

CODE OF ETHICS

Approved by the Discovery Place, Inc. Board of Trustees August 18, 2005

Revised June 29, 2020 (updated Mission and Vision)

Revised March 7, 2025

Pending Approval by Discovery Place, Inc. Board of Trustees - expected March 31, 2025

History

Over 75 years after opening the doors of its first small museum, Discovery Place, Inc. continues to shape a future where people of all ages embrace science to create opportunities, build hope, solve problems, and bring positive change to our world.

Today, through four museums in three cities and virtual and community outreach programs throughout the Carolinas, Discovery Place serves three-quarters of a million people a year with high-energy, high-impact science education that is helping to build our region's future.

Discovery Place Science has become one of the leading hands-on science museums in the nation, bringing science, nature and design together through special exhibitions, hands-on learning labs and educational programming for all ages in partnership with the communities we serve.

Since its renovations and reopening, the Charlotte IMAX Dome Theatre allows Discovery Place to deliver a wide array of digital content from blockbuster films to planetarium programming to two-way international video conferencing.

Discovery Place Kids-Huntersville and Discovery Place Kids-Rockingham continue to be destinations for families to enjoy fun-filled, interactive experiences that encourage curiosity, creativity, and a lifelong love of learning. With carefully curated exhibits and engaging programs, the Museums offer an environment that fosters growth and development in young children.

Discovery Place's new nature museum, the Charlotte Museum of Nature (expected to open in 2026), will be a world-class environmental education center with animals native to the Piedmont, a North American river otter habitat and outdoor experiences that connect the museum with its forest location. The new nature haven will invite guests of all ages to explore the outdoors and learn sustainability practices that improve the health of our city, region and planet.

Discovery Place is grounded in a tradition of public service to our region, state, and beyond, and is committed to maintaining the highest ethical standards of operations, consistent with the American Alliance of Museums, the Association of Children's Museums, and the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (Discovery Place will seek AZA accreditation at our earliest opportunity following the opening of the Charlotte Museum of Nature).

Our Vision

A future where people embrace science to:

- Create opportunities
- Build hope
- Solve problems
- And bring positive change for our world.

Mission

We bring science, nature and design together to create transformative experiences that enable our community to understand, enjoy and apply science to their lives.

Statement of Purpose

As a nonprofit organization dedicated to the public good, Discovery Place is accountable to the public, transparent in its operations, responsible in its stewardship of resources, and committed to excellence. This Code of Ethics is in place to ensure that the Board of Trustees, staff, and volunteers work together toward the greater good of Discovery Place and its stated mission.

Discovery Place holds its non-living collections as a public trust, and its Board of Trustees, staff, and volunteers share a responsibility to maintain public confidence in the institution.

Additionally, Discovery Place is accountable for stewardship of its property, objects, and exhibits, conducting its programs, and serving the public with accuracy, honesty, and sensitivity.

Discovery Place is committed to informing Board, staff and volunteers about the Code of Ethics and its application; evaluating the code regularly and creating policies and procedures that reflect its values.

Personal and Professional Conduct

In their dealings as representatives of the Museums, Discovery Place's Board, staff, and volunteers act professionally with honesty, integrity, and openness. They treat each other and constituents fairly and with respect. Staff, board members and volunteers are responsible for being aware of corporation policies that address their conduct.

Conflict of Interest

Discovery Place maintains a policy concerning conflict of interest adopted August 28, 2003, and revised March 22, 2012. Discovery Place employees, board members and volunteers act in the best interest of the corporation rather than in furtherance of personal interests or the interests of third parties, such as friends and family. Decisions about the institution and the use or disposition of its assets are made solely in terms of the benefit to the Discovery Place and are neither influenced by, nor appear to be influenced by, any private profit, personal gain or outside benefit for staff, board members and volunteers; their friends and family members or other organizations with which they are affiliated. Trustees and senior level employees must review annually the Conflict of Interest Policy and disclose any activities or financial interest which might constitute a conflict.

