Developing and Delivering Effective Ethics Education and Communications

1. Who is your audience?

To create effective ethics education and communications you must begin with your audience. Knowing who you are addressing is critical to establishing appropriate objectives for your ethics education and to ensuring that participants see themselves in it.

Consider who you will be addressing before building your materials and when deciding upon delivery methods:
• What work environments/experiences and personal perspectives do your participants bring with them?
• What ethics risks do they face in the work they perform?
• How do they encounter "ethical issues" in their day-to-day lives?
• What are the actual (or likely) demographics of the group?
• What is the actual (or likely) level of education of the group?
• What learning, physical, or other accessibility challenges might members of the group have?

2. How relevant and engaging is your content and delivery? Is it inclusive and accessible?

Ethics education and communications are most effective when they meet people where they are. Your audience should see themselves and their needs reflected in the content and in the delivery.

Questions to consider:
• Are the topics you choose, the examples you create, and the questions you ask relevant to the work being performed? Do they reflect the experiences of your audience?
• Is the diversity of your audience reflected in the content (names, images, examples, language, etc.)?
• Do your instructors understand the needs of your audience, and are they able to effectively and credibly communicate with them?
• Do your delivery methods vary to accommodate different learning styles?
• Are your materials accessible?
• Do you provide materials in advance, especially for those using accessibility tools, or those who learn better with an opportunity to pre-read?

When you build your content, build intentionally for accessibility and inclusivity. Before you deliver your content, identify any individuals who may desire or require accessibility accommodations. Accessibility and inclusivity should never be an afterthought.

3. How effective is your program?

An effective ethics education and communications program relies as much on listening and learning as it does on talking and teaching. Seek input before you develop and feedback after you deliver your ethics education.

Sources of input and feedback could include:
- Needs assessment surveys (supervisors and employees)
- Informal discussions with groups of managers and groups of employees
- Meetings with a .508 compliance coordinator and your agency's DEIA Team
- Post-education evaluations that assess relevance, inclusivity, and accessibility
- Discussions with agency leaders and employees to evaluate whether the education and communications they received have supported them in managing ethics risks.