

June 10, 2004

**TO:** Executive Officers and Chief Contracting Officers

**FROM:** Head of the Contracting Activity and Director, Office of Acquisition Management and Policy  
Director and Deputy Chief Financial Officer, Office of Financial Management

**SUBJECT:** Use of Appropriations to Purchase Employee Business Cards

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- a. On March 17, 1998, the Deputy Associate General Counsel (DAGC), HHS, issued a memorandum on the subject "Use of General Appropriation Funds to Purchase Business Cards for Employees." This memorandum clarifies the U.S. Department of Justice opinion dated August 11, 1997, authorizing executive agencies, under certain circumstances, to use appropriations to purchase business cards for employees.
- b. On April 20, 1998, the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Finance, HHS, issued a memorandum on the subject "General Counsel Opinion on Business Cards." This memorandum referenced the DAGC, HHS, March decision and advised OPDIV Chief Financial Officers to evaluate their individual circumstances in applying DAGC's guidance.

## **2. POLICY**

- a. Appropriated funds may be used to purchase employee business cards for NIN employees who, in the conduct of their official duties, interface significantly and continuously with people or organizations external to NIH to further the statutory mission of NIH. Employee business cards should only be used to facilitate prompt and efficient business-related communications with persons outside of NIH (Government and Non-Government).

**NOTE:** Use of appropriated funds for the purchase of employee business cards is not authorized for Federal Advisory Committee Members and Special Government Employees.

- b. Use of appropriated funds to purchase employee business cards for purposes other than described in this policy is not authorized.

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c. Employee business cards must be procured using the following procedures:

- (1) Employee business cards for Institute personnel can be purchased through the NIM Printing Branch, Division of Medical Arts and Printing Services, ORS (NH Printing Branch) (301/496-3881). If the NIH Printing Branch is not used, then the purchase must be made from the Lighthouse for the Blind (LB), Seattle, Washington, unless a purchase exception exists under FAR 8.706 (41 CFR 51-5.4). LB is a mandatory source via the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act. The General Services Administration has issued the LB a Federal Supply Schedule contract to supply employee business cards to Federal employees.
- (2) Employee business cards for Center or other NIH component's personnel must be purchased through the NIH Printing Branch.

The NIH Printing Branch will only accept Central Services Accounting (CSA) requests for the purchase of employee business cards. Requestors must also go to the website address: <http://www.nih.gov/od/ors/dss> to place orders. Contact the NIH Printing Branch at (301) 496-3881 for more information.

- d. The standard employee business card format must include: "Department of Health and Human Services" and "National Institutes of Health" in either text or logos; employee's name and official organizational title (informal titles and references cannot be used); address, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address. The IC or Center logos may be included.

**The purchase of employee business cards with foiled logos is prohibited. The inclusion of personal cellular telephone numbers on the employee business cards is also prohibited.**

- e. Orders for business cards shall be reasonable in relation to their usage by the particular employee. In most cases, orders will not need to be placed more often than yearly for an employee. Most employees will not need more than 250 cards per year. An adequate justification for quantities exceeding 250 employee business cards is required. A reorganization or change in position may necessitate replacement of cards.

### 3. RESPONSIBILITIES/PROCEDURES

- a. The employee shall submit a written request for employee business cards to their immediate supervisor. The written request must describe the employee's duties, why the employee business cards are required, the level of interaction with people or organization external to NIH, and how the employee's communication capabilities are or will be adversely impacted without the employee business cards. If more than 250 cards are needed, the written request shall state the number of cards required and

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include an adequate justification for the excess quantity.

- (1) Reviewing and determine whether the request to purchase employee business cards is justified. Requests will not be considered if the employee does not have significant and continuous interaction with persons or organization external to the NIH.
- (2) Ensuing that requested questions in excess of 250 business cards are justified and reasonable.
- (3) If applicable, ensuring that requests for cards in excess of one order per year per employee are justified and reasonable.
- (4) Requesting approval of employee business card requests from the Executive Officer (EO) (cannot be re-delegated) (see attached sample memorandum). Requests for EO approval can be handled via e-mail or fax. Approvals must be obtained in writing before the acquisition process begins.
- (5) Maintaining written approval of employee business card requests.
  - b. The individual responsible for ordering supplies cannot begin the acquisition process for an employee business card order until there is written evidence of EO approval.

If the employee business cards are ordered through the NIH Printing Branch, a copy of the EO approval (with the CSA ordering number, P or X, affixed) must be faxed to (301) 480- 4548.

#### 4. INQUIRIES

If you have questions or comments regarding this memorandum, please contact Allyson Y. Stokes by telephone at (301) 496-6014, email at [as463u@nih.gov](mailto:as463u@nih.gov), or fax to (301) 402-1199.

This memorandum supersedes all previous guidance.

/s/

Diane J. Frasier  
Head of the Contracting Activity and  
Director, Office of Acquisition Management  
and Policy

/s/

Kenneth Stith  
Director, Office of Financial Management  
Deputy Chief Financial Officer

**USE OF APPROPRIATIONS TO PURCHASE EMPLOYEE BUSINESS CARDS**

**SAMPLE REQUEST FOR APPROVAL MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:**

**FROM:**

**TO:** (Insert Name)  
Executive Officer, (Insert IC)

**SUBJECT:** Request for Approval to Purchase Employee Business Cards

Attached is the Justification to purchase employee business cards for [insert name] of my staff.

The employee interacts significantly and continuously with people or organizations external to NIH. Use of the employee business cards would facilitate prompt and efficient business-related communications in the course of such interaction, which further the statutory mission of NIH. The quantity of [insert number] employee business cards requested is determined to be reasonable.

Your approval is requested.

(Signature)  
Immediate Supervisor's Name (typed)  
Immediate Supervisor's Title

\_\_\_\_\_ This request is approved \_\_\_\_\_ This request is not approved

(Signature)  
Executive Officer's Name (typed)