



## VALUES AND ETHICS CODE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER

The Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer contributes to Canadian parliamentary democracy by serving Parliament with integrity and respect, in accordance with our core values:

### **INDEPENDENCE**

We ensure independence by providing non-partisan analysis and by keeping Parliament as a whole informed of our results.

### **TRUST**

We uphold trust by promoting mutual respect and ethical conduct, by maintaining transparency in our analyses, and by demonstrating fairness and courtesy to parliamentarians, the government, other various partners and the public.

### **COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE**

We achieve excellence in all aspects of our operations by delivering relevant and timely analysis as well as innovative and professional services.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This Values and Ethics Code (the “Code”) is intended to offer a broad range of guidance about the standards of conduct expected of employees, but no code can address every situation that could arise or could result in an actual, potential or perceived breach. For this reason, this Code does not relieve persons governed by it of the responsibility to exercise good judgment and, in circumstances where they are unsure of the proper course of action, to seek appropriate guidance.

This Code recognizes that the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guarantees such freedoms as freedom of expression and freedom of association, and such rights as democratic rights and legal rights, subject only to reasonable limits prescribed by law.

## **1 APPLICATION**

- 1.1 This Code applies to all employees and other persons in the service of the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer (the “OPBO”), including persons employed in an indeterminate or determinate position, on a full-time or part-time basis, students, interns, and persons seconded to the OPBO from other organizations.
- 1.2 The Parliamentary Budget Officer shall appoint a person to act as the OPBO’s Values and Ethics Officer, who shall be responsible for the application of this Code. This person shall ensure that the Code is applied consistently throughout the OPBO, and shall be available to provide advice and guidance to all persons who are subject to this Code.
- 1.3 The OPBO may establish guidelines respecting the application of this Code.

- 1.4 Adherence to this Code is a condition of employment of all OPBO employees.

## **2 GENERAL RULES OF CONDUCT**

- 2.1 Persons governed by this Code must ensure that they comply with the Code and that they uphold the OPBO's core values of independence, trust and commitment to excellence.
- 2.2 Persons governed by this Code may conduct their personal affairs as they see fit so long as they do not compromise, or are not perceived to compromise, the values and integrity of the OPBO or its employees.
- 2.3 Persons governed by this Code shall carry out, and be seen to carry out, their duties on a non-partisan basis in order to preserve the OPBO's reputation of impartiality and to be sensitive to the unique political environment in which the OPBO operates.
- 2.4 During and after employment by the OPBO, no person governed by this Code shall communicate, improperly use, take advantage of, or benefit from information that is acquired in the course of duties with the OPBO.
- 2.5 Persons governed by this Code who wish to discuss compliance with it are encouraged to do so with their manager or the Values and Ethics Officer.
- 2.6 This Code does not restrict in any manner the conduct of a spouse, partner, or child of a person governed by the Code, and no person governed by this Code may be disciplined or penalized for the conduct of his or her spouse, partner, or child.

## **3 CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

- 3.1 Persons governed by this Code shall conduct their affairs in ways that prevent actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest.
- 3.2 No persons governed by this Code may have a pecuniary or other interest that conflicts or appears to conflict in any manner with the discharge of their duties.
- 3.3 No persons governed by this Code shall perform their duties in a way that improperly furthers their or anyone else's pecuniary or other interest.
- 3.4 Persons governed by this Code shall advise their manager or the Values and Ethics Officer of any pecuniary or other interest that conflicts or could appear to conflict with their duties as soon as they become aware of such interests.
- 3.5 Final determination of a conflict of interest shall be made by the Values and Ethics Officer or by the Parliamentary Budget Officer.
- 3.6 Every person governed by this Code shall apply responsible practices to optimize the use of public funds, assets and resources and should not use, or allow the use of, public property for anything other than officially approved activities.

## **4 ENGAGING IN OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES**

- 4.1 For the purpose of this Code, "outside activities" include paid work, carrying on a profession or business, and volunteer work other than the employee's principal employment with the OPBO.

- 4.2 Persons governed by this Code may also be employed outside the OPBO and take part in other outside activities unless the employment or activities could place demands on them inconsistent with their OPBO-related duties, call into question their capacity to perform those duties in an effective and objective manner, or create an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest.

