

**DRAFT - ST. LOUIS COUNTY CODE OF CONDUCT - DRAFT**

Draft date 10/10/07

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Professional behavior demonstrates to the public and all public servants that it matters how we do business each day. It is a public commitment to doing our work in a professional, respectful and lawful way. Each public servant is expected to assume personal responsibility for ensuring that his/her conduct is appropriate and legal. This code of conduct establishes standards for professional behavior in St. Louis County. It applies to all employees of St. Louis County. A Public Servant refers to any person who is acting in an official capacity for St. Louis County, including elected officials, employees and volunteers.

**STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

**1. Respect**

Respect, trustworthiness and fairness serve the public good by ensuring that our citizens can trust who we are and what we do as public servants. Each public servant is expected to model respect, trustworthiness and fairness in all county-related activities and relationships.

**2. Performance of duties**

Public servants are expected to perform their duties in a timely and professional manner, including compliance with established work rules.

**3. Health and Safety**

St. Louis County strives to provide a safe working environment for public servants and customers. Public servants are expected to work together to provide a safe workplace by participating in all mandatory safety training, complying with safe work practices and with all applicable federal, state and

county policies, laws and regulations. Unsafe conditions and behaviors shall be reported to supervisors and to the Employee Safety and Risk Management Division.

**4. Protection of County Property** *(See County Board Resolution #343, 2000 (St. Louis County Computer Policy))*  
St. Louis County public servants are public stewards of all County property.

Public servants are responsible for safeguarding County property against waste, theft, loss or misuse. Unauthorized use of County property for personal benefit is not allowed. Occasional personal use of telephones, emails, facsimiles, computer software or Internet access will not violate the values expressed in this document.

**5. Creating County Records**

Honesty and accuracy in creating County records positively reflects our work as St. Louis County public servants and reflects high professional standards for all members of the public. It is important that all County records and financial information be reported honestly, completely and accurately. Intentional misrepresentation of information on internal reports or memorandums, as well as external correspondence, is prohibited.

**6. Public and Not-Public Data**

Information and business data collected in the course of County operations is crucial to providing satisfactory services. The public expects that this information will be properly handled. Public servants must safeguard not-public information against improper disclosure, both inside and outside of the work place. Disclosure of not-public information is prohibited. A public servant's obligation to properly handle not-public information continues after public service ends. Any question regarding the

classification of information as public or not-public shall be addressed to supervisors or the data practices officer.

**7. Political Participation** *(See Minnesota Statute 383C.05 Political activity)*

St. Louis County encourages its employees, as individuals, to take an active interest in local, state and national government. Such involvement is voluntary, and must take place on the public servant's own time. Public servants shall not use county funds, time, equipment, supplies or facilities in support of candidates or political organizations.

**8. Conflicts of Interest** - *(See County Board Resolution #104, February 20, 2007 for current policy).*

Preserving the integrity of County government should be a key concern of all employees. Conflicts of interest negatively impact public perception of the integrity of County government. Public servants must avoid any business, financial or other relationships where personal interests conflict or appear to conflict with the interests of the county.

**9. Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace** - *(See County Board Resolution #512, June 13, 1989 for current policy)*

Preserving the safety of public servants and setting a good example for the public is an important goal for St. Louis County public servants. While at work, public servants shall comply with all federal and state laws, as well as county policy, regarding the use of alcohol and drugs. The trust and confidence of our customers as well as the safety of our public servants depends on a workplace free from the effects of substance abuse. Public servants are expected to report to work fit for duty and free from the effects of substance abuse.

**10. Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** - *(See County Board Resolution #494, October 4, 2005 for current policy)*

All St. Louis County public servants have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner that contributes to a safe, accepting and supportive workplace environment. The County is committed to ensuring that no employee feels endangered or unreasonably uncomfortable in their workplace.

**11. Workplace Violence**

Violence in the workplace, in any form, will not be tolerated. It can be physical, psychological or behavioral.

