



Code of Conduct

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1. Code of Conduct Statement of Purpose

The Springfield Municipal Opera (the “Muni”) is dedicated to and dependent on its Volunteers for success. We hold ourselves and all our Volunteers to a professional standard in the quality of our productions and experiences. These policies have been created to serve as a Code of Conduct for the Muni's Volunteers.

A few things are essential to keep in mind about this Code of Conduct. It contains only general information and guidelines regarding personal conduct. It is not intended to be comprehensive or address all the possible applications or exceptions to the general policies and procedures described. This document can't address every issue or provide answers to every situation, but the principles in this Code of Conduct define the spirit in which we intend to operate and should guide all of our Volunteers. If you have any questions concerning the applicability of a policy or practice, you should address specific questions to any member of the Board of Managers or Board of Trustees.

This document reflects the current state of an evolving interest in establishing standards for the Muni. The Muni Board of Trustees can modify these policies as necessary and without notice, and both the Board of Managers and the Board of Trustees will continually evaluate them.

This manual is intended only partially to govern the conduct of all Muni Volunteers. However, other rules and policies govern different aspects of Muni that are not contained in this manual. For example, rules govern productions and auditions that are not necessarily related to personal conduct. Additionally, show staffs will have rules and expectations for their productions.

2. Goals of the Code of Conduct

Each summer, the Muni entertains thousands of people in our community. We strive to enrich the lives of our Patrons and Volunteers by providing a welcoming, encouraging, and comfortable environment. To achieve these goals, behavioral standards must be clear, and an open communication channel must encourage individuals to address their concerns.

Arts environments require risk, courage, vulnerability, and investment in our physical, emotional, and intellectual selves. Our Volunteers and productions become compromised when creative environments are unsafe or unwelcoming. Volunteers and Parents sometimes fear that speaking out about a concern will harm a show or their reputation. Having a clear pathway to raise concerns regarding unsafe conditions and harassment helps maintain the integrity of our productions, Volunteers, Patrons, the Muni, and our community.

The overriding tenets of this document are communication, safety, respect, and accountability.

3. Definitions

The following definitions apply to the terms used in this Code of Conduct.

- *Actor*. A performer in a Muni production.
- *Background Check*. The Muni process of searching the Illinois State Police Criminal History Information Response Process (CHIRP), the FBI national sexual offender database, and the State of Illinois sexual offender database for certain Volunteers.
- *Board Member*. Any member of the Muni Board of Managers.
- *Backstage Volunteer*. This includes all set crew members, costumers, set builders, makeup artists, hair stylists, and other backstage Volunteers.
- *Board of Managers*. Has responsibility for the day-to-day oversight of the Muni.
- *Board of Trustees*. The governing body of the Muni.
- *Bullying*. Refers to repeated, unreasonable actions of individuals (or a group) directed towards a Volunteer (or a group of Volunteers), which are intended to intimidate, degrade, humiliate, or undermine or create a risk to the health or safety of the Volunteer(s).
- *Chair*. The Chair of the Board of Trustees is the principal executive officer of the Muni.
- *Detrimental Acts*. Any act or threat of violence, any action that damages Muni property, or any act that casts a disparaging light upon the reputation of the Muni or its Volunteers.
- *Executive Committee*. Consists of the Chair, the President, the President-elect, the Treasurer, and the Secretary of the Board of Managers.
- *Harassment*. Any objectively and subjectively unwelcome or objectionable physical, visual, or verbal conduct, gesture, comment, or display that is insulting, humiliating, or degrading to another person or creates an

intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment and is based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, physical ability, or sexual orientation.

- *Muni Environment.* This includes auditions, rehearsals, performances, workdays, social events, board or committee functions, social media involving or related to the Muni, and any other function related to the Muni.
- *Parent.* Many Muni Volunteers, including Actors, are minors. A parent is the legal guardian of any Volunteer under 18.
- *Patron.* Any individual who attends a production, a Muni event, or provides financial assistance to the Muni.
- *President.* The President of the Board of Managers is responsible for overseeing all Muni productions and is the principal officer of the Board of Managers.
- *Principal Staff.* The director, assistant director, producer, vocal director, and choreographer of each show.
- *Sexual harassment.* This includes any sexually oriented misconduct that is objectively and subjectively unwelcome, inappropriate, and which is personally intimidating, hostile, or offensive.
- *Social media.* Social media are forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos and artificial intelligence).
- *Trustee.* Any member of the Muni Board of Trustees.
- *Volunteer.* This term includes any performer, backstage Volunteer, Board Member, front-of-house Volunteer, concessions Volunteer, ticketing Volunteer, parking Volunteer, or any individual who dedicates their time to a Muni production or any other Muni event. For the purposes of the Code of Conduct, it also encompasses members of the orchestra for any production.