## 5 GIFTS AND OTHER BENEFITS

- 5.1 Persons governed by this Code shall not solicit or accept from outside parties gifts or other benefits that may have an actual, potential or perceived influence on their objectivity in carrying out their official duties, that may place them under obligation to the donor, or that may compromise or appear to compromise in any way the integrity of the persons or the OPBO. However, persons governed by this Code may accept gifts and other benefits if the gifts and benefits:
- are infrequent and of minimal value (e.g., low-cost promotional objects or souvenirs with no cash value); and
  - are within the normal standards of courtesy or protocol.

## 6 POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

- 6.1 For the purpose of this Code, “political activity” is defined as any activity in support of, within or in opposition to a political party or a candidate, including promoting a political party, or speaking publicly on behalf of or against a candidate, party or political cause. Voting in a federal, provincial, territorial or municipal election or in a referendum is not considered to be a political activity for the purpose of this Code.
- 6.2 Persons governed by this Code may engage in any political activity so long as it does not impair or is not perceived to impair their ability to perform their duties in a politically impartial manner and when such activity has been assessed by the Values and Ethics Officer. During the assessment, the Values and Ethics Officer may take into consideration factors such as the nature of the political activity, the nature of the employee’s duties, and the level and visibility of the employee’s position.
- 6.3 Persons governed by this Code shall not engage in political activity at work, or associate their position within the OPBO with political activity.
- 6.4 Persons governed by this Code may seek nomination and/or elected office in a party leadership campaign or in a federal, provincial or territorial election only if they have requested and obtained permission for a leave of absence without pay from the Values and Ethics Officer. The Values and Ethics Officer may grant permission only if the Officer is satisfied that the employee’s ability to perform his or her duties in a politically impartial manner will not be impaired or perceived to be impaired. The Values and Ethics Officer may take into consideration factors such as the nature of the election, the nature of the employee’s duties, and the level and visibility of the employee’s position.
- 6.5 Persons governed by this Code who wish to seek nomination or be candidates in a municipal election should discuss the matter with the Values and Ethics Officer before making public their intention, in order to ensure that there is no actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest with their duties. Such discussions would also assist in determining whether a leave of absence without pay would be required for the period of the election and of political office, if the persons are elected. The Values and Ethics Officer may grant the leave of absence only if the Officer is satisfied that the employee’s ability to perform his or her duties in a politically impartial manner will not be impaired or perceived to be impaired. The Values and Ethics Officer may take into consideration factors such as the nature of the election, the nature of the employee’s duties, and the level and visibility of the employee’s position.

- 6.6 The Parliamentary Budget Officer and the Deputy Parliamentary Budget Officer shall not engage in any political activity other than voting in an election.

## 7 DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

- 7.1 Unless authorized, no person governed by this Code shall speak to the news media on behalf of the OPBO or the Parliament of Canada.

## 8 SOCIAL MEDIA

- 8.1 Persons governed by this Code who use social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, or blogs, must be aware that contributions to such social media are not considered to be private communications. Persons governed by this Code are expected to conduct themselves on social media in the same way and according to the same standards as they would in person.
- 8.2 Persons governed by this Code may use social media so long as doing so does not impair or is not perceived to impair their ability to perform their duties in a politically impartial manner. Persons governed by this Code must not comment on issues or individuals in a way that could reflect negatively on their work, or the reputation of the OPBO and its employees, or the Parliament of Canada.

## 9 CORRECTIVE MEASURES

- 9.1 It is expected that most questions of values and ethics will be resolved in discussions between persons governed by this Code, and the Values and Ethics Officer or managers, through which they will identify avenues of resolution and take appropriate action.
- 9.2 However, persons governed by this Code who do not comply with this Code, and who knew or reasonably should have known that they were not in compliance, may be subject to appropriate disciplinary measures. These measures may include reprimand, suspension, dismissal, or legal or other proceedings.

## 10 REPORTING OF WRONGDOINGS

- 10.1 Persons governed by this Code who become aware of a breach of the Code, or any other wrongdoing or illegal activity in the workplace, have a responsibility to report that breach or wrongdoing to the Values and Ethics Officer. Furthermore, persons who, in good faith, report such breaches or wrongdoings are protected from reprisals for doing so.
- 10.2 After receiving a report under section 10.1, the Values and Ethics Officer shall consult with the appropriate manager of the OPBO. Managers have an obligation to follow up promptly, and shall advise the Values and Ethics Officer of their findings and the disposition of such reports.

## 11 MISCELLANEOUS

- 11.1 Disagreements about the application of this Code shall be addressed in compliance with the recourse mechanisms prescribed in the collective agreement or terms and conditions of employment of the person questioning the application of the Code, or in the *Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act*.