

# THE RAPIDES FOUNDATION

## Staff Code of Ethics and Conduct

### Statement of Ethical Principles

*The Rapides Foundation is a member of the Council on Foundations and has formally adopted this organization's ethical principles, as follows:*

*The Council on Foundations and its members promote the highest standards of ethical behavior. In recognition of the importance of philanthropy toward the public good and those we serve, we adopt these ethical principles.*

**Mission:** Our members are committed to the public benefit and to their philanthropic purposes and act accordingly.

**Stewardship:** Our members manage their resources to maximize philanthropic purposes, not private gain; and actively avoid excessive compensation and unreasonable or unnecessary expenses. They pursue maximum benefit through their work, how they work, and by supporting the work of partners, colleagues and grantees.

**Accountability and Transparency:** In carrying out their philanthropic activities, our members embrace both the letter and the spirit of the law. They welcome public interest, take responsibility for their actions and communicate truthfully.

**Diversity and Inclusiveness:** Our members seek diversity and inclusiveness in order to reflect the communities they serve and to ensure that a range of perspectives contribute to the common good and the development of their mission in a changing society.

**Governance:** Our members' governing bodies understand and embrace their responsibility to oversee the mission, strategic direction, finances and operations of their respective organizations, and do so honestly and with integrity. They establish clear and understandable policies and ensure that they are followed.

**Respect:** Members interact respectfully with grantees, colleagues, donors and peers.

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### Purpose

The Rapides Foundation is obligated as a charitable, tax exempt organization to maintain the public trust. The Foundation has always taken this obligation very seriously and strives to set an example for the field of philanthropy in all of its activities. Accordingly, it is incumbent upon employees of the Foundation to conduct the affairs of the Foundation with a commitment to the highest standards of integrity. This includes acting at all times in an honest and ethical manner, in compliance with all laws and regulations and avoiding or managing potential or actual conflicts of interest according to the established conflict of interest policies in this document. Compliance with this Code of Ethics and Conduct will sustain a culture where honest and ethical conduct is recognized, valued and exemplified throughout the Foundation.

# **Policies and Practices**

## **General Statement – Conflicts of Interest**

Employees of The Rapides Foundation have a full-time responsibility to the Foundation. A potential or actual conflict of interest occurs whenever an employee is in a position to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for him or herself, any other employee or an immediate family member. (For the purposes of this policy “immediate family” means a staff member’s spouse or domestic partner, parents, siblings, children and in-laws.) An employee may not engage in activities that create a conflict between the interests of the Foundation and those of the employee. In certain circumstances, the Foundation may also be concerned about the appearance of a conflict of interest, even if no actual conflict has occurred. Any activities, which conflict, appear to conflict, interfere or compete with the interests of the Foundation should be avoided. If an employee thinks that a conflict of interest exists or might arise, he or she should notify their supervisor immediately.

## **Activities that are Prohibited/Discouraged:**

### **Confidentiality – Disclosure of Information**

Disclosing to others outside the Foundation or using for his or her own benefit information not generally available to the public which the Foundation or employee has access to by reason of his or her position, such as confidential information of a technical, financial, or business nature or other “inside information.”

### **Financial Interests**

Employees must avoid incurring any kind of financial interest or personal obligation which might affect (or appear to affect) his or her judgment in dealings on behalf of the Foundation with firms or individuals. Each person must examine his or her own activities and those of his or her family to disclose any conditions which could create or appear to create a financial interest in respect to transactions of the Foundation.

### **Gifts and Other Payments**

Except for gifts of nominal value or meals that are in keeping with good business ethics and do not obligate the recipient, employees or their immediate families may not accept the following: payments, gifts, loans, services or entertainment (such as event tickets), from vendors, dealers, consultants, contractors, grantees, or non-grantees who have existing or proposed business relationships with the Foundation. Family members may accept the items listed above from these entities if the acceptance is not related to Foundation business or interests.

### **Relationships to Suppliers**

Staff members with responsibility for issuing or approving orders for the purchase of supplies, equipment, or transportation, or for any contracts for employment or services for the Foundation, may not have a significant interest in any supplier of supplies or services to the Foundation. Nor may staff member’s immediate family have such an interest. (“Significant interest” means any financial interest that may influence the judgment of the staff members in conducting the work of the Foundation.)

### **Foundation Grants and Consultancies**

Program staff may not administer any grant where they have an interest. No Foundation employee may be the Responsible Program Officer on any grant to a grantee employing, either on staff or as a consultant, a member of the employee’s immediate family.