4. Harassment

The Muni is committed to keeping its environment welcoming, inclusive, and comfortable, where all Volunteers and Patrons feel welcome and safe. Discrimination, harassment, or intimidation of any person, including but not limited to Patrons or Volunteers, will not be tolerated in the Muni Environment.

While harassment is oftentimes thought of as sexual harassment, it is not so limited. It can also be based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, place of birth, physical ability, or sexual orientation.

In a broader sense, harassment includes:

- Inappropriate or insulting remarks, gestures, jokes, innuendos, or taunting about a person's gender, gender identity, sexual identity, racial or ethnic background, color, place of birth, citizenship, religion, or physical ability.
- Persistent unwanted questions or comments about a person's private life outside the Muni.
- Posting or displaying materials, articles, graffiti, and similar content that may cause humiliation, offense, or embarrassment on prohibited grounds outside the production's boundaries. This may include social media posts.

In the theatrical context, sexual harassment includes, but is not necessarily limited to:

- A series of comments or conduct of a gender-related or sexual nature outside the boundaries of the production, which is known or should reasonably be known to be unwelcome/unwanted, offensive, intimidating, hostile, or inappropriate.
- Unwelcome remarks, jokes, innuendos, or taunts about a person's body, attire, gender, or sexual orientation.
- Negative stereotyping of race, gender, gender identity, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, or physical ability.
- Any unwanted or inappropriate physical contact, such as touching, kissing, massaging, patting, hugging, or pinching, outside the boundaries of a production's content.
- Unwelcome inquiries or comments about a person's sex life or sexual preference.
- Leering, whistling, or other suggestive or insulting sounds.
- Inappropriate comments about clothing or physical characteristics.

- Posting or displaying material that is sexually oriented. This can include social media postings.
- Requests or demands for sexual favors, especially those that include or imply promises of rewards for complying.
- Intentional failure to comply with the dressing room standards.
- Improvising sexual conduct or language in a production that is not intended to be part of the production.

5. Bullying

Bullying will not be tolerated at the Muni. Examples of bullying include:

- Unwarranted or invalid criticism.
- Blame without factual justification.
- Being treated differently than other Volunteers.
- Being sworn at.
- Exclusion or social isolation.
- Being shouted at or humiliated.

6. Social Media

Social media has become an essential and integral part of marketing in the past few years. It is dynamic, fluid, and increasingly powerful in capturing community sentiment and shaping our conversations. However, with this comes a degree of ambiguity about what constitutes appropriate and proper ethical behavior when participating online in a personal or organizational capacity.

Social media is important in our marketing effort and constitutes a significant component of the Muni's marketing plan. However, social media can be equally damaging to the Muni or individuals associated with us. You are encouraged to join our Facebook group and appropriately use all types of social media to help advertise, promote, or market Muni and its productions.

When posting about Muni or its productions on social media, keep your posts positive and respectful. Do not insult a production, cast members, Patrons, Board Members, Volunteers, or Muni anywhere the general public can access. If you do engage in negative social media activity in a public forum, you will be subjected to discipline, including removal from the Muni Environment.

What you do say in private messages is your business. Understand you will be held accountable for any message demeaning the Muni, a production, Patrons, Board of Managers members, or Volunteers made public by a party you have shared such a message with.

7. Background Investigations

As part of Muni's efforts to ensure the safety of its Volunteers and Patrons, background checks will be performed on specific individuals.

The following individuals shall be subjected to this background check policy:

- All individuals over 18 who audition for any role at the Muni.
- All individuals over 18 who have access to the Muni site's backstage area, including Actors, staff, and Backstage Volunteers.
- All members of the Board of Managers and Board of Trustees shall be subjected to an annual background check.
- Any Volunteer for whom there is a reasonable suspicion that they might be precluded under this policy from engaging in any Muni-related activities.

All auditionees over 18 must complete a consent form authorizing Muni to conduct a background check at the time of their audition. The producer of each show is responsible for obtaining consent forms for all staff members, other Backstage Volunteers, and orchestra members.

The information obtained during a background check will remain confidential and only be disseminated on a need-to-know basis.

Any Volunteer who is either identified on a sexual offender list or has been convicted of a violent felony in the last five years will not be permitted to Volunteer in any capacity.

Any individual convicted of a violent felony more than five years in the past, who has been convicted of any misdemeanor involving violence or the threat of violence, or who has been convicted of any misdemeanor that involves truthfulness or moral turpitude shall be referred to the Executive Committee for a decision on how to proceed.

The Executive Committee will oversee and enforce this policy.

8. Dressing Rooms

Our performers are entitled to their privacy. However, this becomes challenging, given the frequent costume changes and the size of some of our shows. Non-Actors (except the stage manager and wardrobe staff) are not allowed in the dressing room between 30 minutes before the performance begins and 30 minutes after the performance ends. If this is not possible, communication between the dressing room inhabitants and those who need to pass through is encouraged to establish the least intrusive way to share the space.

