

110 – CODE OF CONDUCT

- A. A fair and independent court system is essential to the administration of justice. Proper conduct by a Court System employee inspires public confidence and trust in the court system. An employee, faithful to that trust, must observe high standards of conduct so that the integrity and impartiality of the courts may be preserved.
- B. There are certain principles that govern the conduct of all employees. This Code of Conduct provides uniform standards for the conduct of all employees other than judicial officers (justices, judges and referees) who are subject to the Code of Judicial Conduct. It is intended to complement the Code of Judicial Conduct that governs the conduct of judicial officers and the Rules of Professional Conduct for Lawyers and should be interpreted in a manner consistent with the applicable code.
- C. The minimum standards contained in this code do not preclude the adoption of more rigorous standards by law, court order, or policy. Violations of this code may lead to corrective action up to and including dismissal.
- D. An employee must uphold the integrity and impartiality of the Court System.
 - 1. Impartiality. An employee must maintain high standards of conduct so the independence of the Court System is preserved.
 - 2. Integrity. An employee must maintain and observe high standards of integrity, honesty, and truthfulness in the employee's professional dealings.
- E. An employee must avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety in all of the employee's activities.
 - 1. Compliance with Law. An employee must respect and comply with the law and must act, at all times, in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the Court System.
 - 2. Gifts. An employee must not accept, solicit, or agree to accept any gift, favor, or anything of value based on any understanding, either explicit or implicit, that the official actions, decisions, or judgment of an employee would be influenced.
 - 3. Extra Compensation. An employee must not request or accept any fee or compensation, beyond that received by the employee in the employee's official capacity, for advice or assistance given in the course of the employee's public employment.
 - 4. Abuse of Position. An employee must not use or attempt to use the employee's position to secure special privileges or exemptions for the employee or any other person.
 - 5. Use of Public Property. An employee must not use public funds, property or resources wastefully or for private purpose not allowed by the Court System or other administrative authorities.
- F. An employee must perform duties impartially and diligently.

1. Professionalism. An employee must be patient, prompt, and courteous to litigants, jurors, witnesses, lawyers, and others who come in contact with the Court System.
 2. Impartiality. An employee must perform duties impartially, and must not be influenced by kinship, social or economic status, political interests, public opinion, or fear of criticism or reprisal.
 3. Prejudice. An employee must perform duties without bias or prejudice, and must not manifest, by words or conduct, bias or prejudice based on race, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status.
 4. Information and Records. An employee, when authorized, must furnish accurate, timely information and must provide access to public court proceedings and records according to established procedures. An employee must not disclose any confidential information received in the course of official duties, except as required in the performance of such duties, or use such information for personal gain or advantage.
 5. Legal Assistance. An employee may assist citizens in identifying available procedural options and in understanding and complying with court procedures. An employee must not advise a particular course of action.
 6. Communication with Judicial Officers. Except in the case of normal duties, an employee must not communicate personal knowledge about the facts of a pending or impending matter to the judicial officer assigned to the case and must not make or repeat remarks about a pending or impending matter that might affect the fairness or improperly influence the outcome of the matter.
 7. Duty to Report. An employee must report to a supervisor, administrator, or judicial officer any violation of the law or this code by another employee. An employee will not be subject to retaliation for reporting or failing to report violations if such report or failure to report is made in good faith.
 8. An employee who has knowledge of or reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused or neglected, based on images of sexual conduct by a child discovered on a workplace computer, shall report the circumstances to the Department of Human Services or its designee, and the employee must report the circumstances to the employee's supervisor.
- G. An employee must conduct personal activities as to minimize conflicts with the employee's employment responsibilities.
1. General Activities. An employee must conduct personal activities so as to avoid a negative effect on the Court System or the employee's ability to perform duties.
 2. Financial Activities. An employee who is a lawyer, regardless of the position the employee holds within the Court System, may not engage in the private practice of law while employed with the Court System. With the approval of an employee's appointing authority, an employee may engage in any business

activity or secondary employment as long as that business activity or secondary employment does not:

- a. Involve an organization or a private employer that regularly conducts business with the court.
 - b. Involve employee time or attention during the employee's normal working hours.
 - c. Place the employee in a position of conflict with the employee's official role in the judicial department.
 - d. Require the employee to appear regularly in judicial or administrative agency proceedings.
 - e. Identify the employee with the Court System or give an impression the employment or activity is on behalf of the Court System.
 - f. Require use of employee access to case management software, court equipment, materials, supplies, telephone services, office space, computer time, or facilities.
3. Conflict of Interest. An employee must manage personal and business matters so as to avoid situations that may lead to conflict, or the appearance of conflict, in the performance of the employee's employment.
- a. An employee must inform the appropriate supervisor of any potential conflict of interest involving the employee's duties.
 - b. An employee must withdraw from participation in a court proceeding or court business in which the employee has a personal, business, or family interest that may actually or appear to influence the outcome of the court proceeding or business.
 - c. An employee who accepts an offer of employment for a law firm, regardless of the nature of the future position, must notify the employee's immediate supervisor of the potential conflict of interest upon confirmation that the employee has been accepted for hire by the law firm.
4. Solicitation. Unless authorized, an employee must not use the employee's position or office to solicit funds.

H. Political Activity

1. An employee may not engage in inappropriate political activity during work hours or use court facilities or property for inappropriate political activity. Inappropriate political activity means:
 - a. Campaigning, arranging for campaign meetings or events, transporting candidates or workers engaged in campaigning, displaying campaign

literature, badges, stickers, signs or other items of political advertising on behalf of any party, committee, agency or candidate for political office.

- b. Actively soliciting signatures for political candidacy.
 - c. Actively soliciting or receiving funds for political purposes.
2. An employee retains the right to vote as the employee chooses and is free to participate in political activity during non-working hours and outside court facilities. An employee who chooses to participate in political activity during non-working hours may not use the employee's position or title within the Court System in connection with such political activities and the activity must not be incompatible with the employee's duties.
 3. An employee who runs for elective office must notify the employee's supervisor or appointing authority on the filing of nomination papers or election, whichever is earlier. An employee may hold an elected office provided the requirements of that elected office:
 - a. Are fulfilled outside of normal working hours and are not incompatible with the performance of the employee's duties and responsibilities.
 - b. Do not require or induce the employee to disclose confidential information acquired in the course of and by reason of official duties.
 - c. Do not create a conflict of interest or any reasonable appearance of such conflict or reflect adversely on the integrity of the court.
 4. No employee may use official authority or position, directly or indirectly, to influence or attempt to influence any other employee of the Court System to become a member of any political organization or to take part in any political activity.
 5. An employee may not discriminate in favor of or against any other employee of the Court System or applicant for employment based on political contributions or other permitted political activities.

Approved by the Supreme Court 4/1/12; amended 4/4/12 effective 4/15/12; amended 10/1/22