***A. Examples of workplace violence include:***

- \_ Physically harming another, shoving, pushing, harassing, intimidating, coercing, brandishing weapons, and threatening or talking of engaging in those activities.
- \_ Any persistent verbal or physical act that a reasonable person would find threatening, intimidating, humiliating, hostile or offensive. Bullying includes, but is not limited to, derogatory remarks, insults or epithets, malicious gossiping, physical conduct that a reasonable person would find threatening, intimidating or humiliating, or the intentional sabotage or undermining of a public servant's work performance.
- \_ Group behavior directed against a public servant(s), that produces repeated health-harming mistreatment to the targeted public servant(s).

It is the intent of this code of conduct to ensure that everyone associated with St. Louis County, including public servants, customers, contractors and visitors are not

threatened by any public servant's actions or conduct. Public servants are not expected to tolerate such behavior from the public.

## **ST. LOUIS COUNTY RESOURCES AND RESPONSES FOR CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **1. Education Programs**

As part of its commitment to maintaining these standards of conduct, the county has established a menu of training programs for all public servants related to the County Code of Conduct. Each public servant will be required to attend one internal or external Code of Conduct training per year. The County will designate in the Employee Development Catalog which courses meet employee requirements for mandated training.

### **2. New Employee and Annual Refresher Training on the Code of Conduct**

Code of Conduct training will be included as part of new employee orientation. Thereafter, supervisors shall review the Code of Conduct with staff on an annual basis.

### **3. Employee Assistance Program**

The County provides an employee assistance program (EAP) for all full-time and part-time employees. This EAP offers services to these employees and their eligible dependents. You are encouraged to use the EAP whenever you feel it will be of assistance to you. The EAP is a confidential service to be used when you need help. Policies and procedures for accessing the EAP are located online in Chapter 8 of the St. Louis County Policy Manual.

### **4. Reporting Suspected Violations**

If an employee is concerned with actions that violate the Code of Conduct, he/she shall discuss the situation with the supervisor, who may refer it to the affirmative action officer. If an employee is dissatisfied with the

supervisor's response, the employee may discuss this with someone at a higher level in management.

If a manager or supervisor is found to have allowed conduct which violates this policy, it will be addressed in his/her performance evaluation.

Upon receipt of a complaint against an elected official, the Chair of the County Board shall as soon as practicable convene a meeting of a special Ethics Committee, comprised of the Chair of the County Board, the County Auditor and the County Sheriff. The County Attorney and Affirmative Action Officer shall serve as advisors to the Committee, and the Vice Chair of the County Board shall serve as an alternate member of the Committee and, if the complaint was filed against any member of the Ethics Committee, shall replace that member on the Committee.

The Ethics Committee shall oversee the investigation of the complaint, including, as deemed necessary, the hiring of an outside, neutral person experienced in employment law to conduct that investigation. On conclusion of the investigation, the Chair of the Ethics Committee must report the Committee's findings and make a recommendation to the County Board as appropriate.

### **CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATING THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

Any public servant who violates this Code of Conduct will be subject to disciplinary action designed to bring the public servant's conduct into conformity with this code. In the case of a complaint filed against an elected official, the County Board must either adopt the report of the Ethics Committee or direct the Ethics Committee to appoint a review panel. If the County Board adopts the report of the Ethics Committee, the elected official against whom the complaint was filed may

also request the appointment of a review panel. The review panel must consist of five members selected from different geographical areas of the county, representing five separate commissioner districts, and selected based on knowledge of employment law and regulations, standards of workplace conduct, investigation, and impartiality. No member of this review panel may be a local official or county employee or his or her close relative, a candidate for elected public office, or otherwise subject to any significant conflict of interest. The review panel shall consider the report of the Ethics Committee, the results of the investigation, and any other relevant information and make its recommendation to the County Board as soon as practicable. Violations of law or regulation will be referred to the appropriate law enforcement or regulatory agency for investigation.

**STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING**

I have received and reviewed the St. Louis County Code of Conduct and understand  
the expectations of conduct.

Name:

\_\_\_\_\_ (Printed)

Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date:

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