

# **Northern Lights Library Network Conflict of Interest Policy**

## **Article I Purpose**

The purpose of the Conflict of Interest Policy is to protect Northern Lights Library Network's interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer or director of Northern Lights Library Network or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflict of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

## **Article II Definitions**

### **1. Interested Person**

Any director, principal officer, or member of a committee with governing board delegated powers, who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person.

### **2. Financial Interest**

A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:

- a. An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the Northern Lights Library Network has a transaction or arrangement,
- b. A compensation arrangement with Northern Lights Library Network or with any entity or individual with which Northern Lights Library Network has a transaction or arrangement, or
- c. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which Northern Lights Library Network is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.

Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial, nominal, or of insignificant value. Gifts or favors that are not insubstantial includes anything of value that could reasonably be expected to influence a vote, official actions, or judgment, or could reasonable be considered as a reward for any official action or inaction. A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. Under Article III, Section 2, a person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the appropriate governing board or committee decides that a conflict of interest exists.

## **Article III Procedures**

### **1. Duty to Disclose**

In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the directors and members of committees with governing board delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.

## **2. Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists**

After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he/she shall leave the governing board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.

## **3. Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest**

- a. An interested person may make a presentation at the governing board or committee meeting, but after the presentation, he/she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.
- b. The chairperson of the governing board or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
- c. After exercising due diligence, the governing board or committee shall determine whether Northern Lights Library Network can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
- d. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the governing board or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in Northern Lights Library Network best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.

## **4. Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy**

- a. If the governing board or committee has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
- b. If, after hearing the members response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the governing board or committee determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

## **Article IV Records of Proceedings**

The minutes of the governing board and all committees with board delegated powers shall contain:

- a. The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the governing boards or committees decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
- b. The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

#### **Article V Compensation**

- a. A voting member of the governing board who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from Northern Lights Library Network for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that members compensation.
- b. A voting member of any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from Northern Lights Library Network for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- c. No voting member of the governing board or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from Northern Lights Library Network, either individually or collectively, is prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.

#### **Article VI Annual Statements**

Each director, principal officer and member of a committee with governing board delegated powers shall annually sign a statement which affirms such person:

- a. Has received a copy of the Conflict of Interest policy,
- b. Has read and understands the policy,
- c. Has agreed to comply with the policy, and
- d. Understands Northern Lights Library Network is charitable and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

#### **Article VII Periodic Reviews**

To ensure Northern Lights Library Network operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-

exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

- a. Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information, and the result of arms length bargaining.
- b. Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to Northern Lights Library Network written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit or in an excess benefit transaction.

### **Article VIII Use of Outside Experts**

When conducting the periodic reviews as provided for in Article VII, Northern Lights Library Network may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the governing board of its responsibility for ensuring periodic reviews are conducted.

Our signature below indicates our receipt and understanding of the Conflict of Interest Policy. We also verify that we have been provided with an opportunity to ask questions about the Policy.

### **Article IX Statement of Ethics for Northern Lights Library Network Board Members**

Members of the Governing Board are prohibited from taking any official action that produces a substantial financial benefit to the board member, the board member's family, or an organization in which the board member has significant financial interest.

Board members in the capacity of trust upon them, shall observe ethical standards with absolute truth, integrity, and honor.

Board members must avoid situations in which personal interests might be served or financial benefits gained at the expense of citizens in the 23 county region of Northern Lights Library Network.

It is incumbent upon any board member to disqualify himself/herself immediately whenever the appearance of a conflict of interest exists.

Board members must distinguish clearly in their actions and statements between their personal philosophies and attitudes and those of the organization, acknowledging and supporting the formal position of the board even if they personally disagree.

A board member must respect the confidential nature of some aspects of library business while being aware of and in compliance with applicable laws governing freedom of information and open meetings law.