### **Employment, Consultancies and Teaching Assignments**

Since it is possible that non-Foundation part-time employment, paid consultancies or teaching assignment could interfere with the discharge of a staff member's Foundation responsibilities or create an actual or apparent conflict of interest with the Foundation, staff members generally should not accept such assignments, especially assignment with a Foundation grantee or supplier. Exceptions may be made with prior approval of the President if the arrangement will not interfere with the staff member's responsibilities, or where it will not affect, or appear to affect, the staff member's judgments on behalf of the Foundation.

### **Service on Boards**

It is prohibited to serve another organization as a representative of the Foundation in any capacity to include activities, compensated or not, which can affect or appear to affect an employee's ability to discharge his or her duties to the Foundation.

Staff members who are invited to serve on their own time, as a personal commitment (rather than at the request of the Foundation) as trustees or directors may accept such invitations only with the prior approval in writing of the President. Factors to be considered in evaluating such invitations include conflict of interest issues (for instance, whether the organization is a grantee or supplier of the Foundation or likely to become one), and likelihood of time conflicts (whether this commitment would interfere with the individual's ability to carry out his or her Foundation responsibilities).

### **Speaking Engagements, Articles for Publication, Acceptance of Fees**

Staff members are encouraged to maintain their professional credentials by undertaking speaking engagements and writing articles appropriate to their fields of interest, provided the time for preparation and delivery does not interfere with their Foundation responsibilities. Possible speeches or articles should be discussed with the staff member's supervisor, and requires prior approval from the President of the Foundation. The Communications Officer must be consulted on all presentations.

In any matter related to Foundation business, staff members may not accept a fee or any type of reimbursement from a grantee or a non-grantee.

### **Political Activities**

Staff members are free to engage in political activities when, in the staff member's judgment, such activities will not conflict with their ability to carry out Foundation responsibilities. Staff members should keep in mind, when making such decisions, the potential difficulty in outside perception in distinguishing between the staff member's personal and professional capacities. No political activities can be conducted during a staff member's business day, or with the use of any Foundation resources. Prior approval of the President in writing is required before a staff member runs for any public office.

Employees may at the direction of the President become involved in Foundation-sponsored issue advocacy. However, employees may not invoke The Rapides Foundation or their involvement with the Foundation in political campaigns or issues that are not sanctioned by the Foundation.

### **Honorary Degrees**

A staff member may not accept an honorary degree from a college or university without prior approval in writing of the President of the Foundation.

## **Reporting Requirements and Procedures**

### **Meeting Agenda**

As part of the permanent agenda for every meeting, the Chairman of the Board and/or the Committee Chairman shall call for the disclosure of any conflicts of interest and the attendees shall also be given an opportunity to challenge the presence of an undisclosed conflict regarding any employee-related matter. The minutes of all meetings of the Board shall record each announced disclosure of any conflict of interest and the abstention from voting by trustees having a conflict of interest.

Any employee who is aware of an actual or potential conflict of interest with respect to any matter coming before the Board of Trustees of any Committee of the Trustees shall not participate in any discussion or be present during any vote in connection with the matter. Nor shall such employee advocate his or her interest in the matter informally through private contact, communication or discussion.

### **Disclosure Statements**

In order to implement these policies, the Board of Trustees will develop disclosure statements for completion by employees on an annual basis. This questionnaire will be filled out annually by each staff member, disclosing any information which may be considered a conflict of interest.

It is nevertheless each person's responsibility to report, in writing, on a current basis, any new developments as to matters included in this policy statement or in the disclosure statements.

All disclosure statements and reports shall be maintained in confidence and access to such materials shall be limited to the President, the Trustees, Foundation Counsel, and other persons designated by the President who have a reasonable need to know the contents or whose duties involve custody of such materials.

## **Compliance with this Code**

### **Reporting Requirement and Procedures**

An employee must promptly disclose actual or potential conflicts of interest to his or her supervisor. If a staff member thinks he or she has, or in good faith thinks another staff member has, violated any provision of this Code, that staff member should immediately report the suspected violation to his or her immediate supervisor, and if deemed appropriate to the President of the Foundation.

### **Retaliation is Prohibited**

No one reporting an actual or suspected violation of this Code or other unlawful act in good faith will be subject to retaliation of any kind. Retaliation against an individual for reporting an actual or suspected violation of this Code in good faith or for participating in an investigation of a violation is a serious offense and may lead to disciplinary action.

### **Knowledge of the Law**

Employees are not expected to be familiar with every law and regulation relating to this issue. When in doubt, however, it is incumbent upon each employee to consult with the President, and for the President to address any matters with the Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

This policy statement concerns some matters which may require evaluation, judgment and analysis of the law or discretionary action. Therefore, the Board of Trustees shall be responsible for resolving any disputes, and making any interpretations issuing any opinions in respects to all matters that arise. The decisions of the Trustees shall be final. The Board of Trustees shall have the right to authorize deviations from this policy if, in their discretion, such deviations seem advisable and in the best interests of the Foundation.