

Livingston County Michigan Human Resources Policy Manual

Section:	Employment
Subject:	Anti-Nepotism & Anti-Fraternization

A. POLICY

1. PURPOSE:

Livingston County is committed to the highest standard of professional conduct and expects all employees to adhere to them. Livingston County employees must take care to ensure that relationships within the community do not create conflicts of interests and situations that might impair objective judgment. The purpose of this anti-nepotism policy is to promote a positive work environment.

2. POLICY STATEMENT:

It is Livingston County's policy to hire, promote and transfer employees on the basis of individual merit and to avoid any suggestion of favoritism or discrimination in making such decisions. The employment of relatives in positions where one might have influence over the other's status or job security is regarded as a potential violation of this policy. Even if favoritism or discrimination is not shown, the existence of the situation within ones' sphere of influence, may precipitate questions to answer or may cause some discomfort for the individuals involved.

It is therefore, our policy to prohibit the hiring of relatives in situations where a relative would be under the direct or general supervision of an elected official, department head, supervisor or team leader, or to employ relatives where the status of employment of that person might be influenced by an elected official, department head, supervisor or team leader.

By adhering to the above policy which prohibits relatives from working in positions where they might have influence over each other's status, or the hiring of those relatives, a potentially discriminatory situation is avoided altogether. Livingston County realizes that there may be existing relationships among employees which are contrary to this policy. It is the purpose of this policy statement to avoid creating any new situations where relatives are employed in spheres of influence relationships, and not to affect the employment of any relationships that currently exist.

3. APPLICABILITY:

All employees, elected officials, independent contractors, volunteers and student interns.

4. DEFINITIONS:

Relative - Parent, foster parent, spouse, child, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle, cousin, in-law or step relative, or any person with whom the employee has a close personal relationship.

Personal relationship – relationship between individuals who have or have had a continuing relationship of a romantic or intimate nature.

Spheres of influence – scope in which an employee exerts direct or indirect control over another.

Economic relationship – fiduciary relationship in which one employee benefits by receiving financial remuneration such as landlord/tenant relationships or business partnerships.

Fraternization – relationship of an intimate or romantic nature between a supervisor and his/her subordinates or conduct that creates the appearance of impression that such a relationship exists.

5. REFERENCE AND LEGAL AUTHORITY:

6. SEE ALSO:
7. SUPERSEDES:
none
8. APPROVED BY:
Personnel Committee: Approved: October 4, 2006
Board of Commissioners: Approved October 16, 2006
9. RESOLUTION: No. 2006-10-336
10. REVIEW HISTORY:

B. PROCEDURE:

Livingston County permits members of the same family to work at the county. However, the county will not authorize an appointment where employment would result in a supervisor/subordinate relationship between relatives or in a possible conflict of interest.

Specific to the supervisory relationship, the following guidelines will govern these situations:

- a. No employee will be permitted to participate in the hiring of, recommend the hiring of or hire a relative.
- b. One relative may not supervise another relative or work in a position which has an audit or control function over the other relative.
- c. Related persons will not be involved in evaluating each other's job performance or in making recommendations for salary adjustments, promotions or other decisions.
- d. Additionally, the same restrictions are placed on supervisors who have an economic relationship with applicants or other employees requesting transfer or promotion.
- e. Any pre-existing family relationships that predate this policy shall be exempt under this policy. However, if the existing employment relationship is changed so that this conflict no longer exists, i.e., the relative is in a position that no longer directly reports to the relative supervisor; this policy will apply for future employment decisions, i.e. the relative's supervisor then could no longer reemploy the relative in a directly subordinate position.

Pre-Existing relationships are subject to restriction if conflicts of interest are found.

An employee who is involved in a personal relationship with another employee may not work directly for, or supervise the employee with whom he or she is involved.

If a personal relationship exists, it is the responsibility and obligation of the employees involved to disclose the existence of the relationship to the elected official, department head, supervisor or team leader. If a conflict or a potential for conflict arises because of a relationship affecting employment, the individuals concerned will be given the opportunity to decide who is to be transferred to another position or terminated if no position is available.

Livingston County reserves the right to take prompt action if an actual or potential conflict of interest arises concerning individuals who occupy positions at any level (higher or lower) in the same line of authority that may affect employment decisions. Supervisors are prohibited from dating subordinates or any type of fraternization and may be disciplined for such action, up to and including termination.

Any employee who feels aggrieved by the provisions of this policy shall have the right of appeal to the Personnel Committee. The Personnel Committee's decision will be final.