

National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-0001



October 28, 2014

Reply to Attn of:

General Law Practice Group

TO: Distribution

FROM: Alternate Designated Agency Ethics Official

SUBJECT: Determination Regarding Attendance by NASA Employees at the L'Oreal USA for Women in Science Fellows Awards Ceremony, on November 13, 2014

On November 13, 2014 L'Oreal USA will host a reception at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C., at 6:30 p.m. The event is to introduce and celebrate the 2014 L'Oreal USA for Women in Science Fellows and present them with grants to help fund their scientific research.

Approximately 1,000 people have been invited to attend, including representatives from Congress and the Executive Office of the President, other Federal agencies and academia, members of industry and media, and L'Oreal employees. The estimated cost of the reception, including all food and beverages, is \$27.60 per person. I find that the event meets the requirements of a "widely attended gathering" as defined in 5 C.F.R. § 2635.204(g)(2).

I further determine that free attendance at the above mentioned event is in the interest of the agency because it will further agency programs and operations. Attendance at this event will allow NASA attendees to exchange information regarding NASA's plans and programs. Accordingly, NASA employees (subject to the exceptions noted below) who have been invited to attend may accept free attendance to this event.

NASA employees, including NASA employees who are in non-career positions for which they are required to sign an ethics pledge under Executive Order 13490, whose duties do not substantially affect the sponsors or a majority of its members, may accept an invitation for free attendance to the reception.

However, NASA employees whose duties may substantially affect the event sponsor, such as by way of contracting duties, should seek an individual determination pursuant to 5 C.F.R. §

2635.204(g)(3)(i) regarding participation in this event from their local ethics counselor to attend under the widely attended gathering exception.¹

Attendees are reminded of the \$20 gift exception at 5 C.F.R. § 2635.204(a), which provides that employees may accept gifts valued at no more than \$20 per occasion (and no more than \$50 from one source in a calendar year). We understand that L'Oreal USA will be distributing a gift bag with a total value of \$350 worth of L'Oreal products. Accordingly, attendees should decline the gift bag or reimburse L'Oreal for its contents.



Adam F. Greenstone

¹ NASA employees other than non-career employees subject to the ethics pledge of Executive Order 13490 whose duties may substantially affect an event host may also attend the event, under the \$20 gift exception (5 C.F.R. § 2635.204(a)) without reimbursing the organizers if they (and any accompanying guest) do not accept refreshments and gifts worth a total of more than \$20, or worth more than \$50 from the sponsor during the calendar year under the \$20 exception. This would, for example, be the case if an employee only accepted a moderate amount of food and refreshments served at the reception. Those individuals are, however, reminded: 1) that it is never inappropriate and frequently prudent to reimburse a contractor host for the value of attending even if reimbursement is not required, 2) to ensure that their attendance does not generate any appearance of impropriety, such as appearance of preference or endorsement, and 3) they may contact a local NASA ethics official for advice.