Board of Trustees

Responsibilities:

Discovery Place has an active Board of Trustees that sets the institution's mission, strategic direction, and policies and has general oversight of its finances and governance. The board ensures that: its volunteers and the employees act for the benefit of the corporation and its public purpose with integrity and honesty; adequate financial and other resources are made available through a broad variety of sources necessary to support the programs and other services of the corporation; corporation resources are responsibly and prudently managed; and Discovery Place has the ability to carry out its programs through effective planning and good management. The Board also supervises, evaluates, and determines appropriate compensation for the President and CEO, and ensures that Discovery Place is fair and inclusive in its employment practices.

Relationships:

The Board of Trustees should deal with the President & CEO openly and with candor. Trustees should avoid giving directions to staff other than the President & CEO, unless such actions are in accordance with established procedures, or the Board Chair or President & CEO are apprised. Staff members should communicate with the Board of Trustees through or with the prior knowledge of the President & CEO.

Trustees should act as a full Board in appointing or dismissing the President & CEO and the relationship between the President & CEO and the Board should reflect the acknowledged primacy of institutional goals and mission over all personal considerations. The President & CEO should attend all Board of Trustee meetings and committee meetings, except executive sessions concerning the CEO.

The President & CEO has an obligation to bring before the Board current and complete financial information in comprehensible form, to bring to the attention of the Board any matters involving policy questions not already determined, and to keep them informed on a timely basis of all other matters of substance or intended actions affecting Discovery Place.

The President & CEO must carry out the policies established by the Board of Trustees and adhere to the budget approved by the Board. Whenever necessary to deviate from established policies or to alter budget guidelines, the President & CEO should notify the Board or its appropriate committees in advance and request appropriate approval.

Staff

General Principles:

Staff members include those who are employed by Discovery Place on a full-time, part-time, regular, or temporary basis. All staff members are responsible for understanding the duties of their positions and executing those duties to the best of their abilities. Discovery Place promotes a working environment that values respect, fairness, and integrity. Its human resources policies are fair, establish clear expectations and provide for meaningful and effective performance evaluation. Open communication among staff is highly valued. To help all staff meet their potential and to sustain the institution and encourage its growth, the senior staff model professional conduct and provide leadership, clarity, and respect for individuals and for diverse points of view.

The working relationship among all staff is based on equity and mutual respect. Staff members will use their different skills, experiences, and styles to foster opportunities for teamwork and collaboration. It is the ethical responsibility of staff to treat each other and the public respectfully and with sensitivity in the context of differences. Including but not limited to, race, age, sexual orientation, physical and mental ability, gender, educational level, economic access, and cultural heritage. Staff members have a responsibility to maintain an open mind concerning diversity and what can be learned from new experiences.

When acting in their capacity as representatives of Discovery Place, staff members will respect and promote the codes, policies, and decisions of the institution. Where the professional opinions or judgments of staff member conflicts with the policies or decisions of Discovery Place, that staff member will not use his or her position to compromise the institution's integrity or reputation. Staff members will endeavor to avoid situations that could, rightly or wrongly, be construed as improper conduct of any kind and in all places where they are representing or construed as representing Discovery Place.

Purchases, Gifts, Favors, Discounts & Dispensations:

Discovery Place is committed to the highest ethical principles in all relationships with the public and with business suppliers. Any staff member who is authorized to spend Discovery Place funds should do so with impartiality, honesty, and with regard only to the best interests of the institution. Whenever possible multiple quotations or bids should be secured for goods or services, and a good faith effort is expected to include minority and women owned business enterprises in the bidding process.

Staff members and others in a close relationship with them must not accept gifts, favors, loans, or other dispensations or things of more than minimal value that are available to them in

connection with their duties for the institution when there is the potential perception that by receiving such gifts and favors a conflict of interest is created. Gifts of minimal value are deemed to be novelty items with a value of less than \$50. Gifts include discounts on personal purchases from suppliers who sell items or furnish services to Discovery Place, except where such discounts are regularly offered to the general public. Gifts can also include offers of outside employment or other advantageous arrangements. Gifts in questionable taste, or which could be seen as representing a conflict of interest, should be declined in all instances, regardless of cost or value.

