

MUNICIPAL WEBSITE ADVERTISING POLICY

TOWN OF COLUMBUS, WISCONSIN

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for limited advertising on the Municipality's official website to offset operational costs while preserving public trust, neutrality, and compliance with applicable law, including Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 19.

2. Definitions

- **Municipality Website:** Any official website operated by the Municipality.
 - **Advertisement:** Any paid or sponsored message, graphic, or link displayed on the website.
 - **Advertiser:** Any individual, business, or organization purchasing ad space.
 - **Sponsorship:** A limited acknowledgment of financial support that does not promote specific products or services.
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3. Forum Classification

The Municipality website is designated as a **non-public forum**.

The Municipality reserves the right to restrict advertising in a reasonable and viewpoint-neutral manner consistent with applicable law and the free speech protections outlined in Wisconsin Constitution Article I Section 3.

4. Permitted Advertising

The Municipality may accept advertisements from:

- Local businesses and service providers
- Nonprofit organizations
- Community events and cultural activities
- Public service campaigns

All advertisements must be consistent with the Municipality's mission and community standards.

5. Prohibited Advertising

The following content is strictly prohibited:

- Political campaign advertisements or electioneering
- Advocacy for or against ballot measures
- Adult or sexually explicit material
- False, misleading, or deceptive claims
- Tobacco, vaping, or illegal substances
- Content that promotes discrimination or violates civil rights laws
- Ads that could reasonably be interpreted as official government notices

The Municipality reserves the right to reject any advertisement that is inconsistent with public interest or could undermine public confidence.

6. No Endorsement

The Municipality does not endorse any advertiser or product.

All advertisements must include or be accompanied by the following disclaimer:

“The Municipality does not endorse or guarantee the products, services, or information advertised on this website.”

7. Ad Placement and Design

- All advertisements must be clearly labeled as “Advertisement” or “Sponsored.”
- Ads must be visually distinguishable from official content.
- Ads shall not:
 - Interrupt access to essential services
 - Mimic emergency alerts or government notices

- Interfere with accessibility standards (e.g., ADA compliance)

The Municipality reserves full control over ad placement, format, and duration.

8. Privacy and Data Collection

To protect residents:

- The Municipality prohibits advertising practices that rely on invasive behavioral tracking.
 - Advertisers and vendors must comply with applicable privacy laws, including Children's Online Privacy Protection Act where applicable.
 - No personally identifiable information collected through the municipal website may be sold or shared for advertising purposes.
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9. Vendor and Procurement Requirements

- All advertising agreements must comply with applicable municipal procurement policies.
 - Contracts with advertising vendors must be approved by authorized municipal officials.
 - Revenue arrangements must be transparent and auditable.
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10. Review and Approval Process

- All advertisements are subject to prior review and approval by the Municipality or its designee.
 - Decisions will be made based on objective, content-neutral criteria outlined in this policy.
 - Advertisers may appeal a denial in writing within a specified timeframe (e.g., 10 business days).
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11. Fees and Revenue Use

- Advertising rates shall be established by the Municipality.
 - Revenue generated shall be used to support website operations, digital services, or other public purposes.
 - The Municipality may publish periodic reports on advertising revenue.
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12. Termination and Removal

The Municipality may remove any advertisement at any time if:

- It violates this policy
- It becomes inconsistent with community standards
- Required by law or public interest

No guarantee is made regarding ad duration.

13. Indemnification

Advertisers agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Municipality from any claims arising from the content of their advertisements.

14. Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed periodically and may be amended by the Municipality to ensure continued compliance with legal standards and community expectations.

15. Effective Date

This policy shall take effect upon approval by the governing body of the Municipality.

15. Wisconsin Public Records

All advertising agreements, communications, and related records may be subject to disclosure under Wisconsin Public Records Law.