

CODE OF ETHICS

Core Values:

This agency has established a Code of Ethics to guide the actions of board members, staff, volunteers, and contract agents that support the services provided to individuals served and their families. The Code of Ethics reflects agency vision, mission and values. These standards of conduct have been adopted and set forth to clearly demonstrate commitment of quality of service, ethical business practices, legal compliance, recognition for conflict of interest, protection of assets and financial practices, and professional responsibilities.

Each new employee, volunteer contract agent or board member will be required to review and sign the Code of Ethics, indicating understanding and acknowledgement of them. These standards of conduct can not and do not cover every situation you may encounter, however they should be used as a guide in the expectations of the agency for you in the workplace. Many of the principles discussed in the Code of Ethics relate to established agency policy and procedure and these guidelines are not intended to minimize the importance of them.

The core values that serve as roots for our Codes of Ethics are:

- ❖ **Respect for Each Other**
Staff/Volunteers or contract agents and board members will exercise respect and thoughtful consideration of the needs of others – staff, board members, persons receiving services and their families.
- ❖ **Conciliation**
Staff/Volunteers or contract agents and board members will act in a spirit of compromise and agreement. Each individual will hear and respect the other person's point of view and be open to constructive discussion.
- ❖ **Honesty**
All Staff/Volunteers or contract agents and board members will deal honestly with other staff, board members, customers, and those receiving services and their families. The value of honesty cannot be compromised. We must be honest without being harmful.
- ❖ **Trust**
Each of us will be non-judgmental on issues that do not pertain to us. We will be supportive in time of need.

Code of Ethics:

I. Quality of Service

The agency believes in providing quality of care at the highest level as well as delivering services that are responsible, appropriate and cost effective. All employees, volunteers, contract agents and board members have a duty to report any actual or perceived quality of care issues to a member of the Administrative Management Office.

1. Our agency believes in a philosophy of care that promotes dignity, empowerment, independence and inclusion into communities. We will be diligent in our effort to provide and promote advocacy efforts and citizenship opportunities for persons served and their families.
2. We believe that each individual is unique and diverse. Being sensitive to a person's diverse cultural background is important to excellent quality service and a strong, knowledgeable team to provide that service.

3. We believe that each person or their representative has the right of choice and we strive to promote this belief so each person has increased ability for success.
4. We believe and promote the right to privacy and confidentiality by our actions and workplace practices.
5. We strive to be compassionate, creative and flexible in our actions and workplace practices.
6. We believe that education is the key factor in providing the best care possible and engage in professional development activities through available training and classes.
7. We believe that quality service is demonstrated to others by what we say and do and that we should act as role models for everyone we come in contact with.

II. Legal Compliance

This agency will operate in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations and professional standards to maintain the integrity of the organization. It is the responsibility of all employees, volunteers, contract agents or board of directors to report any perceived violation of applicable laws, regulations or other professional standards to the Administrative Management Office or Chief Human Resource Officer. All employees, volunteers, contract agents or board members will not solicit, or receive, offer to give or give, anything of value, whether in the form of cash, loans, goods or services, to any actual or potential referral source for the referral of persons served or services. Kickbacks, bribes, rebates or any kind of benefits that are intended to induce referrals or contracts are strictly prohibited.

This agency and all employees, volunteers, contract agents or board members will refrain from any conduct that will violate the federal and/or State False Claims Act. Submission of false, fraudulent or misleading claims for payment, the knowing use of a false record or statement to obtain payment on false or fraudulent claims paid by the United States government, or the conspiracy to defraud the United States government by getting a false or fraudulent claim allowed or paid is not permissible. If the claims submitted are knowingly false or fraudulent then the False Claims Act has been violated.

1. In our service delivery we will maintain complete and accurate records.
2. We will keep all information of persons served confidential and secure.
3. We will provide services in a manner that does not discriminate based on individual's gender, age, disability, diagnosis, race, color, religion, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation or any other legally protected status.
4. We engage in the hiring of persons with proper credentials, experience and expertise that benefits the persons of whom we provide services to.
5. We will adhere to all rules and regulations as stipulated in our contractual relationships with other persons or entities, including funding source and State contractual relationships. And when the agency seeks to enter into a contractual relationship with another person or entity, it will abide by all the guidelines within the law including checks for any persons or entities that may be excluded to participate in a Medicaid or Medicare funded program.
6. We strictly prohibit the submission of any claim for payment or reimbursement to any party that is false, fraudulent, knowingly inaccurate or fictitious. Any form of abuse in the reimbursement process for services provided or other wrongdoing is not allowed.

