

Nepotism – Sample Policies

Library policy regarding nepotism is not one size fits all. Some library boards will take a hard line on nepotism – it is simply not allowed under any circumstances. For other libraries, including rural libraries that might struggle to attract qualified candidates for positions, nepotism is discouraged but may be allowed. The key is to institute a policy that is fair and helps to ensure that the work environment remains free of illegal discrimination.

Following are three sample policy statements addressing nepotism:

Example #1 – Brief; no related employees unless board reviews and approves

It is the policy of the [Library Name] that two or more employees who are related to immediate family shall not be employed in the library unless the library board has reviewed and approved the proposed employment of relatives.

Example #2 – Related employees may work at the library, but not in a supervisor-employee situation. Note that the policy applies to relatives of library board members too.

It will be considered a conflict of interest for an employee or library trustee to participate in or influence the recruiting, hiring, evaluation, promotion or disciplinary proceeding of an immediate family member, or for any employee to be hired who would have an immediate family member providing direct supervision or line of supervision authority over a direct supervisor of that employee.

No person who is an immediate family member of a library trustee shall be hired as an employee of the Library.

If two employees become immediate family members during their employment at the Library and such relationship violates the provisions of this Policy, the library board will review the situation on a case-by-case basis and make appropriate reassignments. If the Library is unable to accommodate reassignment, the Library may require for one employee to end employment at the Library.

For purposes of this Policy, immediate family shall mean the spouse, child, father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, sister, brother, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, son-in-law or daughter-in-law or any other relative that resides in the same household.

Example #3 – Ideal for libraries with a large workforce

[Library Name] is committed to a policy of employment and advancement based on qualifications and merit and does not discriminate in favor of or in opposition to the employment of relatives.

Due to potential for perceived or actual conflicts, such as favoritism or personal conflicts from outside the work environment, which can be carried into the daily working relationship, [Library Name] will hire relatives of persons currently employed only if: a) candidates for employment will not be working directly for or supervising a relative, and b) candidates for employment will not occupy a position in the same line of authority in which employees can initiate or participate in decisions involving a direct benefit to the relative. Such decisions include hiring, retention, transfer, promotion, wages and leave requests.

This policy applies to all current employees and candidates for employment.

“Family member” is defined as one of the following: spouse or significant other, parent/step parent, child/step child, grandparent, grandchild, brother/brother-in-law, sister/sister-in-law, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, first cousin, in-laws (father, mother, son, daughter).

Procedure

Prior to the employment offer, the immediate supervisor must complete a signed statement certifying that the candidate for employment or other employment action is not a relative as defined above. Failure to submit the signed statement to the human resources (HR) officer will result in the delay of the job offer until the statement is submitted.

The hiring supervisor is responsible for ensuring policy compliance. Department directors are responsible for monitoring changes in employee reporting relations after initial hire to ensure compliance with this policy. Employees are responsible for immediately reporting any changes to their supervisor.

If any employee, after employment or change in employment, enters into one of the above relationships, the library board will review the situation and make appropriate reassignments. If the Library is unable to accommodate reassignment, the Library may require for one employee to end employment at the Library.

No exception to this policy will be made without the approval of the library board.