

# Ethics, Gift & Conflict of Interest Policy for TRUSTEES, EMPLOYEES & VOLUNTEERS

## Public Trust

“Public service is a public trust.” This means that each North Valley Public Library employee, Board of Trustee, and volunteer at the library has a responsibility to the citizens of Stevensville and Lone Rock School Districts to follow all applicable laws and to put ethical principles above private gain. The public deserves and should expect no less. The library board, the library director, and the library staff have a responsibility to safeguard public funds. Fiscal responsibility includes spending the funds needed to provide library services to the community. Trustees, employees and volunteers need to avoid conflicts of interest, bias and favoritism, and the appearance of impropriety (i.e., acts that appear illegal or wrongful to the average citizen). Employees must conduct themselves in adherence to the rules of conduct stipulated for public employees in MCA 2-2-101 et seq. Code of Ethics.

## Ethical Conduct

- Employees, trustees, and volunteers shall not use public office, public time, facilities, or resources for private gain.
- Employees, trustees, and volunteers shall act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any private organization or individual.
- All employees, trustees, and volunteers shall disclose relationships of friends and relatives of current and prior employees, trustees, and volunteers prior to employment or appointment and not violate Montana nepotism laws for Government Structure and Administration MCA 2-2-301.
- Political activities must take place outside of the Library.
- Employees, trustees, and volunteers will not disclose library records per MCA 22-1-1103 and not disclose or use confidential information for personal economic benefit.

## Gifts and Gift exchange between Employees

Gifts cannot be purchased with public funds.

Exception: The North Valley Library will budget for gift certificates from local Stevensville businesses to be distributed to volunteers that work at the library starting FY 2018.

Supervisors may not accept gifts from subordinates or personnel who receive less pay having a value greater than \$15.

## Gifts & Parties at Retirement & Resignation

Gifts & Parties cannot be purchased with public funds.

## **Farewell Procedure - Length of Service and Farewell Function**

Less than 1 full year	Good Wishes
At least 1 full year but less than 3 full years	Card
At least 3 full years but less than 5 full years	Card and sweets/treats from the staff
5 full years or more	Card, gift, and party

The North Valley Public Library Foundation will be asked by the North Valley Library to purchase a retirement/resignation gifts for employees, trustees, and volunteers with more than five years of service. The Foundation will determine the amount based on length of service, their current funds, and a vote of their membership.

Gifts from co-workers and subordinates voluntarily given upon a public servant's departure due to retirement, resignation, or completion of their office may be accepted.

- A superior is prohibited from soliciting funds for a gift from staff. A staff member, other than the supervisor, may ask for contributions to a gift fund, but it must be voluntary. Any pressure, subtle or otherwise, on unit members to contribute is prohibited. For the donation to be truly voluntary, an employee must be free to determine the amount of the contribution or make no contribution at all.
- Requests for contributions should be disseminated in a general announcement to all employees using such methods as an internal memo, email, bulletin board notice, or staff meeting announcement. Any such announcement should clearly convey that participation is voluntary, free of any coercion, and that employees may contribute less than the recommended amount, or nothing at all. Reasonable reminders are permissible. Supervisors should not sign or distribute these announcements to their subordinates. This does not prohibit supervisors from otherwise participating in the planning and execution of a farewell activity.

## **Parties**

Parties cannot be funded with public funds. If a party for a retirement, holiday, or special function is desired, then the North Valley Public Library Foundation will be asked if they will fund the event.

- A superior is prohibited from soliciting funds for a party from staff. A staff member, other than the supervisor, may ask for contributions to a party fund but it must be voluntary. Any pressure, subtle or otherwise, on unit members to contribute is prohibited. For the donation to be truly voluntary, an employee must be free to determine the amount of the contribution or make no contribution at all. An employee who declines to contribute should not be excluded from a celebration held in the workplace during business hours. A supervisor must ensure employees who make no contribution are not subject to disparaging remarks, harassment or any negative consequences.
- Requests for contributions should be disseminated in a general announcement to all employees using such methods as an internal memo, email, bulletin board notice, or staff meeting announcement. Any such announcement should clearly convey that participation is voluntary, free of any coercion, and that employees may contribute less than the recommended amount, or nothing at all. Reasonable reminders are permissible. Supervisors should not sign or distribute these announcements to their subordinates. This does not prohibit supervisors from otherwise participating in the planning and execution of a farewell activity.

## Conflict of Interest

North Valley employees, trustees, and volunteers have an obligation to conduct business within guidelines that prohibit actual or potential conflicts of interest. An actual or potential conflict of interest occurs when an employee, trustee, or volunteer is in a position to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for that employee or for a relative or other party of interest (as described below) as a result of the Library's business dealings.

If employees, trustees, or volunteers have any influence on transactions involving purchases, contracts, or leases, it is imperative that they disclose as soon as possible the existence of any actual or potential conflict of interest, so that safeguards can be established to protect all parties. Personal gain may result not only in cases where an employee, trustee or volunteer or relative has a significant ownership in a firm with which the Library does business, but also when an employee, trustee, volunteer or relative receives any kickback, bribe, substantial gift, or special consideration as a result of any transaction or business dealings involving the Library.

Whereas the Board of Trustees of the North Valley Public Library sets personnel policy, sets salary ranges, and supervises the Director, the Library will prohibit trustees from applying for employment at the North Valley Public Library while serving as a trustee and for seeking employment after leaving the board for a minimum of 18 months.

Board of Trustees are encouraged to volunteer for special events such as walking in the Creamery Picnic parade. They are also encouraged to spend a day volunteering at the front desk, learning the various functions of staff and library duties. Trustees may choose to volunteer their time and talent for occasional programming. It is not appropriate for a trustee to volunteer in any capacity where they are managed by, or overseeing a staff member, or in a capacity that would create the appearance of favoritism or the opposite.

Revision adopted by the Board of Trustees on 11/18/2020

**North Valley Ethics, Gift & Conflict of Interest Policy**  
**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

By signing this statement, the employee acknowledges that the employee read, understands, and is responsible for complying with the Ethics, Gift, & Conflict of Interest Policy.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

**Employee's Guide to Standards of Conduct in Montana State Government**  
**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

By signing this statement, the employee acknowledges receipt of the Standard of Conduct for State Employees and that the employee read, understands, and is responsible for complying with the policies contained herein.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_