7. We will submit for payment or reimbursement claims only for services actually rendered and appropriately documented in a persons served records, using appropriate billing codes and service types.
8. We will take steps to protect and follow guidelines as described in the Standard Operating Procedures for transmission and collection of confidential information.
9. We will ensure that agency computers and other technology are equipped to provide a secure password protected system and prohibit the transmission of confidential information.
10. We will not participate in any activity that violates federal and State Laws regarding waste, fraud and abuse, or will we allow any such activity to be carried out by other persons, and will report all activity in good faith to the required authorities.
11. Agency policy supports a no-reprisal approach for the reporting of activity that violates federal and State laws as well as any allegations or violations agency policies and procedures.

III. Marketing

This agency will not use information of persons served to solicit for the purposes of fundraising, marketing new programs or make awareness of new programs without prior expressed authorization from persons served or their guardian. All employees, volunteers, contract agents and board members have a duty to report any actual or perceived marketing breach to a member of the Administrative Management Office or Chief Human Resource Officer.

1. This agency will not use a persons served likeness, statements of satisfaction, quotes or other confidential characteristics without prior expressed authorization.
2. This agency will not release or share information to outside persons or third parties without a persons served prior expressed authorization.
3. Agency employees will not use their position or program sites as an avenue to solicit fundraising for their own personal gain. Any fundraising activity will only be allowed if it is to benefit the program, agency or services for persons served.

IV. Conflict of Interest

All employees, volunteers, contract agents and board members will take all reasonable steps of precaution to avoid conflicts, or the appearance of conflicts, between their private interests and their official responsibilities and performance of their duties. All employees, volunteers, contract agents and board members have a duty to report any actual or perceived conflict of interest to a member of the Administrative Management Office or Chief Human Resource Officer.

1. We will avoid all situations that may create an actual conflict, or the appearance of a conflict of interest.
2. We will not allow the use of position or confidential information for personal gain.
3. Every employee, volunteer or contract agent shall disclose any outside employment to their supervisor regardless of any real or perceived conflict of interest. If any outside employment causes performance issues in regards to their position with this agency, corrective action may be taken in the best interests of persons served.

4. Employees of this agency may not serve as a trustee, or director of, or have financial interest in or any business relationship with, another organization that might result in any conflict with the purposes, aims, or goals of this agency unless approved, in advance by the Administrative Management Office.
5. We do not allow the acceptance of money, personal gifts, favors, loans, uncompensated services or other types of gratuities or hospitality from organizations doing business with this agency, competitors of this agency, persons served, families or referral sources.
6. Agency staff will not serve as a witness of legal documents (power of attorney, guardianship, advance directives, etc.), but will act as a resource for and when applicable, make referral to external entities to assist persons served and or their personal advocates in the manner of witnessing of legal documents. Employees shall seek advice from Chief Human Resource Officer.

V. Protection of Assets

This agency is committed to fiscal responsibility and viability. As such, protection of the organizations assets is everyone's responsibility. It is expected that all employees, volunteers, contract agents and board members protect and safeguard all physical property, funds and proprietary information against loss, theft, misuse or abuse. Each person has a duty to report any actual or perceived loss, theft, and misuse or abuse of agency property or assets to a member of the Administrative Management Office or Chief Human Resource Officer.

1. We are personally responsible and accountable for the proper expenditure of agency funds and for the proper use, care and maintenance of agency property.
2. Agency employees must be respectful of the personal property and belongings of persons served, agency personnel and other stakeholders.
3. Expenditures are not made without prior authorization and approval as indicated by the amount of the expenditure.
4. We will follow generally accepted accounting principles, established finance procedures and internal control procedures in handling and recording all funds, and physical property.

VI. Human Resources

This agency is committed to creating a positive workplace for all employees. It is our endeavor to assist all employees in achieving their potential in a fair and equitable manner. All employees, volunteers, contract agents or board members have a responsibility to report any actual or perceived mistreatment, discrimination, safety issues, hostile activity, legal violation or other non-compliance issue in the workplace to a member of the Administrative Management Office or Chief Human Resource Officer.

1. We will not tolerate any form of sexual, physical, verbal or psychological abuse or harassment.
2. We expect employees to conform to the standards of our profession and exercise reasonable judgment and objectivity in the performance of their duties.
3. We expect that all employees and agents of this company recognize relationship boundaries and act in a manner that is professional and representative of proper workplace behavior. Where applicable, employees employed as Peer Support Specialists, who because of the nature of their position description and assigned job duties, may have

relationships that differ from those employees who are not hired as such. This may be inclusive of sharing more lived experiences, such as sharing meals, attending social events and personal communications.

