Shelby County Government
Social Media Policy

Statement of Purpose: Shelby County, Illinois recognizes that social media services such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blogs, and others have become increasingly common forms of communication among residents, media outlets, government agencies, businesses, and others. Using these channels, the county can inform the public about initiatives, provide news releases and to share information that supports the goals of the County. Social media also provides a two-way means by which to interact with residents, visitors, media, local businesses, and people who live within Shelby County. This policy establishes guidelines for employees, volunteers, elected/appointed officials who communicate via official County social media channels.

Social Media: Social media is the collection of online communication channels dedicated to community-based input, information sharing, interaction, collaboration, and content-sharing. Content may vary in nature: photo sharing networks, video sharing networks, blogs, and microblogs. These include but are not limited to platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Linkden, YouTube, TikTok, and Pinterest. It is acknowledged that the platforms for social media change rapidly and some presentations of social media may be relatively transient. Email, SMS/MMS messages are not considered social media as defined here.

Applicability and Scope: This policy is applicable to all employees of Shelby County, volunteers, elected/appointed officials, vendors, and anyone working on behalf of Shelby County who creates or contribute materials to Shelby County's official social media sites on behalf of Shelby County.

County social media sites are not to be used for campaigning; however, they may provide objective information about election procedures, ballot instructions, polling locations, and campaign laws.

County officials shall be mindful of the risk of electronic communications in relation to the Illinois Open Meetings Act and avoid communications that would violate this standard.

Procedure for Account Creation and Registration: Any official Shelby County social media site will be created using the creator's Shelby County email address. No accounts will be created using personal email accounts. A social media site account request will be made in writing to the County Board Chairman for approval by the full Shelby County Board. Any account not created in this manner will not be considered an official Shelby County social media site.

All login credentials for official Shelby County sites will be submitted to Shelby County Information Technologies (IT) and updated regularly as the account requires updating.

Design and Content: Official accounts will be used for official business only, to provide helpful information, updates, facts, and alters to the users of that site. Content should be authoritative, accurate, and transparent. Official accounts will not be used for endorsement of ballot issues, candidates, or unverified information.

Accounts should be created with as consistent a look/feel as possible with existing Shelby County accounts (ex: use of consistent handle). Logos may be obtained from information technologies and should be used rather than other images in identifying an official county site. All sites should contain a link to the official County website if possible.

Posts should be courteous and abide by the General Rules of Conduct in the Shelby County Code. Comments should not:

- Discriminate based on creed, color, age, religion, sex marital status, sexual orientation, party affiliation, national origin, weight, height, gender identification or genetic information.
- Be sexual in nature.
- Use defamatory, threatening, or profane language.
- Support or oppose political candidates or ballot measures.
- Promote illegal activity.
- Solicit commerce.
- Include personally identifiable information such as an address, phone number, social security number,

protected health information or other sensitive information.

- Provide information that might interfere with or compromise a current investigation, police tactics, or jeopardize the safety or security of the public.
- Violate another's copyright, trademark, or other protected property.

Comment Policy: Visitors to official Shelby County sites are requested to observe the same guidelines described above. The County's social media sites are limited public forums. The county does not make its social media sites available for public discourse, but rather reserves and limits the topics that may be discussed on the social media site. Topics may be structured narrowly to focus discussions on items of particular interest to the County rather than to provide a public forum. Shelby County Information Technologies may remove or restrict content that is deemed to be in violation of these guidelines. In each case a record of the material to be deleted will be made and retained by Information Technologies (IT).

Blocking of users on the County's social media sites should only be a last result in egregious cases involving abuse or hate speech, and only after a review by legal staff.

Correction Policy: It is understood that occasionally mistakes are made when posting. In the case of an error, the submitter should acknowledge the error. Deleting the post is acceptable if it is likely to cause confusion. In each case a record of the

material to be deleted will be made and retained by Information Technologies (IT).

Account Monitoring and Procedures: Shelby County accounts/sites are NOT monitored 24/7. As such, posts, responses, and notifications should not be immediately expected.

As these accounts are NOT monitored 24/7, users are advised NOT to use the County's social media accounts to report a crime or emergency. Crime reports and requests for police, fire, or emergency medical assistance should be made by dialing 911.

County Resources and Social Media: It is appropriate to interact with official Shelby County sites as a contributor or creator only when an employee's use has been approved by their Department Head or designee and is directly related to accomplishing work goals. County hardware, software and social media subscriptions are intended solely for County related work.

Personal Social Media: Person social media accounts should not be created using Shelby County email addresses.

Users may list their county positions in their personal social media accounts but are not authorized to speak or comment on behalf of the County.

The County branding/logo should not be used with personal social media accounts.

It is recommended that users keep privacy and security in mind when engaging in personal social media use. Even with good security measures, comments made may be forwarded to others and accessible for others to view for an extended time.

Archiving of Sites: Information Technologies (IT) shall implement as feasible systems by which to archive posts made on County social media sites.

Hard copy or imaged copies of posts that have been deleted or modified will be forwarded to Information Technologies (IT) for retention.

Violations: Employees found to have violated this policy may be subject to prosecution under federal, state, or local laws.