JO DAVIESS COUNTY, ILLINOIS
WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION POLICY

PURPOSE: This policy is intended to encourage, enable, and protect Jo Daviess County employees who report good faith concerns about suspected wrongful conduct. More specifically, it:

- Encourages employees to disclose suspected wrongful conduct so that prompt, corrective action can be taken;
- Informs employees how to disclose allegations of wrongful conduct;
- Protects employees from retaliation as a result of having disclosed alleged wrongful conduct; and
- Provides employees who believe they have been subject to reprisal, a process for obtaining relief.

This policy does **not** protect employees who make unsubstantiated, malicious, or false allegations of wrongful conduct nor does it interfere with standard employment decisions.

DEFINITIONS:

**Whistleblower:** a whistleblower, as defined by this policy, is an employee of Jo Daviess County who reports an activity that he/she considers to be illegal or dishonest.

**Retaliation:** adverse actions, threats, and/or discrimination against an individual because he/she made a protected disclosure or participated in an investigation related to a protected disclosure.

**Wrongful Conduct:** actual or suspected violation of Jo Daviess County policy, applicable state or federal law, or use of Jo Daviess County property or resources for personal gains.

**SCOPE:** Elected officials and their employees shall abide by this policy, unless the elected official has indicated in writing their intent to do otherwise. In addition, for employees hired by elected office holders, they may be subject to other, further, or different provisions in keeping with the right of the elected officials to control their internal operations of his/her office. In all other cases, the policy shall govern.

**POLICY:** Jo Daviess County requires employees to observe the highest standards of business and personal ethics in conducting their duties on behalf of Jo Daviess County. Compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules and regulations is required. All employees are expected to fulfill their duties honestly and with integrity.

An employee who has reasonable grounds to suspect a violation of law or Jo Daviess County policy is expected to act in good faith and disclose that information. The following list provides examples of the types of alleged improprieties that should be reported as suspected wrongful conduct. This list is intended to be representative, not complete:

- Fraud, dishonesty, or deception regarding accounting, financial controls, financial reporting, audit, and other financial matters.
- Discrimination or harassment in violation of federal, state, or county law or Jo Daviess County policy.

Approved 11.13.18
Any employee who intentionally files a false report of wrongdoing will be subject to disciplinary action.

Whistleblower protections are provided in two important areas: confidentiality and no retaliatory actions:

- **Confidentiality**
  - All reports of wrongful conduct must be in writing and the complainant must identify themselves to the Compliance Officer. The identity of the complainant as well as the reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, with the understanding that confidentiality may not be maintained where identification is required by law or in order to enable Jo Daviess County or law enforcement to conduct an adequate investigation.

- **Retaliatory Actions**
  - An employee shall not be retaliated against by the employer or employees of officers of the employer due to the employee’s:
    - Disclosure or threatened disclosure of any violation of this policy;
    - The provision of information related to or testimony before any public, body conducting an investigation, hearing or inquiry into any violation of this policy, or;
    - Assistance or participation in a proceeding to enforce the provisions of this policy.
  - No individual making a report will be retaliated against even if a report made in good faith is not substantiated.
  - The employer will take reasonable steps to protect from retaliation any employee or officer who is a witness.
  - Supervisors must ensure that no retaliation will result against an employee making a complaint.
  - Similar to the prohibition against retaliation contained herein, the **State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (5 ILCS 430/15-10)** provides whistleblower protection from retaliatory action such as reprimand, discharge, suspension, demotion, or denial of promotion or transfer that occurs in retaliation for an employee who does any of the following:
    - Discloses or threatens to disclose to a supervisor or to a public body an activity, policy, or practice of any officer, member, state agency, or other state employee that the state employee reasonably believes is in violation of law, rule, or regulation;
Provides information to or testifies before any public body conducting an investigation, hearing, or inquiry into any violation of a law, rule, or regulation by any officer, member, state agency, or other state employee, or;  
Assists or participates in a proceeding to enforce the provisions of the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act.

RESPONSIBILITIES: Employees are encouraged and expected to report suspected violations of federal, state or local law, rules or regulations or suspected ethical violations.

PROCEDURES: Jo Daviess County has an open door policy and expects and encourages employees to address questions, concerns, and complaints with the Compliance Officer or Office of the Inspector General hotline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compliance Officer</th>
<th>Office of the Inspector General</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Hay</td>
<td>888-814-4646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>330 North Bench Street</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galena, IL 61036</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>815-777-0109</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: 815-777-3203</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:jhay@jodaviess.org">jhay@jodaviess.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All complaints/reports of wrongful conduct or violations must be in writing and the complainant must identify themselves to the Compliance Officer.

The Compliance Officer shall promptly investigate each such report and prepare a written report of such investigation; all persons entitled to protection shall provide the Compliance Officer with credible information. All actions of the Compliance Officer in receiving and investigating the report, and additional information, shall endeavor to protect the confidentiality of all persons entitled to protection. The Compliance Officer shall keep detailed records of all reports submitted.

All reported questions, concerns, or complaints involving accounting or auditing practices shall be made to the Compliance Officer who will immediately inform the Jo Daviess County Finance Committee. The Jo Daviess County Finance Committee shall investigate all complaints involving accounting and auditing matters.