



## Grand County Library Foundation Operating Principles Handbook

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This handbook is designed to quickly acquaint a prospective donor or person interested in joining the Foundation with our basic operating Principles.

I have borrowed heavily from the Colorado Nonprofit Association's publication, "Principles & Practices for Nonprofit Excellence in Colorado", in developing this document. There are several modifications which we have adopted that best meet our Foundations operational goals.

This booklet is the first of two booklets. The first being the Principles and the second being the Practices. The Practices booklet contains detailed guidelines and instructions as to our methods of adhering to Principles which are contained in this booklet.

The Grand County Library Foundations intent, in bringing the GCLF into full compliance with Colorado Non-Profit operating standards, is to operate as functionally independent as possible from the GCLD. Practices that require investments in equipment, services and personnel will be borne by the Foundation, not the Grand County Library District. To every extent possible, the membership of the Foundation will begin assuming operational responsibility. Any expansion of services for the Foundation will be funded by the Foundation.

Founded in 2005, the Grand County Library Foundation was designed to help build an endowment fund which will ensure the sustainability of the Library, seek additional funds to support enhanced Library operations and manage investments for the benefit of the Library.

The Grand County Library Foundations Principles and Practices will be reviewed and modified at least once per year and re-adopted at the first meeting of every year.

Many thanks to all those that helped assemble this booklet as **VERSION 1.1.**

David M. Skinner, President Grand County Library Foundation 2012

## Grand County Library Foundation Operating Principles

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### **MISSION**

The Mission of The Grand County Library Foundation (GCLF), a 501(c)(3) entity, encourages, solicits, receives, holds and manages gifts, bequests, and reserves on behalf of the Grand County Library District (hereafter referred to as Library), so that these assets and their earnings may provide ongoing support for facilities, staff, programs and services to help in achieving the Library's vision to be "The Peak of Excellence in Mountain Libraries, Spanning the Divide".

### **Goals**

The goal of the Foundation is to enhance, not replace, traditional tax-based support for the Library by:

1. Building an endowment to ensure the viability and sustainability of the Library.
  2. Seeking additional funds to support enhanced Library operations.
  3. Managing investments for the present and future benefits of the Library.
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# 1.1 Governance & Leadership - Principles

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**Grand County Library Foundation (GCLF) governing body, officers, and key members are responsible for defining and upholding the organization's mission, vision, and values as stated in these principles and for providing overall leadership and strategic direction to the organization.**

- Ensure that the organization is adequately resourced to carry out its mission
- Ensure the ethical and legal integrity of the organization and advance accountability and good governance practices
- Ensure that activities and expenses align with mission focus
- Actively set and implement policies
- Evaluate its own effectiveness as a governing body and as representatives of the community in upholding the public interest served by the organization

**Members of the governing body need to be aware of and committed to the legal fiduciary duties related to their work: (CRS 1-128-401)**

## Duty of care

- Performing their responsibilities in good faith and with diligence, attention, care and skill
- Carrying out the purposes and mission of the charitable nonprofit, GCLF
- Completing required filings
- Complying with the organization's governing documents (Articles of incorporation and Bylaws)
- Participating in decision making and oversight responsibilities such as:
  - Attending board meetings regularly
  - Entering discussions
  - Reading minutes
  - Understanding the organization's programs

- Maintaining a careful oversight of finances
- Questioning unclear or troubling activity

## Duty of loyalty

- Placing the interests of the organization before their own private interests
- Avoiding the use of organizational opportunities for personal gain

## Duty of obedience

- Complying with federal, state, and local laws
- Adhering to the organization's governing documents
- Guarding the organization's mission

# 2.1 Transparency and Accountability – Principles

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- GCLF has an ethical and legal obligation to its constituents and the public to conduct its activities in a transparent and accountable manner. GCLF will regularly and openly convey information to the public about its mission, activities, accomplishments and decision-making processes.
  - Information about the GCLF mission, activities, accomplishments and decision-making processes will be made available on the GCLF website, [www.gclfoundation.org](http://www.gclfoundation.org), in targeted and untargeted mailings (both USPS and electronic), in public places such as public notice boards, or at any venue that will allow presentation of its mission and activities in an appropriate manner. All activities and written materials will be designed to ultimately build trust in the GCLF.
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## 3.1 Financial Management – Principles