Responsibility to Discovery Place Property, Real and Intangible:

The name, reputation, and resources of Discovery Place are valuable assets and should not be exploited either for personal advantage or the advantage of any other person or entity. Discovery Place's property, whether physical or intellectual, is acquired, produced, and maintained for the sole purpose of furthering the institution's mission. No staff member should use, outside Discovery Place premises or for personal gain, any object or item that is a part of Discovery Place's exhibits, historical objects, or under the guardianship of Discovery Place, or use any other property, supplies or resources of Discovery Place, except for the official business of Discovery Place without the prior express consent of the institution.

Information about the administrative or business activities of Discovery Place that staff may acquire in the course of their duties, which are not generally known or available to the public, must be treated as information proprietary to the institution. Such information should not be used for personal advantage or other purposes.

Staff members are responsible for maintaining the security of confidential records and information and the privacy of individuals or groups who support Discovery Place.

Youth Under 18:

Youth (those under the age of 18), who participate in camps, programs, apprenticeships, and internships, are a vital part of Discovery Place and will be respected as peers who have valuable input to bring to the institution. Staff members will encourage youth to become active participants in their learning experience by allowing them the freedom to explore and expand the opportunities available to them. Discovery Place has high expectations for the potential of all youth regardless of race, gender, class, or physical ability to excel in science, technology, engineering, and math. Staff members have a responsibility to be supportive and encouraging of youth, sensitive to their needs, and able to provide direction and guidance.

Young people come to Discovery Place with different needs for learning, stages of development, and life experiences and look to adults for mentorship. Because adults naturally wield a certain authority and power over youth, staff members will take care not to inappropriately direct youth or misuse the authority of the relationship. Additionally, all discovery Place staff are required to complete annual training around the abuse of minors.

As minors, youth can never be considered wholly outside of the context of their families. Staff members have a responsibility to keep a young person's family apprised of successes and activities of their children as well as activities that may involve a parent or guardian decision. Staff members also have an ethical duty to direct and guide youth in Discovery Place-related activities that are appropriate to the family experiences and cultures that they bring with them.

Outside Employment & Volunteer Activities:

Certain types of outside employment, including teaching, writing, lecturing, and consulting can benefit both Discovery Place and the staff member by encouraging personal and professional development. Such activities should not interfere with the staff member's regular duties (except in instances where these activities are integral to performance of the position), and the

individual should not take advantage of his or her Discovery Place position for personal gain or appear to compromise the integrity of the institution.

Staff may hold outside jobs as long as they meet the performance standards of their job with Discovery Place. All employees will be evaluated by the same performance standards and will be subject to the institution's scheduling needs, regardless of any existing outside work requirements. If Discovery Place determines that a staff member's outside work interferes with the performance or the ability to meet the requirements of job, the staff member may be asked to terminate the outside employment in order to remain employed with Discovery Place.

Staff members are encouraged to participate in voluntary outside activities with community groups or public service organizations. If a staff member volunteers for another organization and could appear to be acting in an official capacity as a Discovery Place staff member, disclosure is recommended to avoid possible misrepresentation. A staff member will discuss with his or her supervisor all aspects of the outside activity or employment that may be construed to impact the reputation of Discovery Place. Together, they will work to eliminate the potential for any perceptions of that activity, accurate or inaccurate, that would reflect negatively on Discovery Place. Staff members should conduct themselves so that their activities on behalf of community or public service organizations do not reflect adversely on the reputation or integrity of the institution. When a staff member speaks out on a public issue, he or she should make sure to do so as an individual and avoid the appearance of speaking or acting in an official capacity or on Discovery Place's behalf.

Personal Collecting by Staff:

Discovery Place staff members may not compete with the institution in any personal living or non-living collecting activity or build the collections in a manner that serves their private interests rather than the institution's objectives. Staff members may not use their affiliation with Discovery Place to promote personal collecting activities. Because of the potential for liability issues and a conflict of interest, Discovery Place staff members, Trustees, and volunteers are prohibited from storing personal collections on Discovery Place premises.

Volunteers:

Discovery Place's volunteers are in direct contact with visitors on a daily basis and often are the face of the institution to the public. When acting on behalf of the corporation, volunteers understand their duties and execute them to the best of their abilities.

Discovery Place volunteers are held to the same standards and ethics as employees.

