

Purpose

The YMCA is committed to maintaining a safe, transparent, and professional environment for all consumers, participants, members, employees, and volunteers. Boundaries regarding gifts are an important part of protecting children and vulnerable individuals from grooming behaviors, favoritism, conflicts of interest, and inappropriate relationships. This policy establishes clear expectations regarding the giving and receiving of gifts to help ensure interactions remain safe, appropriate, and centered on the YMCA's mission and values.

Gifts to Consumers

The YMCA strongly discourages employees and volunteers from exchanging gifts with consumers. Individuals who seek to harm children or vulnerable individuals may use gifts to build inappropriate relationships, create secrecy, or gain trust. To protect consumers and maintain professional boundaries, the following standards apply:

- Gift requests must be submitted to and approved by a supervisor prior to purchase or distribution.
- The supervisor will determine an appropriate cost limit for the gift.
- Parents or guardians must be informed of the gift item and the reason the consumer is receiving the gift.
- Employees and volunteers are prohibited from giving gifts to individual consumers unless specifically authorized as part of an approved YMCA program, recognition, or special event.
- Approved gifts must be distributed equitably to all consumers within a group, team, or program whenever possible (e.g., holiday celebrations, program incentives, or group recognition).
- Employees and volunteers must clearly communicate that any approved gift is provided on behalf of the YMCA, not from the individual employee or volunteer personally.
- Employees and volunteers may not encourage consumers to keep gifts secret from parents, guardians, staff, or other trusted adults.

Gifts from Consumers or Families

The YMCA recognizes that consumers and families may wish to express appreciation to employees or volunteers. In many cultures, gift-giving is a meaningful way to show gratitude. To remain respectful while maintaining professional boundaries, the following guidelines apply:

- Employees and volunteers may accept small tokens of appreciation with a monetary or in-kind value not exceeding \$10.00.
- All gifts accepted from consumers or their families must be disclosed to the employee's immediate supervisor.
- Under no circumstances may employees or volunteers accept cash, or personal payments from consumers or their families.
- Employees and volunteers must politely decline gifts that exceed the allowable value and refer to this policy if necessary.

- Employees and volunteers may encourage parents, guardians, or consumers to make a donation directly to the YMCA.

Artwork and Letters from Consumers

- Artwork, thank-you notes, and letters of appreciation created by consumers may be accepted when appropriate; however:
- Such items must remain displayed or stored within the YMCA in a public or shared workspace.
- Employees and volunteers may not remove consumer-created artwork, notes, or letters from YMCA property for personal use or keep them at their homes or other private locations.

Exceptions to the Gift Policy

The YMCA recognizes that, on rare occasions, members, donors, community partners, or staff groups may wish to acknowledge employees during significant life events or special occasions.

This may include one-time expressions of appreciation such as weddings, retirements, bereavement, birth or adoption of a child, serious illness or recovery, or an occasional holiday or staff appreciation gift.

Exceptions to the nominal gift limit may be approved in advance by appropriate YMCA leadership when the gift is reasonable, one-time in nature, and does not create an actual or perceived conflict of interest, favoritism, or undue influence. Under no circumstances may employees or volunteers accept:

- Cash or cash equivalents
- Repeated or ongoing gifts from the same individual or family
- Gifts tied to special treatment, access, scheduling, or services
- Gifts that could reasonably be perceived as influencing YMCA decisions or relationships.

The YMCA may not hold, manage, or distribute personal funds intended for gifts.

An exception may only be approved if all of the following criteria are met:

- The gift is associated with a significant life event, staff appreciation occasion, or one-time holiday recognition;
- The member, donor, or family is not in a position to influence employment decisions, scheduling, compensation, or discipline;
- The gift is one-time and not recurring;
- The gift is reasonable in value and appropriate to the circumstance; and
- The gift is reviewed and approved in advance by the CEO or Associate Executive Director (AED).

Failure to comply with this policy may result in corrective action, up to and including termination of employment or volunteer service.