
Board Policy



Conflict of Interest and Ethics Policy

Policy Statement

The members of the Pierce County Library System (the “Library”) Board of Trustees (the “Board”) and employees should demonstrate individually and collectively the highest standards of honor and integrity to maintain public trust in the Library as an institution of self-governance. Therefore, it is crucial that all Trustees and employees conduct business on behalf of the Library with the highest level of integrity, avoiding the reality or appearance of improper influence, favoritism, and conflicts of interest.

Purpose

The Library establishes this policy to ensure that matters arising from family, personal, or financial relationships do not impair an employee or member of the Board’s judgment in acting in the best interest of the Library, in the management of employees, or in their fiduciary responsibilities.

Trustee Ethics and Conduct

The Board adopts RCW 42.23.070, which includes the following four prohibitions, as the basis of its code of ethics:

- No Trustee may use their position to secure special privileges or exemptions for themselves or others.
- No Trustee may, directly or indirectly, give or receive any compensation, gift, gratuity, or reward from any source for a matter connected with or related to the Trustee’s services unless otherwise provided by law.
- No Trustee may accept employment or engage in business that the Trustee might reasonably expect would require them to disclose confidential information acquired by reason of their official position.
- No Trustee may disclose confidential information gained by reason of the Trustee’s position, nor may the Trustee use such information for their personal gain.

In addition, each Trustee shall:

- Uphold the mission, vision, and values of the Library.
- Respect the opinions of their fellow Trustees and conduct themselves with respect and decorum when they disagree or oppose a viewpoint different from their own.
- Distinguish clearly between their personal philosophies, opinions, and positions and those of the Library, acknowledging and supporting the formal position of the Board, even if they disagree.
- Pursue opportunities to improve their knowledge and understanding of the Library, libraries in general, and changing conditions, which may impact the way the Library provides services.

Conduct which harms public trust in the Library is grounds for recommending to the Pierce County Council removal from the Board.

Prohibited Contract Interests

Trustees and employees may not have a beneficial financial interest in any contract made by, through or under their supervision in the course of their duties. Also, they may not unfairly benefit as a result of having their position. Other than compensation, no employee, employee’s spouse/domestic partner or

dependent child (“immediate family member”) or business in which the employee or immediate family member is an officer, director, member or employee or directly or indirectly owns or controls an interest shall derive any personal profit or gain by reason of their employment by the Library.

Gifts

No Trustee or administrative-level director may, directly or indirectly, give or receive or agree to receive any compensation, gift, reward, or gratuity from a source except the Library, for a matter connected with or related to such person’s services as a Trustee or administrative-level director, as applicable, unless otherwise provided for by law.

Misuse

Trustees and employees shall not use public resources that are not available to the public in general, such as Library staff time, equipment, supplies or facilities, for other than a Library purpose.

Conflict of Interest; Reporting and Remedies

A conflict of interest is any action that, in the opinion of the Library, might interfere with, or appear to interfere with, the independent exercise of judgment or performance of work duties by, or present the potential of undue influence upon actions of, a Trustee or employee.

A Trustee or employee who recognizes an actual or potential conflict of interest must promptly disclose any financial or personal beneficial interest, direct or indirect, and abstain voluntarily from discussion, voting, or decision-making on any issue that raises such conflict of interest.

If any Trustee perceives a possible conflict of interest for any other Trustee, the possible conflict shall immediately be brought to the attention of the Board. If any employee perceives a possible conflict of interest for any other employee, the possible conflict shall immediately be brought to the attention of the employee’s supervisor or the Staff Experience Director or designee.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Pierce County Rural Library District on November 8, 2023.

By the enactment of this policy the Board of Trustees of Pierce County Library System is concurrently rescinding any prior policy or procedure within PCLS that is either in conflict with or expansive of the matters addressed in this policy.