Discovery Place Management Policy

Fiduciary Responsibility:

Discovery Place manages its funds responsibly and prudently by:

- ensuring that all spending practices and policies are fair, reasonable and appropriate to fulfill its mission;
- generating monthly financial reports – reviewed by staff and trustees, and undergoing annual independent audits that are accurate, complete, and accessible in all material respects.

Legal Compliance:

The organization's Board of Trustees, staff and volunteers comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Data Management & Privacy:

Discovery Place abides by the highest ethical and legal standards when dealing with personal data and maintains and updates annually policies including but not limited to information

security, compliance, data retention, and disaster recovery. Personal data should be gathered, maintained, and used only for the purpose of furthering the mission of Discovery Place. Discovery Place will comply with all applicable state and federal laws pertaining to the gathering and use of personal data.

Inclusiveness and Diversity:

To enhance its effectiveness, Discovery Place promotes inclusiveness, and its Board, staff, and volunteers strive to ensure that the diversity of Museum professionals is reflected in its programs and committees. The institution supports diversity in its hiring, retention, promotion, and Board recruitment efforts and in the programs it develops for its constituencies.

Integrity:

Discovery Place responds to the changing needs of its communities and is committed to improving its organizational effectiveness, programs, products, and services. It strives to provide the field, the media, policy makers and the public with content that is accurate, clear, and informed.

Disclosure:

Discovery Place provides comprehensive information about the institution and responds in a timely manner to reasonable requests for information. Basic data about Discovery Place operations—such as the IRS Form 990, NC disclosure forms, annual reports, audited financial statements, program reports and policies—are available to the public.

Confidentiality:

Discovery Place Board, staff, and volunteers may, under certain circumstances, have access to confidential and privileged information about the institution, its members, and other constituents. Loyalty to the Museum and to the field requires that individuals with access to such information comply with privacy and confidentiality policies and treat all information responsibly and appropriately.

Commercial Activities:

Commercial activities undertaken by Discovery Place should not violate or compromise the integrity of Discovery Place's mission, the ability of Discovery Place or its staff to maintain professional standards, or Discovery Place's nonprofit status. Control of a product (e.g., exhibition, publication, and programming) will neither be delegated to, or vested in, an outside party to obtain financial support. Commercial activities associated with Discovery Place, as well as the publicity related to them, should also be in keeping with the mission of Discovery Place, relevant to the basic educational purpose of the institution, and the integrity of any permanent collections.

Fundraising and Business Practices:

Discovery Place is truthful in its fundraising solicitation materials. The institution handles information about donations with confidentiality according to the wishes of its donors and to the extent provided by the law; expends funds consistent with donor intent and provides appropriate acknowledgement and recognition.

In all cases, for the protection of the good name of Discovery Place, the institution strives to only enter into agreements with reputable organizations whose image, products, and services do not conflict with the mission or values of Discovery Place.

Collections Management

General Principles:

Discovery Place maintains comprehensive policies governing the management of its Non-Living and Living Collections. These policies and various management procedures are reviewed annually and updated as needed. All Trustees, staff, and volunteers of Discovery Place are

bound to comply with the policies outlined in the corporation's Collections Management Policy and its Living Collections Management Policy.

Collections staff are required to abide by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) Code of Ethics for Museums, the International Council of Museums Code of Ethics, and Discovery Place's Code of Ethics, as well as all relevant state, federal, and international laws regarding collections. In all cases, Collections staff shall act responsibly toward natural and cultural resources and observe all applicable legal, and ethical guidelines for collecting, acquiring, preserving, storing, and exhibiting collections objects. Discovery Place's Collections staff is expected to provide effective collections stewardship to ensure that the Museum's collections are available and accessible to present and future generations. Discovery Place Collections volunteers with access to Discovery Place's Collection are expected to adhere to the guidelines in the Collections Management Policy for proper care, preservation, and security of collections objects. Volunteers are also expected to follow AAM's Code of Ethics for Museums and Discovery Place's Code of Ethics.