4. We expect that all employees and agents of this company demonstrate respect for the individuals we provide service to and their families, co-workers and members of the community.
5. We ensure that everyone is afforded equal employment, compensation and advancement opportunity regardless of gender, age, disability, race, color, religion, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation or any other protected class.
6. We will give regular, timely and accurate feedback and recognition on job performance including setting and evaluating measurable goals with employees at the time of their review.
7. It is the responsibility of all employees, volunteers, contract agents or board members to report any violations or wrong doing of federal or State law or any internal agency policies or procedures within (24) hours of that knowledge. All reports made will be reviewed by the designated Administrative Management Office personnel and Chief Human Resource Officer. The Administrative Management Office personnel and/or Chief Human Resource Officer will, where applicable make return contact to the reporting person within (48) forty eight hours. In the event that a longer period of time is needed for investigation, the reporting person will be notified of the extended period of time.
8. Employees, volunteers, and contract agents must follow agency policy regarding the use of social media. Guidelines are outlined in the agency Personnel or Volunteer/Contract Handbook.
9. We will provide training to ensure and enhance competencies of employees including, but not limited to:
 - All required or mandatory training along with competency training;
 - Knowledge of agency vision, mission and values;
 - Understanding of ones role and the value of teamwork;
 - Taking responsibility and ownership for outcomes and achievements, both for persons served and for employees;
 - Continuous quality improvement efforts to accomplish goals and objectives;
 - Identification of challenges, barriers to service delivery and planning/development of alternatives;
 - Assurance of effective communication throughout agency;
 - Sensitivity to the vast and diverse cultural make-up of persons served, employees, stakeholders and the community;
 - On-going knowledge and training of proper documentation and billing procedure requirements.

VII. Health and Safety

This agency believes that health and safety of all persons served, their families, employees, and other stakeholders are a priority in providing quality services.

1. We will comply with all health and safety rules, regulations and policies.
2. We will take reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of employees, persons served and other personnel.

3. We will maintain, practice and regularly communicate our emergency plans and procedures to all employees, volunteers, persons served and other visitors or personnel.
4. We will maintain an environment that is free from workplace violence. Weapons are not allowed on agency property.
5. We will promote an environment that is drug and alcohol free. The illegal possession, distribution, use, sale or abuse of controlled chemical substances or alcohol while on company business or on company premises is strictly prohibited.
6. We will provide clean, safe and inviting environments for persons served.

VII. Communication

This agency understands and values the importance of open communication. It is our endeavor to foster an environment that facilitates and encourages such communication.

1. This agency will facilitate and encourage the sharing of ideas, suggestions and information. We will treat all opinions with respect and consideration. We will provide timely response to questions or complaints and provide written resolution in an understandable manner.
2. We will raise questions and concerns in an appropriate, timely and efficient manner.
3. We will strive to understand the duties, responsibilities and challenges of our co-workers and the organization.
4. We will encourage employees to participate in meetings, information forums that directly relate to their program area and are in the interest of enhancing services to persons served.
5. We will protect the rights of persons served and their families.
6. We will show dignity and respect to persons served and their families in all forms of communication.
7. We will demonstrate the concept of person first in all communication with persons served, families and community members.
8. We will not make decisions for persons served in any form unless the individual is an eminent threat to themselves or others.
9. We will provide information and communication to persons served and or their families in regards to care and treatment, with prior expressed consent when applicable.
10. We will act as a referral source to persons served or refer them to the appropriate resource when identifying needed supports.

These standards of conduct are not intended as an all-inclusive list of performance, but rather serve as a guideline for this agency's commitment to providing the highest quality of service to individuals in our program. It will be your responsibility to maintain high standards of ethical, moral and professional conduct in your workplace and interactions with persons served, families, co-workers, outside professionals and the community at large. It is your responsibility to be familiar with and act in accordance with the relevant laws and Code of Ethics that govern your position.

When needed, it is your responsibility to ask questions, seek guidance or direction if you are uncertain about how to handle an ethical, legal or moral question relating to your position with this agency. It is your responsibility to report any perceived or actual violations of any laws, regulations or agency Code of Ethics that governs the vision, mission and values of this agency. The agency will not take any disciplinary action or other type of retaliation against an employee, volunteer, contractual agent or board member that in good faith, reports a concern, raises an issue or otherwise makes a member of the Administrative Management Office or Chief Human Resource Officer aware of such a concern.

The term "Good Faith" means that you are telling the truth to the best of your knowledge. Intentionally making false accusations or allegations is a serious matter, and a violation of policy of this agency. Such action may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Any employee who believes they have experienced retaliation for making a report should contact the Chief Human Resource Officer or member of the Administrative Management Office.

In the event that you have a religious, political, ethical or moral belief that conflicts with and hinders your ability to support a person served or an aspect of their care in an objective and professional manner, you need to notify your supervisor using the **Ethical Practices Agreement-Request Not to Participate**. (See attached form) In doing this, you understand that you will be removed from working with the individual, which may result in reassignment within the organization, a reduction of hours, removal to on-call status, and/or discharge.