



## Civility Pledge

In all of my daily interactions I pledge to do my best to:

View everyone in positive terms

Work on building common language

Build strong relationships of trust

Remember our shared humanity

Value both the process and the results

Look both inside and outside for guidance.

# Public Service Values

When we talk about the values that ought to guide one's public service, what kinds of values do we mean? The following provides some ideas on values that can inform one's public service and suggests examples of what those values mean in practice.

## TRUSTWORTHINESS

- I remember that my role is first and foremost to serve the community.
- I am truthful with my fellow elected officials, the public and others.
- I avoid any actions that would cause the public to question whether my decisions are based on personal interests instead of the public's interests.
- I do not accept gifts or other special considerations because of my public position.
- I do not knowingly use false or inaccurate information to support my position.
- I do not use my public position for personal gain.
- I carefully consider any promises I make (including campaign promises), and then keep them.

## FAIRNESS

- I make decisions based on the merits of the issues.
- I honor the laws and the public's expectation that agency policies will be applied consistently.
- I support the public's right to know and promote meaningful public involvement.
- I support merit-based processes for the award of public employment and public contracts.
- I am impartial and do not favor those who either have helped me or are in a position to do so.
- I promote equality and treat all people equitably.
- I excuse myself from decisions when my or my family's financial interests may be affected by my agency's actions.
- I credit others' contributions in moving our community's interests forward.
- I maintain consistent standards, but am sensitive to the need for compromise, "thinking outside the box," and improving existing paradigms.

## RESPONSIBILITY

- I work to improve the quality of life in the community and promote the best interests of the public.
- I promote the efficient use of agency resources.
- I do not use agency resources for personal or political benefit.
- I represent the official positions of the agency to the best of my ability when authorized to do so.

- I explicitly state that my personal opinions do not represent the agency's position and do not allow the inference that they do.
- I take responsibility for my own actions, even when it is uncomfortable to do so.
- I do not use information that I acquire in my public capacity for personal advantage.
- I do not promise that which I have reason to believe is unrealistic.
- I disclose suspected instances of impropriety to the appropriate authorities, but I never make false charges or charges for political advantage.
- I do not disclose confidential information without proper legal authorization.
- I am proactive and innovative when setting goals and considering policies.
- I consider the broader regional and statewide implications of the agency's decisions and issues.
- I promote intelligent innovation to move forward the agency's policies and services.

## RESPECT

- I treat fellow officials, staff and the public with courtesy, even when we disagree.
- I focus on the merits in discussions, not personality traits or other issues that might distract me from focusing on what is best for the community.
- I gain value from diverse opinions and build consensus.
- I follow through on commitments, keep others informed, and make timely responses.
- I am approachable and open-minded, and I convey this to others.

- I listen carefully and ask questions that add value to discussions.
- I involve all appropriate stakeholders in meetings affecting agency decisions.
- I come to meetings, and I come to them prepared.
- I work to improve the quality of life in my community.

## COMPASSION

- I realize that some people are intimidated by the public process and try to make their interactions as stress-free as possible.
- I convey the agency's care for, and commitment to, its community members.
- I am attuned to, and care about, the needs and concerns of the public, officials, and staff.
- I recognize my responsibility to society's less fortunate.
- I consider appropriate exceptions to policies when there are unintended consequences or undue burdens.

## LOYALTY

- I safeguard confidential information.
- I avoid employment, contracts and other financial, political and personal interests that can conflict with my public duties.
- I prioritize competing issues based on objective benefits and burdens to the public interest, not to myself, my family, friends or business associates.
- I don't oppose final decisions once they have been made by the decision makers, except through internal lines of communication.
- I put loyalty to the public's interests above personal and political loyalties.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC PERCEPTION

The interesting—and somewhat unique—aspect of public service ethics is that it is not exclusively an introspective process. A public official can be absolutely confident that he or she is able to put personal interests or relationships aside, but the public may still question whether indeed that is so.

Public perception, therefore, matters a great deal in one's analysis of what the "right thing to do" is in public service. This is because, as public servants, public officials are stewards of the public's trust in the public's governing institutions.

In short, public service ethics are not only about doing the right thing, but also about

the public's confidence that indeed the right thing has been done. But not doing the right thing just because the public's perception may be negative can have its own pitfalls.

To step, or at times tiptoe, along the trail toward good government, here is a simple (but not necessarily easy) process:

- First Step: Figure out what "the right thing" to do is.
- Second Step: Figure out what the public's perception of "the right thing to do" would be.
- Third Step: When needed, balance the first two steps and follow the path which best supports public service values.

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