



## **COMMUNICATIONS POLICY STATEMENT**

### **PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines to keep all communications between Discover Lancaster and its stakeholders 1) appropriate, 2) recognizable, 3) consistent and 4) professional and to assure appropriate access to the Board by Partners.

### **TIMELINESS**

Communications should provide partners with timely, accurate, clear, objective and complete information about Discover Lancaster policies, programs, services and initiatives. The Board has a duty to explain its policies and decisions and to inform partners of its priorities. Communications therefore should be complete, clear and swiftly follow any changes or major initiatives.

Programs should plan for communication from the beginning. Discover Lancaster programs should address communication needs in the development stage of policies and programs. Policies and programs should never surprise partners or happen by accident. Discover Lancaster should proudly promote each and every service and program it provides. Programs about which partners have not been educated are bound to fail.

### **AUTHORIZATION**

Collective communications must be authorized. No communication that claims to represent the policies or positions of either the Board or Discover Lancaster as a whole shall be made public until and unless it is approved by the Board. All official communications shall be distributed to the organization's various publics by Discover Lancaster staff.

Individual officials of Discover Lancaster are encouraged to communicate directly with partners. Openness in governance helps members fairly judge our performance and helps enable partner participation. Officials serve the organization best by communicating openly and frequently about programs they administer while treating sensitive information with the discretion it requires.

Board members have a right to have their dissent in votes explicitly recorded in the minutes. However, current Board members and other elected or appointed officials of the organization may not attempt to undermine the actions or intent of Discover Lancaster or the Board in the public expression of these rights. As indicated in the Board of Directors Code of Conduct Policy, members of the Board have an absolute duty of undivided loyalty to Discover Lancaster. This duty prevents questioning or publicly opposing any and all Board decisions and requires public silence as a Board member on any and all Board decisions with which any Board member may not agree. This duty supersedes any conflicting loyalty such as that to advocacy or interest groups and membership on other boards or staffs. All officials of Discover Lancaster have the right of resignation if they cannot support the activities or decisions of the Board and are freed of the duty of obedience, but not the requirements of confidentiality, upon their resignation.

Under no circumstances should staff express public dissent with a decision of the Board or President.

Unauthorized communication between individual Board members or other elected/appointed officials of Discover Lancaster and the media is expressly forbidden. Coaching and planning is often required before engaging with the general public or the media. Therefore, officials of the organization must not engage the public or the media about Discover Lancaster issues unless authorized by the President.

The President or other designated spokesperson are authorized to engage with the general public and partners on Discover Lancaster issues, but must at all times communicate to the public in line with the established wishes and policy expressions of the Board.

With the exception of announcing/promoting new and/or Priority 1 & 2 groups coming to Lancaster, Discover Lancaster will not – without Executive Committee authorization – distribute any press releases on behalf of another organization or in a manner that may be perceived as endorsement.

### **TRANSPARENCY**

Discover Lancaster defaults to transparency. Transparency is essential to good governance. Therefore, by default, any action or policy of Discover Lancaster is public at the moment it is authorized by the Board and repeatable by anyone to any partner of Discover Lancaster. If the Board requires actions at meetings or other information to be private and confidential, it must specify that when the action is taken. All action taken in executive session is private.

Communications should be openly two-way. Discover Lancaster does not engage solely in top-down communication with its partners or the general public. All public communications should include clear mention of a method the recipient can use to contact the appropriate staff person for more information or discussion.

The Board should never be, or seem, inaccessible to partners. Discover Lancaster should frequently call attention to Board/partner communication. Such attention will help demonstrate to non-communicative partners that the Board is open and responsive. To encourage that, inquiries sent to Discover Lancaster official channels should be responded to promptly and, where possible, completely.

Multiple communications channels (e-blast, personalized e-mail, mail) will be employed to ensure that key information is effectively communicated to the target audience.

### **STYLE**

Communications should be clear and engaging. Communications must use plain language, be clearly formatted and expressed, and be accessible to all our partners.

Official communications should be consistent. Any periodic communication, such as the e-newsletter to partners or any other type of regular communiqué, should stay consistent in format and structure with infrequent redesigns or alterations.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:**

I agree to abide by this policy.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date