

COUNCIL 28 CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR STEWARDS

Preamble:

To hold in stewardship the welfare of the membership of WFSE, we adopt this code of Practice and Solidarity.

Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines for stewards in conduct and values in preserving union values in action. The code offers a set of values, principles, and standards to guide decision-making, representation, and conduct. Steward actions should be consistent with the spirit as well as with the letter of this code.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The roles and responsibilities of the steward are those described in the AFSCME Steward Handbook, published by the International Union, the WFSE Policy for Processing Grievances, and the WFSE Steward Policy. These include:

- Protecting the rights of bargaining unit employees and the union.
- Representing bargaining unit employees in a professional manner consistent with the duty of fair representation.
- Communicating accurate information and providing follow-up when necessary, including motivating and mobilizing members in pursuit of positive solutions to workplace problems.
- Stewards are the face of the union in the workplace. When making decisions stewards should put the interest of the membership ahead of any personal interest.

Recognizing:

- Participating actively, showing respect and consideration for the opinions of all members and making decisions based on discussing and weighing information put forward.
- While conducting transactions with management, the focus of transparency and accountability shall be of paramount concern.
- Exercising authority as members of a collective body, not as individuals.

Principles:

- Stewards promote union values, principles, and ideas in the workplace. Those values include service, social justice for all, treating each person with dignity and worth, valuing relationships, having integrity and competence, and honoring confidentiality, specifically the WFSE Policy on Privileged Confidential Communication attached to this code.
- Stewards, as the voice of the workers, strive to improve working conditions in all available forums.
- Stewards create, foster, and promote solidarity within the Union, including membership and staff.
- Stewards seek the advice and counsel of other stewards/staff whenever such consultation is in the best interests of clients.
- Stewards must be alert to and avoid actual or potential conflicts of interest. If a conflict is discovered, the fact that there is a conflict must be disclosed to the affected member and reasonable steps taken to protect the member's interest to the greatest extent possible.

WFSE Policy on Privileged Confidential Communication

It is the position of the Washington Federation of State Employees that a communication, whether oral, signed (for hearing impaired), or written (electronic or otherwise), between a Washington Federation of

State Employees member and his/her Washington Federation of State Employees union representative(s) which is intended to be private and confidential regarding a representational matter is a privileged communication. A privileged communication is one, which may not be disclosed to third person, i.e., nonrepresentatives, in any manner, such as but not limited to, orally or in writing (electronic or otherwise), through means of social media (such as Facebook or Twitter), or by any other method of communication. The privilege belongs to the member. Divulgence of a privileged communication with a member should be made only pursuant to the member's waiver of the privilege or an appropriate court order, where the court has ruled either that the communication is not privileged or that the communication must be divulged despite the privilege.

Amended 6-30-12 by Executive Board