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Questions - Answers



Student's Name

SOC 105

Date



Questions

Question 1:



Ethics: You are working as a housing inspector for the City of Oshkosh. Due to budget constraints, you are furloughed without pay for two weeks. Due to the nature of your job you find that you still must attend to your official duties during those furlough days. At the end of the year, you notice an error in your pay stubs; you mistakenly were paid for the days you were furloughed. What do you do and why?

Among the proposed answers, the third one seems to be the most relevant action to be taken by a housing inspector for the City of Oshkosh. The reason for this is the need for the public service workers to follow the code of ethics established in their organizations and the overall moral code of justice. Being a housing inspector for the city means being a public servant ("Toward a bureaucratic ethic," 2016). In its turn, being a public servant means not only assisting the public by performing the established duties, but also operating with public resources and being paid from the budget of the city. In case any individual obtains extra wage, some area of the city loses these financial resources due to the fact that the only limited source of money for the budget is the taxpayers. As a consequence, if any public worker takes someone's money, he or she violates both the code of professional conduct and the code of ethics. One may even understand it not as



professional negligence but as a fraud in the case the fact that the furlough was occasionally paid is concealed. Scholars claim that professional ethics is the rules of conduct that translate the profession's characteristic ideals and ethos in daily actions (Shafritz, Russell, & Borick, 2011). Violation of these rules would mean that a person serves his or her own false ideas, which may represent greed or any other negative individual quality that harm the society. Following these misleading values may be beneficial in a short-time perspective but highly destructive in the future, because such worker may be further involved in bribery or other crime involving the financial aspect. Therefore, in the case a person notices that there was a fact of a financial mistake within an organization, he or she should notify the responsible authorities about it.

Furthermore, one presumes that it is possible to improve the efficacy of an organization by enhancing the range of the performed actions related to the topic. Thus, an ethically correct duty of a respectful and loyal worker is to investigate whether any similar case took place in his or her department, unit or even the entity overall. Remembering that a housing inspector for the city is accountable to the people, he or she should ask the colleagues about the situations involving payment for furlough days. Moreover, a housing inspector should notify the HR department and the administration of the mistake initiating a procedure of revision of the financial accounts of any individual. The reason for this is that mass financial errors may take place within an organization due to the work of a new employee or failure of the software, or any other related issue. Consequently, by performing the

above-stated actions, the housing inspector for the City of Oshkosh would enhance the work of the institution and prove the public that the latter serves the people of Oshkosh. Although this action may raise some negative reaction of the colleagues due to revisions of their accounts, it is expected to achieve a sustainable positive result. For instance, on the one hand, one of the positive outcomes of such course of events may be revealing the case of a mass fraud when the city's resources are outsourced on someone's individual activity. On the other hand, the approval of the fact that the organization is just and clear is expected to raise the morale of the workers, because they would know that their colleagues are highly skilled, loyal and responsible employees. Therefore, notifying the administration and the HR managers of the mistake and initiation of a financial revision of the housing department of the City of Oshkosh is the best solution for the proposed case.

Question 2:



Conflict and cooperation: Please define the following concepts:

- Task conflict.
- Process conflict.
- Relationship conflict.
- Groupthink.

Provide theoretical examples of what each concept looks like in a small group setting. Last, please discuss the possible positive and

negative effects of each concept in a small group setting.

Defining the proposed concepts is critical for a public worker because he or she should be capable of identifying various events in order to perform their adequate evaluation and give a relevant response. Thus, task conflict is a disagreement regarding the way of doing something ("Small group behavior – Conflict and cooperation," 2016). For instance, a task conflict that involves public administration may involve the strategies required to solve specific ecological problems of the region due to differences in the proposed decisions. For example, one party may stand for the increase of taxes placed on organizations that rank below ecological standards, whereas the opponents may stress that the city needs a separate ecological monitoring agency to take responsibility for ecological issues. Each task requires diverse ways of financing and regulation as well as has its benefits and drawbacks, which is why the opposing sides may have a continuous disagreement although they agree that solving the ecological problem is critical. Such conflicts may have good and bad implications that depend upon whether the losing party would agree to support the winner ("Small group behavior – Conflict and cooperation," 2016). In the case of mutual agreement, every side of the conflict would collaborate when validating the selected strategy. In the opposite situation, the "losers" may voice their disagreements to the public and initiate protest campaigns, which would restrain any initiative.

Furthermore, the exemplified case may be followed by a process conflict, which is a disagreement upon the specific characteristics of the

selected strategy ("Small group behavior – Conflict and cooperation," 2016). For example, if both sides agree to create the City Ecological Committee (CEC), they may disagree upon the terms of its creation. For instance, one party may state that a month is enough to arrange the aspects of staffing, financing, responsibilities and policies of CEC, whereas the opponents can claim that this time is not enough. This case might be recognized as mostly negative due to the fact that the opposing sides may have endless debates regarding the process of implementation of the plan but failing to validate it. Moreover, process conflicts may serve as indicators of the situation that one or more parties in the conflict have either no ability or will to address the chosen strategy ("Small group behavior – Conflict and cooperation," 2016). However, both of the mentioned conflicts may have positive implications such as the choice of the best strategy as a consequence of the reached consensus. The negative aspect of this factor is that the decision may be delayed and, therefore, lack relevance.

