

Model Statement of Values

Preamble

The proper operation of democratic government requires that decision-makers be independent, impartial, and accountable to the people they serve. The City of _____ has adopted this Statement of Values to promote and maintain the highest standards of personal and professional conduct in the City's government. All (*select*: elected and appointed officials, City employees, and volunteers) are required to subscribe to this statement, understand how it applies to their specific responsibilities, and practice its (*number*) core values in their work. Because we seek public confidence in the City's services and public trust of its decision-makers, our decisions and our work must meet the most demanding ethical standards and demonstrate the highest levels of achievement in following this statement.

The Values

As a Representative of the City of _____,

1. I serve the public interest.
2. I fulfill the duties and responsibilities of holding public office.
3. I am ethical.
4. I am professional.
5. I am fiscally responsible.
6. I am conscientious.
7. I communicate effectively.
8. I am collaborative.
9. I am forward thinking.
10. I am _____.

Value examples/expressions

1. **I serve the public interest. In practice this value means that:**
 - a. I provide courteous, equitable, and prompt service to everyone.
 - b. I am attuned to, and care about, the needs and issues of citizens, public officials, and city workers.
 - c. I am interested, engaged, and responsive in my interactions with constituents.
 - d. I recognize and support the public's right to know the public's business.

2. **I fulfill the duties and responsibilities of holding public office. In practice this value means that:**
 - a. I observe the highest standards of integrity in my official acts and undertake my responsibilities for the benefit of the greater public good.
 - b. I faithfully discharge the duties of my office regardless of my personal considerations, recognizing that the public interest is my primary concern.
 - c. I uphold the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Minnesota and carry out impartially the laws of the nation, state, and municipality and thus foster respect for all government.

- d. I comply with both the letter and the spirit of the laws and policies affecting operations of the City.
 - e. I recognize my obligation to implement the adopted goals and objectives of the City in good faith, regardless of my personal views.
 - f. I conduct myself in both my official and personal actions in a manner that is above reproach.
 - g. I do not use my position to secure for others or myself special privileges or exemptions that are different from those available to the general public.
 - h. I understand and abide by the respective roles and responsibilities of elected and appointed officials and city staff and will not undermine them in their work.
 - i. I am independent, impartial, and fair in my judgment and actions.
- 3. I am ethical. In practice this value means that:**
- a. I am trustworthy, acting with the utmost integrity and moral courage.
 - b. I am truthful, do what I say I will do, and am reliable.
 - c. I am accountable for my actions and behavior and accept responsibility for my decisions.
 - d. I make impartial decisions, free of influence from unlawful gifts, narrow political interests, and financial and other personal interests that impair my independence of judgment or action.
 - e. I am fair, distributing benefits and burdens according to consistent and equitable criteria.
 - f. I oppose all forms of harassment and unlawful discrimination.
 - g. I extend equal opportunities and due process to all parties in matters under consideration.
 - h. I show respect for confidences and confidential information.
 - i. I avoid giving the appearance of impropriety and of using my position for personal gain.
- 4. I am professional. In practice this value means that:**
- a. I apply my knowledge and expertise to my assigned activities and to the interpersonal relationships that are part of my job in a consistent, confident, competent, and productive manner.
 - b. I approach my job and work-related relationships with a positive attitude, contributing to a supportive, respectful, and non-threatening work environment.
 - c. I keep my professional knowledge and skills current and growing.
 - d. I am respectful of all city staff, officials, volunteers, and others who participate in the City's government.
- 5. I am fiscally responsible. In practice this value means that:**
- a. I make decisions after prudent consideration of their financial impact, taking into account the long-term financial needs of the City, especially its financial stability.
 - b. I demonstrate concern for the proper use of City assets (e.g., personnel, time, property, equipment, funds), follow established procedures, and do not use public resources for personal gain.
 - c. I make decisions that seek to preserve the financial capacity of the City to provide programs and services for City residents.
 - d. I provide full disclosure of any potential financial or other private conflict of interest. I abstain from participating in the discussion and vote on these matters.

