to:

- Secretary’s Sub-Cabinet Meetings**
- USDA White House Liaison’s Appointees Meetings**
- Under Secretaries’ & OGC Management Team Meetings**
- Component Agency Heads Leadership Meetings**

USDA Office of Ethics staff present approximately 10 “Ethics Moments” every week for a total of more than 500 “Ethics Moments” every year.



“Ethics Moments” Lessons Learned

Proactively target “high risk” areas related to criminal violations (i.e. where are the issues likely to arise):

- **Contracting and Procurement**
- **Regulatory Enforcement**
- **Grants Management**
- **Information Technology (IT)**
- **Future / Outside Employment**
- **Bribery / Gifts**



Leverage Technology



Leverage Long-Distance Training Technology as a Cost-Effective “Force Multiplier”

- **Most every employee regularly uses a computer or smartphone during their workday.**
- **Think about how you can reach them using those devices to provide short reminders of the ethics rules.**
- **Some Examples....**



The USDA Ethics App

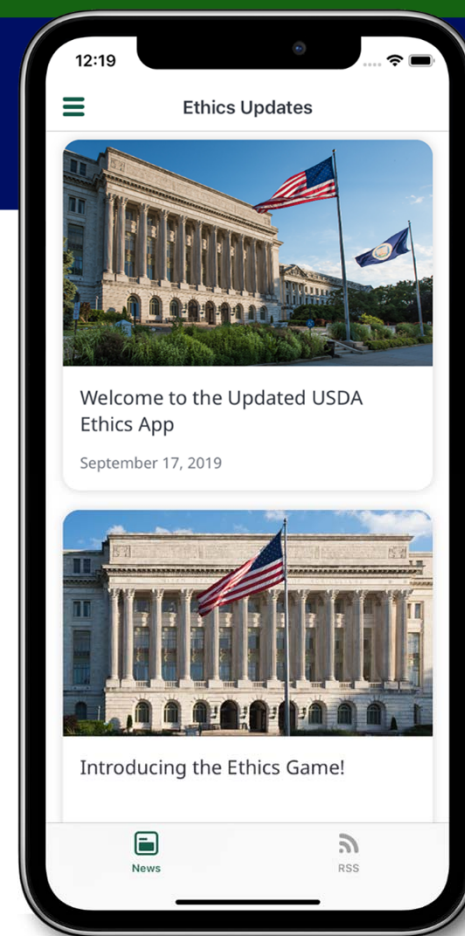
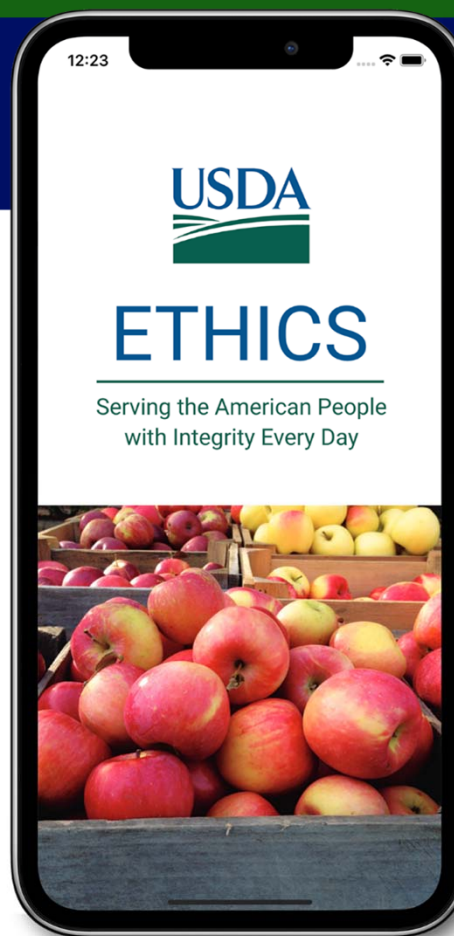


How to download:

Search the term "USDA Ethics" in the App Store or Google Play.



NOW, The Upgraded USDA Ethics App with a New Ethics Game.



To download the App, on any smart phone just search: "USDA Ethics"



Expand Outreach During COVID-19

Technology provides us with fantastic training tools but for an organization's program to be effective, it must be seen (visible) and its services valued.

You may need to “jump” out of your fishbowl, to reach employees who are geographically dispersed across the country and the world.



Video Training in the time of COVID-19

There is data showing the effectiveness of video training in increasing retention, viewership, and employee engagement:

- **Every day, 500 Million hours of video** are watched on **YouTube**. Source: Business Insider
- According to Pew Research Center, **by 2025, it is anticipated that 75% of workforce will be millennials** -- some of the heaviest consumers of video as a medium.
- According to Forrester Research, **employees are 75% more likely to watch a video than read documents, emails or web articles.**



Leveraging Video Training

USDA has 28 Ethics Videos posted on YouTube – and two are animated!


Google Search: “YouTube USDA Office of Ethics Playlist”

Posting resources on public websites promotes transparency, access, and enhances understanding of the Federal ethics and Hatch Act rules.





The Hatch Act and Social Media







Jordan Murphy
Ethics Specialist


THE HATCH ACT RULES

1 DON'T ENGAGE IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES


WRITE OR SPEAK IN PUBLIC OFFICIAL CAPACITY

WRITE OR SPEAK FOR OR IN SUPPORT OF GOVERNMENT OR POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

ASKING YOUR OFFICIAL AUTHORITY FOR ASSISTANCE OR INTERFERENCE




2 DON'T RUN AS A PARTISAN POLITICAL CANDIDATE WHILE YOU'RE A FEDERAL EMPLOYEE



3 DON'T ASK FOR OR RECEIVE ANY CAMPAIGN DONATIONS AT ANY TIME


VOTE FOR JUDGE

PROBATIONARY EMPLOYEE





Rules for All USDA Employees








USDA
ETHICS

EMILY DOXTATOR
Ethics Specialist



Questions?





USDA Office of Ethics

United States Department of Agriculture

Questions?

Contact:

Stuart Bender

Director

USDA Office of Ethics

Stuart.Bender@usda.gov

(202) 720-2251 (office)

Room 347-W, Whitten Building

Office of Ethics Website: www.ethics.usda.gov

