

CODE OF PUBLIC CONDUCT

The greater community of _____ *[insert place name]* is a vital assortment of individual citizens, men, women, young and old, rich and poor, native-born and newcomers, powerful and weak, each person striving in this place to make a life of quality for themselves and their families.

As a community and as Americans, we are at our best when we balance our individual right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness with the responsibility to do so in a way that does not deny others their right to the same things. While we may value most the preferences and paths we choose for our own journey through life, we are at our best when we respect the rights of our neighbors to choose paths and preferences different from our own, and even to learn from each other.

We live and work in our villages, towns, cities and states, large and small. At our best, we choose to belong to those churches, civic groups, clubs and associations, neighborhoods and places of work where we can best collaborate with one another on the things that we care about for our mutual benefit.

At our best, we elect competent, wise public leaders to govern us, appoint officials to manage necessary functions, and we ourselves offer to serve to help meet our collective needs.

We are at our best when we keep informed and are kept informed about our municipality, our state, our country, and our world. We are at our best as citizens when we participate and contribute our gifts, ideas and opinions in whatever ways are necessary to ensure that our community is a place where we all can thrive.

For _____ *[insert place name]* is really nothing but its people, individually and together, who must engage one another in public discourse in all the forums, organizations and workplaces that we have built. And we are at our best when all of that public discourse takes place with the practice of mutual respect and responsibility – with, in a word, civility.

Therefore, for the benefit of our community, local and global, we, public officials, candidates for public office, community groups, the media, and individual citizens, agree to abide by the following Code of Conduct for _____ *[insert place name]*

BE RESPECTFUL

- C Through words and actions, demonstrate respect for the diverse views of all citizens in our increasingly multi-cultural society.
- C When advocating for a belief or position, ensure that criticism of opposing viewpoints is expressed as criticism of a position, not a person.
- C Be a positive role model in public discourse by practicing courtesy and consideration.
- C Engage in respectful, non-judgmental listening with an open mind.

BE RESPONSIBLE

- C Ensure that all sides have a fair opportunity to present their respective viewpoints.
- C Exercise our rights and responsibilities as citizens and encourage others to become informed and involved.
- C While working toward the will of the majority, respect the rights of the minority.
- C Clearly distinguish opinions from facts and ensure all statements of fact are accurate and verifiable.
- C Recognize the value of achieving consensus as an important tool in community building.