- e. I prevent misuse of public funds by establishing, maintaining, and following strong fiscal and management controls.
 - f. I report any misuse of public funds of which I am aware.
- 6. I am conscientious. In practice this value means that:**
- a. I act in an efficient manner, making decisions and recommendations based upon research and facts, taking into consideration short and long-term goals.
 - b. I follow through in a responsible way, keeping others informed, and responding in a timely fashion.
 - c. I am respectful of established City processes and guidelines.
 - d. I prioritize my duties so that the work of the City may move forward.
 - e. I prepare for all meetings by reviewing any materials provided ahead of time. When I have materials to contribute, I make sure all others involved have ample time to review these materials prior to the meeting.
- 7. I communicate effectively. In practice this value means that:**
- a. I convey the City's care for and commitment to its citizens.
 - b. I communicate in various ways that I am approachable, open-minded, and willing to participate in dialog.
 - c. I engage in effective two-way communication by listening carefully, asking questions, and responding appropriately which adds value to conversations.
 - d. I do not interfere with the orderly conduct of meetings by interrupting others or making personal comments not germane to the business at hand.
 - e. I follow up on inquiries in a timely manner.
 - f. I encourage and facilitate citizen involvement in policy decision-making.
 - g. I am respectful in disagreements and contribute constructively to discussions on the issue.
- 8. I am collaborative. In practice this value means that:**
- a. I act in a cooperative manner with groups and other individuals, working together in a spirit of tolerance and understanding to accomplish common goals.
 - b. I share information with others in a timely manner so that, together, we can make informed decisions.
 - c. I work towards consensus building and gain value from diverse opinions.
 - d. I accomplish the goals and responsibilities of my individual position, while respecting my role as a member of a team.
- 9. I am forward thinking. In practice this value means that:**
- a. I promote intelligent, proactive, and thoughtful innovation in order to advance the City's policy agenda and provide City services while considering the broader regional, statewide, national, and international implications of the City's decisions and issues.
 - b. I maintain consistent standards, but am also sensitive to the need for compromise, creative problem solving, and making improvements when appropriate.
 - c. I am open to new ideas and processes, adopting them as they conserve resources and provide efficient and effective service.
 - d. I consider the potential long-term consequences and implications of my actions and inactions.

Template Code of Conduct

___01. Purpose.

The city council of the City of ___ determines that a code of conduct for its members, as well as the members of the various boards and commissions of the City of ___, is essential for the public affairs of the city. By eliminating conflicts of interest and providing standards for conduct in city matters, the city council hopes to promote the faith and confidence of the citizens of ___ in their government and to encourage its citizens to serve on its council and commissions.

___02. Standards of Conduct.

Subd. 1. No member of the city council or a city board or commission may knowingly:

- a. Violate the open meeting law.
- b. Participate in a matter that affects the person's financial interests or those of a business with which the person is associated, unless the effect on the person or business is no greater than on other members of the same business classification, profession, or occupation.
- c. Use the person's public position to secure special privileges or exemptions for the person or for others.
- d. Use the person's public position to solicit personal gifts or favors.
- e. Use the person's public position for personal gain.
- f. Except as specifically permitted pursuant to Minn. Stat. 471.895, accept or receive any gift of substance, whether in the form of money, services, loan, travel, entertainment, hospitality, promise, or any other form, under circumstances in which it could be reasonably expected to influence the person, the person's performance of official action, or be intended as a reward for the person's official action.
- g. Disclose to the public, or use for the person's or another person's personal gain, information that was gained by reason of the person's public position if the information was not public data or was discussed at a closed session of the city council.
- h. Disclose information that was received, discussed, or decided in conference with the city's legal counsel that is protected by the attorney-client privilege unless a majority of the city council has authorized the disclosure.
- i. *Represent private interests before the city council or any city committee, board, commission or agency. (optional)*

Subd. 2. Except as prohibited by the provisions of Minn. Stat Sec. 471.87, there is no violation of subdivision 1 b. of this section for a matter that comes before the council, board, or commission if the member of the council, board, or commission publicly discloses the circumstances that would violate these standards and refrains from participating in the discussion and vote on the matter. Nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit a contract with a member of the city council under the circumstances described under Minn. Stat. Sec. 471.88, if proper statutory procedures are followed.

___03. Complaint, Hearing.

Any person may file a written complaint with the city clerk alleging a violation of the standards of conduct in section __02. The complaint must contain supporting facts for the allegation. The city council may hold a hearing after receiving the written complaint or upon the council's own volition. A hearing must be held only if the city council determines (1) upon advice of the city attorney, designee, or other attorney appointed by the council, that the factual allegations state a sufficient claim of a violation of these standards or rise to the level of a legally-recognized conflict of interest, and (2) that the complaint has been lodged in good faith and not for impermissible purposes such as delay. The city council's determination must be made within 30 days of the filing of the allegation with the city clerk. If the council determines that there is an adequate justification for holding a hearing, the hearing must be held within 30 days of the city council's determination. At the hearing, the person accused must have the opportunity to be heard. If after the hearing, the council finds that a violation of a standard has occurred or does exist, the council may censure the person, refer the matter for criminal prosecution, request an official not to participate in a decision, or remove an appointed member of an advisory board or commission from office.