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**GCLF has an obligation to act as responsible stewards of its financial resources by:**

- Complying with all legal financial requirements
- Adhering to sound accounting principles
- Producing reliable financial information
- Ensuring fiscal responsibility
- Building public trust
- Using its financial resources to accomplish its missions in an effective and efficient manner by establishing clear policies and practices to regularly monitor how funds are used

## 4.1 Fundraising Principles

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- GCLF provides opportunities for individuals and organizations to voluntarily contribute toward the long term viability of the Grand County Library District and all of its goals.
- All GCLF fundraising will be conducted according to the highest ethical standards with regard to solicitation, acceptance, recording, reporting, and use of funds.

## 5.1 Human Resources Principles

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- The ability of GCLF to make effective use of the energy, time, and talents of its volunteers is essential to accomplishing the organization’s mission.
  - GCLF places a high priority on exercising fair and equitable practices that attract and retain qualified volunteers without regard to nationality, race, religion, gender or economic status.
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## 6.1 Planning Principles

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- Organizational planning defines the overall direction, activities, and strategies that will be used to fulfill GCLF’s Mission. As an organization, we will engage in sound planning to define a clear vision for the future and specific strategies for reaching established goals.
- GCLF’s planning will be proactive. It will incorporate evaluation of results and periodic analyses of community needs. The Planning process will be intentional, scheduled, and ongoing in order to best position the Foundation to achieve its goals.

## 7.1 Evaluation Principles

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- As an organization that serves the public, GCLF has an obligation to demonstrate its contribution to the public good by assessing the impact of its actions and to respond appropriately.
- GCLF will regularly measure its performance both in terms of effectiveness, such as outcomes and results of services, and efficiency, such as in service delivery systems.
- The results will be shared with the public and used to continually refine the planning process to improve the quality of GCLF programs and activities.

## 8.1 Advocacy, Public Policy & Civic Engagement - Principles

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**Advocacy is the active support of an idea or a cause.**

- GCLF will advocate on behalf of the Grand County Library District, as well as libraries in general. GCLF will encourage broad and non-partisan community participation in these efforts and, in the process, provide appropriate assistance when needed.
- When a nonprofit advocates for or against specific pending legislation or ballot issues, federal and state lobbying rules will apply. Lobbying activities are permitted but GCLF ***must not*** violate the prohibition on endorsing a

candidate or elected official and must stay within regulatory limits on activities that meet the definition of lobbying. By knowing and observing these rules, GCLF may legally include lobbying activities directed at specific legislation or ballot issues in their advocacy efforts.

## 9.1 Communication Principles

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Effective communications helps to ensure public trust in the organization. GCLF aspires to engage stakeholders with impactful communications. Excellent internal and external communications will advance GCLF's mission, inspire its stakeholders, and increase its impact. Internal communication is essential to:

- Manage the Foundation
- Motivate
- Inform
- Counsel Board members and volunteers
- Set the stage for excellent external communications

External communication is necessary to:

- Attract and retain stakeholders
- Raise public awareness and trust
- Increase understanding
- Increase commitment
- Increase funding

## 10.1 Information Technology Principles

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**GCLF will manage all information to the fullest extent of its capabilities with regard to:**

- Confidentiality
- Safety
- Accuracy
- Integrity

- Reliability
- Cost-effectiveness
- Legal compliance

GCLF will invest in appropriate technology for itself or the GCLD to enhance capacity and improve its efficiency, effectiveness and accuracy in the achievement of its mission. It will also ensure the security of sensitive or confidential information, and ensure its document retention and destruction policy adequately protects electronic information.

**GCLF will not share or make public the information of its donors unless specifically requested via a written request by the donor.**

## 11.1 Strategic Alliances Principles

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**For our purposes, an alliance may either be a formal or informal arrangement for:**

- Sharing information
- Sharing resources
- Strengthening policy initiatives
- Increasing operational efficiency
- May be a formal arrangement, such as a joint venture
- May be a partnership
- May be a consolidation
- May be a merger with a non-profit or for-profit organization