Recording and photography is not permitted in the dressing rooms.

9. Detrimental Acts

All Volunteers are prohibited from engaging in Detrimental Acts as outlined above, and any alleged violations will go through the complaint and resolution process.

10. Complaint and Resolution Process

The Muni strives to provide all of our Volunteers and Patrons with:

- A welcoming environment free from harassment, bullying, and other violations of this Code of Conduct.
- An opportunity to file a complaint when any Volunteer or Parent feels that a violation has occurred and to do so without fear of retaliation.
- An opportunity to be informed of any complaints brought against them.
- An opportunity for an unbiased investigation and a fair determination of the facts.
- A fair appeal process.
- Confidentiality to the degree possible under the circumstances.

10.1. Path to Resolution

We recognize that many concerns can be resolved through informal conversation among the parties involved. Whenever possible, individuals are encouraged to discuss challenges and concerns with one another. Sharing and hearing concerns openly and respectfully can prevent situations from escalating further.

While informal dialogue is encouraged, we recognize there are situations in which it is uncomfortable or insufficient. Any Volunteer or Parent who feels that this Code of Conduct has been violated has the right to and is encouraged to pursue a complaint and participate in the resolution process without concern or fear of embarrassment or retaliation.

The resolution process has two separate tracks: the informal and formal. Based upon the allegations and facts, an informal investigation may be elevated to a formal investigation.

10.2. Informal Investigation

Many complaints can be resolved informally with the help of a staff member or a member of the Muni Board of Managers. This often happens when a Volunteer or Parent feels uneasy about discussing an issue directly. It may also occur when a Volunteer or Parent believes that informal dialogue can effectively resolve a dispute.

Any Volunteer or Parent wishing to make an informal complaint should contact any Board Member, Trustee, or Principal Staff member to discuss the complaint. This communication can be in writing or verbal. The person receiving the complaint will promptly inform the President. The President will then decide whether the issue can be resolved informally or must be treated as a formal complaint. If the President finds the issue can be resolved informally, they will determine the best course of action. The President may appoint an independent Board Member to handle the matter. An informal complaint is regarded as resolved when the complainant is satisfied with the outcome. If a complainant is unsatisfied with the resolution within seven days of filing the informal complaint, it will be treated as a formal complaint.

10.3. Formal Investigation

There are situations that require a more formal investigation and process. Any Volunteer or Parent who reasonably feels this Code of Conduct has been violated can file a formal complaint. An individual need not be personally aggrieved to file a complaint; any Volunteer or Parent who knows of a violation can do so.

A formal complaint will ultimately be in writing. Any Volunteer or Parent who wishes to make a formal complaint should contact any Board Member, Trustee, or Principal Staff member to detail the complaint. The complainant will then be provided with a complaint form to complete. Once the formal complaint is finalized, it will be sent directly to the President and Chair. The President and Chair shall appoint two impartial investigators, at least one of whom must be an impartial member of the Board of Managers, to conduct an investigation.

A formal investigation will, at a minimum, include separate interviews of the complainant and the individual who has allegedly violated the Code of Conduct. Other individuals and information may be reviewed depending on the circumstances. A written report of a formal investigation shall be submitted to the President and Chair within five days. Based on the preponderance of the evidence, the report shall conclude whether a basis for the complaint has been founded. The President and Chair will then share the report with the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee shall then have 48 hours from receiving the report to decide on a resolution. Once the report has been received, the Executive Committee may review other information or discuss the matter with others to determine the proper action to take. Once the resolution is determined, the President shall provide the report and the determination of how it will be resolved to any complainant, the purported violator, and the Board of Trustees. The Executive Committee has the authority to take necessary disciplinary actions provided those consequences do not last longer than the current season.

If the conduct is egregious enough to warrant the barring of an individual from the Muni past the current season, that discipline can only be imposed by the Board of Trustees.

10.4. Appeal

If a party is not satisfied with the outcome of the formal investigation, they may appeal the Executive Committee's determination to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees shall make a final determination within seven days of receiving an appeal.

10.5. Confidentiality

Investigations are sensitive and not taken lightly. For this reason, investigations and their conclusions are confidential to the extent possible. When a complaint is made, it should be made confidentially to protect the integrity of the process, ensure witnesses are cooperative and provide truthful information, and ensure there is no fear of retaliation.

The Muni will not publicly share the results of any investigation.

10.6. Intermediate actions

Sometimes, a complaint is so serious that the individuals involved must be immediately separated. During an ongoing investigation, the Executive Committee

can remove individuals from Muni activities. This determination may not be appealed.