

Ethical Standards of Conduct

Purpose	Establishing ethical standards of conduct for all employees by setting forth those acts or actions that are incompatible with the best interest of the City, and by directing disclosure by public officials and employees of private financial or other interests in matters affecting the City. To comply with Minnesota Statute 465, Northfield City Code and Northfield City Charter.
Policy	Public employees should be held to a high standard of conduct and responsibility due to the nature of their duties and responsibilities. The proper operation of democratic government requires that public servants be independent, impartial and responsible to the people; that government decisions and policy be made through the proper channels of the government structure; that public office not be used for personal financial gain, and that the public have confidence in the integrity of its government. In recognition of these goals, this policy establishes an Ethical Standard of Conduct for public employees and officials of the City of Northfield.
Definitions	<p>Elected Official - Official who won the office in a free election, a public servant, not an employee.</p> <p>Public Employee: Any employee of the City of Northfield and elected officials.</p> <p>Anything of Value: Money, real or personal property, a permit or license, a favor, a service, forgiveness of a loan or promise of future employment. It does not mean reasonable compensation or expenses paid to an employee by the City of Northfield for work performed.</p> <p>Compensation: A payment of “anything of value” to an individual in return for that individual’s service of any kind.</p> <p>Association: A business entity of any kind, a labor union, a club or any other group of two (2) or more persons other than the immediate family.</p> <p>Immediate Family: The employee’s: 1) spouse and the following kin of either the individual or his/her spouse: child, mother, father, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle; and 2) the stepparent and/or legal guardians of the individual or his/her spouse.</p> <p>Gift: The payment or receipt of “anything of value”.</p>
Ethical Standards	<p>In general, public employees are to serve all persons fairly and equitable without regard to their personal or financial benefit. The credibility of Northfield government hinges on the proper discharge of duties in the public interest. Public employees must ensure that the independence of their judgment and actions is preserved without any consideration for personal gain.</p>

The following specific ethical standards shall guide public employees:

Incompatible Offices: A public employee, except for elected officials, shall not hold incompatible offices or engage in any regular outside employment without prior notice to and approval by the City Administrator . (See Section 4.10 for additional information on Outside Employment.)

Use of Non-Public Information: Public employees shall not disclose to others, or use to further their personal interest, non-public information, as defined by the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, acquired by them in the course of their official duties.

Solicitation of or Receipt of Anything of Value: A public employee shall not solicit or receive anything of value from any person or association, directly or indirectly, in consideration of some action to be taken or not to be taken in the performance of the public employee's duties. Incidental items provided to public employees in the due course of business while attending conferences, seminars, and training sessions, shall be exempt from this provision.

Holding investments: No public employee shall hold any investment which might compromise the performance of his/her duties without disclosure of said investment and self-disqualification from any particular action which might be compromised by such investment, except as permitted by statute, such as Minnesota Statute 471.88.

Representation of Others: A public employee shall not represent persons or associations in dealings with the City in consideration of anything of value.

Financial Interest: Where a public employee has a financial interest in any matter being considered by the public employee, such interest (if known to the public employee) must be disclosed to the City Administrator, and the public employee shall be disqualified from further participation in the matter.

City Property: No public employee shall use City-owned property such as vehicles, equipment, or supplies for personal convenience or profit except when such property is available to the public generally.

Special Consideration: No public employee shall grant any special consideration, treatment, or advantage to any citizen beyond that which is available to every other citizen.

Authority: No public employee shall exceed his/her authority, or breach the law, or ask others to do so.

Public Funds: No public employee shall use City public funds, personnel, equipment or facilities, for private gain or political campaign activities, unless such equipment and facilities are available to the public.

Use of Logo or Other City Symbols: Use of the City's logo or any other symbol for non-official City business without approval of the City Council is prohibited.

Expenses: Public employees shall provide complete documentation to support requests for expense reimbursement. Expense reimbursement shall be made in accordance with City policy.

Donations: No public employee shall take any action which will benefit any person or entity because of a donation of anything of value to the City by such a person or entity.

Official Action: No public employee shall take an official action which will benefit any person or entity where such public employee would not otherwise have taken such action but for the public official's family relationship, friendship, or business relationship with such person or entity.

Compliance with Laws: Public employees shall comply with all local ordinances and state and federal statutes, including but not limited to, the Criminal Code, Fair Campaign Practices Act, and laws governing the functioning of municipalities, their elected and appointed officials, and employees.

Acceptance of Gifts: The City may accept a grant or devise of real or personal property and maintain such property for the benefit of its citizens in accordance with the terms prescribed by the donor. Nothing herein shall authorize such acceptance or use for religious or sectarian purposes. Every such acceptance shall be by resolution of the governing body adopted by a two-thirds majority of its members, expressing such terms in full.

Knowledge of Violations: Public employees shall disclose any possible violations of the City's Ethics Policy to the City Attorney, City Administrator or Human Resources Director.

Public Interest: Public employees shall act with the best interests of the City of Northfield and its citizens in mind.

Bribery: Public employees may not, either directly or indirectly, attempt to influence the City Administrator or City Council in any way with money, services or other remuneration.

Complaints Against Public Employees

Allegations made against public employees shall be handled by the City Administrator. The City Administrator will oversee the review and investigation of the allegations, and will determine the appropriate responsive action.

Disclosure of Financial Interest

The following public employees shall be required to file an annual sworn statement in the City Clerk's office:

- Mayor
- City Council Members

- City Administrator
- Directors
- Chiefs
- Managers
- Superintendents
- Captains
- Supervisors
- City Clerk
- Engineers
- Planners

The sworn statement must contain the following:

- A list naming all business enterprises known by the public employee to be licensed by or to be doing business with the City in which the public employee or any member of the public employee's immediate family is connected as an employee, officer, owner, investor, creditor of, director, trustee, partner, advisor, or consultant; and
- A list of the public employees and members of the public employees' immediate family's interest in real property located in the City or which may be competing with the interest of the City located elsewhere, other than property occupied as a personal residence.

Prior to the official appointment to office or employment, each person who enters public duty after the date of this Code shall file this disclosure statement.

Each person who made an initial filing of financial disclosure shall file a new statement by January 30 of each year thereafter, giving the information called for above at the time of the new statement. If a change in financial interest or property ownership occurs between filings, a new filing shall be made within thirty-days (30) of the change.

This Code shall not be construed to require the filing of information relating to any person's connection with or interest in any professional society or any charitable, religious, social fraternal, educational, recreational, public service, civil, or political organization, or any similar organization not conducted as a business enterprise and which is not engaged in the ownership or conduct of a business enterprise.

However, if any of such organizations seeking any action or benefit come before a Northfield Board, Committee, or Council, then membership in the organization shall be a potential conflict of interest and must be reported as such in an amended disclosure statement. The other stipulations of this Code then apply.

If a public employee fails to file the disclosure statement as required, or files a



Policy:
Adopted:
Effective:
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statement containing false information, the City Administrator will determine the appropriate responsive action.

Violation

Violation of this policy will be subject to discipline up to and including discharge.

**Additional
Information**

See Sections 4.20 (Vehicle Use) and 4.25 (Personal Use of City Property) for additional information.