



Code of Ethics

1. Introduction

The Denver Museum of Nature & Science (Museum), a nonprofit educational entity and a responsible steward of the resources held in the public trust, is committed to public accountability and transparency in mission and operations. The Museum is proud of its contribution to Denver, the State of Colorado, and its many visitors and colleagues beyond the state, and through this Code of Ethics (Code), presents certain principles related to ethical conduct upon which it has operated in the past and upon which it will continue to operate in the future.

The Code reflects the highest concepts of ethical and professional practices and endorses the American Association of Museums' Code of Ethics for Museums, as well as the specific codes of scientific professional disciplines represented at the Museum. Where this Code and discipline specific codes disagree, the Code shall prevail. The Code guides the institution and its trustees, staff, and volunteers, who legally, ethically, and effectively carry out their responsibilities. The Code is intended to guide behavior both within the Museum and outside it. By way of example only, the standards of conduct set forth herein apply to interactions with outside organizations, contractors, vendors, potential and actual donors, trustee emeriti and the public at large.

Pursuant to the Museum's bylaws, the Board of Trustees shall have final responsibility in all matters of policy. This Code references other internal governance policies. It is incumbent upon Trustees, staff and volunteers to become familiar with all Museum governing policies in order to meet their ethical obligations. It is understood that all policies employed in fulfilling the vision, mission, strategic direction, strategic plan and annual plan of the Museum, including this Code, meet or exceed all legal and regulatory requirements as established by international, federal, state, county, and municipal authority. The Museum's Executive Committee oversees the implementation of this Code for Trustees. The Museum's President oversees the implementation of this Code for staff and volunteers.

2. Museum Governance

The governing body of the Museum, the Board of Trustees, serves the public interest as it relates to the Museum, and must consider itself accountable to the public as well as to the institution. In all cases, the Board acts as the ultimate legal authority for the Museum, and stands responsible for the formulation and maintenance of its general overall policies and standards. The Board is responsible for the following:

- a. Establishing the vision, mission and strategic direction, and approving the strategic plan, objectives and budget.
- b. Empowering the President to fulfill and manage the day-to-day operations of the Museum.
- c. Conducting Museum business as a board, committee, or subcommittee or otherwise in conformance with the bylaws or applicable resolutions.
- d. Taking no advantage of information they receive during their service to the institution if their personal use of such information could be detrimental to the Museum.
- e. Developing, administering and advocating for policies and procedures that foster fair, consistent and equitable treatment for all.
- f. Ensuring sufficient funding for protection of the Museum's assets and delivery of its programs and services.
- g. Ensuring no policies or activities jeopardize the Museum's non-profit status.
- h. Providing financial protection for trustees, staff, and volunteers for liabilities resulting from Museum activities.
- i. Maintaining standards of conduct at least as stringent as those established for Museum staff and volunteers.

3. The Museum in Society

The Museum, as directed by its mission, is committed to serving its public in science education, providing superior maintenance and security of its assets, both physical and financial, and generating new scientific knowledge through its research program. As such, the Museum:

- a. Aligns its activities with its mission to promote the public good rather than individual gain.
- b. Is committed to human and planetary wellness and shall strive to avoid practices and products whose creation or disposal is unhealthy or otherwise detrimental.
- c. Acknowledges, values, and respects the social, cultural and individual diversity of all people in both its programs and hiring practices. The Museum will use its best efforts to foster accessible exhibits, programs, organizational procedures and operations.
- d. The Museum recognizes the value of sharing decision making with diverse audiences, communities, donors, members, staff, trustees, and volunteers.
- e. The Museum provides for the health and safety of its guests, volunteers, and employees through a continuing program designed to reduce and/or eliminate the possible causes of accidents and to create the healthiest environment possible in the fulfillment of the mission of the Museum.

4. Conduct for Trustees, Staff and Volunteers

Board membership, employment and volunteerism at the Museum involve a position of public trust with great responsibility. In all activities, Museum trustees, staff and volunteers must act with integrity and in accordance with stringent professional ethical principles and objectivity in

support of the Museum's mission and public trust responsibilities. These general expectations do not in any way change or modify legal requirements governing employment practices as addressed in the Museum's Employment Handbook for employees.

- a. Trustees, staff and volunteers are expected to contribute talents and energies that create a safe, open and inclusive environment and add to the quality of the Museum and the Museum's services. Trustees, staff and volunteers are expected to learn and demonstrate the Museum's values, and enhance and support the future of the Museum in our community.
- b. Trustees, staff and volunteers shall attend annual training supplied by the Museum regarding sexual harassment and unlawful discrimination, with the expectation that Trustees shall be held to the same standards of conduct as applicable to Museum employees and volunteers. The Board of Trustees may also elect to implement additional training for Trustees on other matters germane to responsibilities and fiduciary duties.
- c. Trustees, staff and volunteers shall ensure that all relationships with outside organizations, contractors, vendors, potential and actual donors, trustee emeriti and the public at large comport with this Code and are governed by mutual respect.

5. Conflict of Interest

The Museum's Conflict of Interest Policy is designed to maintain high moral standards of honesty, integrity, and loyalty to the Museum and prohibit any private or personal activity that might conflict, or appear to conflict with the Museum's goals, purposes and operations or bring discredit or embarrassment to the Museum or to the profession. Trustees shall comply with the Museum's Conflict of Interest Policy and annually complete a conflict of interest questionnaire to identify and resolve any real or apparent conflicts of interest. Museum staff and volunteers shall comply with the Museum's conflict of interest policies as set forth in the Museum's Employee Handbook and other relevant documentation and guidelines.

6. Collections

The Museum's obligation to its collections and associated documentation is paramount. The collections are held in the public trust at the highest standards of care for ensuring that collections are preserved and used for educational and scholarly purposes in perpetuity. The Board of Trustees provides oversight regarding these stewardship responsibilities, which is governed by the Museum's Manual of Collection Policies.

7. Collaborations and Fundraising

The Museum adheres to the following precepts with respect to collaborations and fundraising:

- a. The Museum welcomes appropriate cooperation with similar organizations to further its preservation, research, and educational goals.
- b. The Museum is in ultimate control of educational content in exhibits and programs. The recognition of external donors or sponsors is secondary.

- c. The Museum will acknowledge corporate support but will not specifically endorse any corporation, its products or services.
- d. The Museum's reputation is one of its most precious assets and in no way shall any sponsorship diminish that reputation. In the case of some breach of morals, the sponsorship shall be dissolved.
- e. Those involved in fundraising must do so with honesty as to need and must use funds for a donor's intended purposes. Opportunities and advantages shall be promised to donors equally.
- f. All donor-related records and documents shall be confidential, except as required by law.
- g. The Museum shall keep standard accounting records.
- h. Those authorized to spend funds must do so with impartiality, honesty, and in the Museum's best interest.

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