

Subject: Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy

Application: WLS trustees and employees

The Westchester Library System (WLS) recognizes that sound, ethical standards of conduct serve to increase the effectiveness of the WLS's Board of Trustees, staff and volunteers. Actions based on an ethical code of conduct promote public confidence and the attainment of WLS's goals. The Board also recognizes its obligation, under the provisions of New York General Municipal Law, to adopt a code of ethics setting forth the standards of conduct required of WLS trustees and employees.

The WLS Board of Trustees is committed to avoiding situations in which the existence of conflicting interests of any trustee or employee may affect the integrity of the management or operation of the System. The Board affirms its commitment to adhere to applicable provisions of law regarding material conflicts of interest:

1. Gifts: No trustee or employee shall directly or indirectly solicit, accept or receive any money or gift having a value of \$75 or more, whether in the form of cash, check, loan, credit, services, travel, entertainment, hospitality, or promise, or any other form. Under no circumstances should a trustee or employee accept any money or gift for which it could reasonably be inferred that the money or gift was intended to influence him or her in the performance of his or her official duties or was intended as a reward for any specific official action on his or her part. However, the Board encourages the writing of letters or notes expressing gratitude or appreciation to staff members.
2. Confidential Information: No trustee or employee shall disclose confidential information acquired by him or her in the course of his or her official duties or use such information to further his or her personal interest. In addition, he or she shall not disclose information regarding any matters discussed in an executive session of the Board of Trustees.
3. Representation Before the Board: A trustee or employee shall not receive or enter into any agreement, express or implied, for compensation for services to be rendered in relation to any matter before the WLS Board of Trustees.
4. Representation Before the Board for a Contingent Fee: A trustee or employee shall not receive or enter into any agreement, express or implied, for compensation for services to be rendered in relation to any matter before the WLS Board, whereby the compensation is to be dependent or contingent upon any action by the Board with respect to such matter.
5. Disclosure of Interest in Matters before the Board: Any trustee or employee of WLS, whether paid or unpaid, who participates in the discussion or gives official opinion to the Board on any matter before the Board shall publicly

disclose on the official record the nature and extent of any direct or indirect financial or other private interest he or she has in such matter. The term “interest” means a pecuniary or material benefit accruing to a trustee or employee.

6. Disclosure of Interests in Contracts: To the extent known, any trustee or employee of WLS who has, or will have, or subsequently acquires an interest in any contract with WLS shall publicly disclose the nature and extent of such interest in writing to the WLS Executive Director as soon as he or she has knowledge of such actual or prospective interest.
7. Investments in Conflict with Official Duties: No trustee or employee of WLS shall invest or hold any investment directly or indirectly in any financial, business, commercial or private transaction that creates a conflict with his or her official duties.
8. Certain Real Property Interests Prohibited: No trustee or employee of WLS who has an interest in any property, either individually or as a trustee or employee of a corporation or partnership, shall participate in the acquisition or plan for acquisition of said property or any property adjacent to said property by WLS. The term “participate” shall include the promotion of the site as well as the negotiation of the terms of the acquisition.
9. Prohibited Conflicts of Interest: No WLS trustee or employee shall have an interest in any contract between WLS and a corporation or partnership of which he or she is a director or employee, if that WLS trustee or employee has the power to negotiate, prepare, authorize or approve the contract or authorize or approve payment there-under, audit bills or claims under contract, or appoint a trustee or employee who has any of the powers or duties set forth above. No chief fiscal officer, treasurer or his or her deputy or employee shall have an interest in a bank or trust company designated as a depository paying agent, registration or for investment of WLS funds of which he or she is a director or employee. The provisions of this section will not be construed to preclude the payment of lawful compensation and necessary expenses of any WLS trustee or employee in one or more positions of public employment, the holding of which is not prohibited by law.
10. Nepotism Prohibited: No person employed by WLS shall hire, supervise, evaluate, promote, review or discipline any other employee who is a member of his/her family. In the event that marriage, promotion, or reorganization results in a situation not in compliance with this policy, reassignment or transfer will be effected in accordance with the applicable provisions of any collective bargaining agreement.
11. Private Employment: No trustee or employee of WLS shall engage in, solicit, negotiate for or promise to accept private employment or render services to private interests when such employment or service creates a conflict with or impairs the proper discharge of his or her official duties.

12. Use of Library Property: No WLS trustee or employee shall use or permit the use of property, owned or leased to WLS, for anything other than official purposes or for activities not otherwise officially approved by WLS.
13. Appearance of Conflict: It is incumbent upon any WLS trustee or employee, whether paid or unpaid, to disqualify or recuse him or herself immediately whenever the appearance of a conflict of interest exists. For purposes of this paragraph, service on the board of a member library does not in itself constitute the appearance of a conflict of interest. However, a WLS trustee who sits on the board of a member library should bring to the attention of the Executive Director and the WLS Board of Trustees any situation in which the interests of such member library might be, or appear to be, in conflict with those of WLS. In any such situation the WLS Board of Trustees may require such trustee to recuse him or herself from discussion and/or votes affecting such member library.
14. Duty to Report Conflicts of Interest: In the event that any WLS trustee or employee knows of or perceives a direct or indirect conflict of interest, he or she shall report it to the WLS Board of Trustees.
15. Duty to Report Violations of this Policy: Any library trustee or employee or any member of the public noting or suspecting a violation of this policy is encouraged to report the matter, either in confidence or in public, to the WLS Board of Trustees.

Distribution of the Westchester Library System Trustee and Employee Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy

The WLS Board of Trustees shall provide a copy of the Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy to be distributed to every trustee and employee of WLS. Each trustee and employee elected or appointed thereafter shall be furnished a copy before entering upon the duties of his or her office or employment. In addition, the Board shall ensure that a copy of Article 18 of the General Municipal Law shall be posted in a place conspicuous to WLS trustees and employees, including the WLS website.

Penalties

A WLS Trustee or employee who shall knowingly and intentionally violate any of the provisions of this Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including the imposition of fines, suspension, and dismissal in the manner provided by applicable law.

Last approved: March 30, 2021

Acknowledgement

The standard of behavior at the Westchester Library System (WLS) is that all trustees and employees, whether paid or unpaid, avoid any conflict of interest between the interests of WLS on the one hand, and their personal, professional, and business interests on the other. This includes avoiding actual conflicts of interest as well as potential and perceived conflicts of interest.

I understand that the purposes of this policy are to protect the integrity of the WLS decision-making process, to enable WLS constituents to have confidence in the System's integrity, and to protect the integrity and reputation of WLS trustees and employees both paid and unpaid.

Upon or before election, hiring or appointment, I will make a full, written disclosure of all interests, relationships and holdings which do create or could potentially create a conflict of interest. This written disclosure will be kept on file and I will update it as appropriate.

During the course of meetings or activities, I will disclose any interests in a transaction or decision where I (including my business and any other nonprofit affiliation), my family and/or my significant other, employer, or close associates will receive a benefit or gain.

I understand that this policy is meant to be a supplement to good judgment, and I will respect its spirit as well as its wording.

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____