A relationship conflict emerges from the fact that two or more individuals do not like one another because of different reasons. Such causes may include diverse political views, personal attitudes, political competition, and other ("Small group behavior – Conflict and cooperation," 2016). For instance, the chief inspector of the newly formulated CEC has a conflict with a housing inspector, because both of them represent the opposing political parties and run for the position of a State Representative. As a result, neither the chief, not the housing inspector would be performing their professional duties well due to the fact that they are involved in a political struggle. At the same time, the

absence of the results of the work of both individuals negatively affects the city they serve. Therefore, the negative aspect of relationship conflicts within an organization is their destructive influence that prevents the institution from validating useful decisions. Scholars claim that this conflict has only negative implications ("Small group behavior – Conflict and cooperation," 2016). In order to solve the ecological problem discussed in the above example, the mayor of the city may raise a debate with his or her colleagues, which might also have negative consequences because of being a "group think."

Although "group think" seems to be a way for productive critical thinking, it has a negative aspect due to its nature. Thus, it is a process when a group faces crisis situation, is aware of the consequences of the decisions, and its members frequently interact with each other that leads to the creation of similar recommendations (Shafritz et al., 2011, p. 158). As a result, the mayor has to exclude one or several of the motioned factors in order for the proposed solutions to be varied, creative and, therefore, productive. Consequently, negative implications of "group think" are high possibility of developing of non-productive and identical decisions, which may leave some details of the problem not addressed or mitigated. At the same time, the positive aspect of this way of critical thinking is that it unites the members of one unit or department and leads them towards solving a problematic case. Although their decisions may lack productivity, they still may bring some positive solutions instead of the situations when people have disagreement.

Question 3:



Social Equity: In class, we discussed the importance of social equity in the administration of government. Please answer the following questions:

- What is social equity?
- Why is it important?
- What are some areas where you feel the government is less than equitable? What would you do to address these problems?
- Who is best positioned to decide, in your opinion, what constitutes social equity? Government officials? Voters? Legislators? Members of sub-groups? Someone else?

Social equity is a concept that promotes equality in a society with social and economic disparities. It embodies the goal of providing all the members of all social groups an equal prospect for success, opportunities and protection ("Social equity," 2016). The analysis of the issue allows stating that this aspect is critical for the US, because this country is not only multinational, but the one that hosts people with diverse values, beliefs, religions, political preferences, occupation, and other characteristics. As a result, it is possible that within a single organization one can observe African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, as well as Hispanics and Caucasians and other employees of diverse religion and values working towards achieving mutual goals. It may seem that it is difficult to suit everyone, but the duty of a person who is involved in public administration is to develop



and validate policies that grant social equity within an institution. As a result, no one of the mentioned individuals would feel disadvantaged in terms of relationship, payment, social benefits, medical service or protection, which would positively affect the organization as a whole.

Next, when characterizing the areas where the government seems to be less than equitable, I can mention healthcare, education and the police system. For instance, many people criticize President Obama for the establishment of what they call “Obamacare” due to the fact that it fails to meet the demands of the socially disadvantaged individuals. In order to fix this, I would have investigated the social concerns related to the issues as well as develop the ways of mitigating them. I consider that the society would reveal the exact drawbacks of the “Obamacare” and expose the least advantaged populations. Similarly, education in the US seems to be too expensive which limits the access to it in poor communities. This issue is especially relevant to poor Hispanic and African American communities, the representatives of which often go into prison instead of visiting public schools and entering colleges and universities. In order to fix it, one has to make the education financed by the state punishing the institutions that establish too high prices creating a financial barrier for the poor communities to obtain a proper education. Similarly, the cases with the police brutality and the police riots expose the facts that the police tend to be prejudiced towards the African American population. In order to fix it, the police officials have to perform the regional analysis, which would expose the statistics in their states, counties and cities presenting the proportion of criminals by their ethnicity. Furthermore, I would issue a requirement that would



oblige the police units with statistical disparities that reveal prejudices towards African Americans to undergo a special course of ethics and professional conduct.

Last, I consider that any mentioned party (government officials, voters, legislators, and members of sub-groups) has to perform independent measurements of social equity issues. The reason for this is that the statistics given by any of them would improve the objectivity of the presented results in general. Moreover, such amount of the social control over the government would increase its responsibility and reaction towards the exposed social disparities. The overall idea of this proposal is that it allows any party to use its democratic principles of freedom, equity, and access to information, which are validated for making our community better.

