

Conflicts of Interest and Commitment (COIC) Addendum for Extension Personnel

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach adheres to all policies of Iowa State University regarding conflicts of interest and commitment (COIC). These include the COIC Policy and the COIC Procedures, Applications, and Guidance which are published in the University's Policy Library: <http://policy.iastate.edu/policy/conflict/>

Aspects Unique to Extension

Some applications of ISU's COIC Policy and Procedures are more prescriptive for ISU Extension personnel because of the nature of the Extension work. ISU Extension work requires considerable direct public contact, and ISU Extension is generally viewed as the primary educational outreach component of the University. Extension educational services are delivered throughout the State of Iowa and beyond. Based on the outreach role and the location of service delivery, it is critical that ISU Extension employees be particularly sensitive to the potential for real or perceived COIC. Extension employees must be especially careful in their private activities to avoid the perceptions that:

- 1) they are asking for or receiving private payment for services that are normally a part of their position responsibilities;
- 2) any services that they provide privately are affiliated with or endorsed by Extension; or
- 3) they are advertising or promoting their private services while performing their Extension roles.

Activities that give the perceptions above could be considered a misuse of their positions and/or a violation of state code. ISU Extension employees representing the Cooperative Extension system have additional responsibilities to safeguard against real or perceived COIC in accordance with the Smith Lever Act and USDA Federal policies.

For these reasons, the following are restricted while employed by ISU Extension.

Private Consulting

University faculty and specialists, because of their special knowledge, education or research activities, may be involved in providing technical expertise outside of their normal job assignments.

These consulting relationships can often provide a valuable method for transfer of expertise and technology. However, private consulting activities that involve fees for personal gain should be carefully examined for potential or perceived COIC.

1. Private, in-state consulting for a fee is not allowed for ISU Extension employees because the provision of such education and services is considered and deemed as part of their employment.
2. In-state consulting for a fee in a subject area not related to the ISU Extension employee's position can still be perceived as a COIC if the subject matter is related to services offered by another ISU Extension unit because it can give the perception to the public that the services are affiliated with or endorsed by Extension.
3. If ISU Extension provides services outside the State of Iowa through a regional or national initiative, Extension units and individual Extension employees should avoid providing like consulting services in that region or nationally. However, if ISU Extension does not provide the service or expertise requested at a regional or national level, it may be acceptable to provide the consulting service.
4. Out-of-state private consulting for a fee in the ISU Extension employee's subject matter expertise may be acceptable after receiving the approval of the supervisor. Any ISU Extension-developed materials used during such consulting work must be acknowledged. In addition, care must be taken to avoid the perception that the employee is using his or her Extension position to advertise or promote his or her private services.

Teaching at community colleges or public/private schools in the State of Iowa

ISU Extension employees may not teach at Iowa community colleges or public or private schools as a contracted employee for personal gain in subject matter areas related to programs offered by any ISU Extension unit. Community college or public/private school teaching aligned with ISU Extension programs should be performed as either an Extension fee-for-service or ISU contractual activity.

Judging at county, regional and state fairs in Iowa

ISU Extension personnel may not serve as fair judges for a fee in the State of Iowa. If fair judging is part of an educational activity and part of an ISU Extension employee's job responsibility, the judging may be pre-approved by the supervisor. Any financial compensation must be done as either an Extension fee-for-service or ISU contractual activity.

See examples of conflict of interest or commitment.