Non-Living Collections Acquisition & Disposal:

It is the policy of Discovery Place to acquire Collections objects that support Discovery Place's stated mission by gift, purchase, exchange, or field collection. All objects acquired shall be in accordance with local, state, federal, and international laws, and in accordance with Discovery Place's accepted Code of Ethics. All acquisitions shall be accompanied by legal documentation transferring ownership of the objects to Discovery Place. Discovery Place may not accept any gift or donation of objects unless the donor signs the appropriate form (e.g., "Deed of Gift") transferring ownership of the listed objects to Discovery Place. Objects purchased by Discovery Place shall be documented with receipt, bill of sale, or purchase order with name, address, and telephone number of the vendor clearly visible.

Deaccessioned Collections objects may be sold at a public sale or a public auction with the proceeds going to the preservation and conservation of Discovery Place's Collection or to the acquisition of Collections objects that are relevant to the institution's mission. The sale or transfer of deaccessioned objects to DP employees, trustees, volunteers, or to their representatives or relatives is prohibited, including at a public sale or a public auction due to the potential for a perceived conflict of interest.

Non-Living Collections Authentication & Appraisals:

It is the policy of Discovery Place that only members of Discovery Place staff with requisite expertise shall participate in the authentication, or internal estimation of value of an object. This restriction also applies to in-house assessments of the value of Collections objects for insurance purposes. In no case are Discovery Place staff allowed to make appraisals or make appraiser recommendations to potential donors due to the perceived conflict of interest. Donors wishing to take an income-tax deduction must have an independent qualified appraisal made of the value of their gift for any items valued over \$5,000.

Use of Animals:

General Principles:

Discovery Place has been housing living creatures since its inception as the Charlotte Children's Nature Museum in 1947. Discovery Place manages its Living Collections to fulfill its mission. It is the goal of these living collections to inspire guests and encourage responsible stewardship through access to, and engagement with healthy organisms that are cared for with Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) husbandry standards. Living Collections strengthen the museum as a credible, expert voice of nature, conservation and environmentalism in the community. Through Living Collections, Discovery Place's opportunities for research

partnerships, and programming are greatly enhanced. In collaboration with community partners, the institution examines evolving best practices to ensure the ethical care of these organisms.

Living Collections staff are required to abide by the AAM Code of Ethics for Museums, the International Council of Museums Code of Ethics, AZA Code of Professional Ethics, and Discovery Place's Code of Ethics, as well as all relevant state (North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission), federal (US Department of Agriculture), and international laws regarding collections. In all cases, staff shall act responsibly toward the organisms in the living collections and observe all applicable legal, and ethical guidelines for collecting, acquiring, and exhibiting living collections specimens.

Volunteers with access to Discovery Place's living collection are expected to adhere to the guidelines in the Living Collections Management Policy for proper care, preservation, and security of living collections specimens. Volunteers are also expected to follow the same standards, codes, and laws that staff are required to follow.

Living Collections Acquisition & Disposal:

Organisms procured for programming and/or exhibition must come from reputable distributors, importers, corporations, AZA-accredited institutions, field collection within the guidelines and permits required by state and federal regulatory agencies, or adoption from humanitarian organizations or private owners that can no longer care for their organism(s). Investigation of the ethical viability of an individual, organization, or institution to care for the animals that they have maintained for any length of time must be carried out by the senior most representative of Living Collections. All acquisitions must flow through the senior staff person responsible for Collections.

Animals in the Living Collection may be dispositioned only in accordance with established authority and only when consistent with applicable laws and professional ethics. All applicable federal, state, local, and international laws, regulations, and other applicable restrictions will be observed and documented. The senior staff person responsible for Collections must approve the dispositioning of animals from the Living Collection. Discovery Place intends to manage the majority of the living collections for the entirety of the animal's natural lifespan in captivity.

Use of this Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics of Discovery Place, Inc. is a living Discovery Place document, designed to be disseminated, adhered to, and updated. The Board of Trustees will establish a schedule for regular review of the code and its dissemination. Discovery Place staff will:

- incorporate the code into its staff handbook and board orientation materials
- review the code during new employee orientations
- post the code on Discovery Place's public website
- disseminate the code to all Discovery Place volunteers via the appropriate vehicles

**Code of Ethics
Annual Acknowledgement Statement**

By signing this document, I am acknowledging that I have read, understand, and agree to comply with the Code of Ethics Policy.

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____