



United Way  
of the Southern Tier

# **Conflict of Interest Statement**

## **for Community Solutions Volunteers**

The mission of the United Way of the Southern Tier is to effectively mobilize the caring power of our community to help people improve their lives. Our vision is “To be the trusted and respected leader in achieving positive community impact.” The Community Solutions process is a critical component of our commitment to fulfill our mission. The integrity of the process is critical to achieving our vision. Therefore it is important that Community Solutions volunteers fully understand what may be expected of them in that, from time to time, it is possible, even probable, that they may be faced with a potential or perceived conflict of interest.

The Community Solutions process is the research and discovery of the human service needs and assets in Chemung and Steuben Counties, and the development of a plan to address those needs that will include a unified approach consisting of investments, collaborative projects and appropriate public policy agenda. Vital to the success of this process are knowledgeable, experienced volunteers who are free to formulate decisions without undue influence, conflict of interest or any appearance thereof.

Community Solutions volunteers are understood to be those individuals participating in the processes involving membership on either an individual Impact Team or the Community Solutions Committee. It is the intention of this statement to expound on the Conflict of Interest Policy contained in the Code of Ethics for the purpose of more specific guidance of the afore mentioned volunteers so as to ensure appropriate conduct in the performance of their duties.

### **Representation**

In their positions with United Way, Community Solutions volunteers are charged with representing the best interests of the community at large. They must not advocate for, or present inappropriately, any personal or professional interests on behalf of organizations in which they or their immediate family may be associated.

### **Application**

A conflict of interest is simply a situation in which an individual may have two separate and competing interests and it is unclear which interest will win out. A conflict of interest can also be identified as something that hinders objectivity in decision-making. Another term for this, which is equally descriptive but without the negative connotation is duality of interest. This might include serving the other organization as: a) a director, trustee, officer, employee, or volunteer; b) a fund raiser or financial advisor; c) an independent contractor or vendor who has received fees or payments from the organization; or d) a holder of any position or interest that would preclude fair and objective evaluation of a request or disbursement/escrow of funds.

## **Disclosure**

The burden for disclosure of a potential conflict of interest is on the volunteer. Before becoming a member of the Community Solutions process, and annually thereafter, volunteers will be asked to disclose the following: a) current United Way volunteer assignments, b) board memberships of voluntary organizations, c) contracts and/or volunteer services with system partners, d) staff or board associations of immediate family members and, e) any other possible conflicts of interest related to potential service providers. Throughout their terms of appointment, volunteers are responsible for identifying potential conflicts of interest as they arise. Disclosure forms will be circulated to all members of the teams and must be signed before voting is permitted.

## **Conduct**

The Chairs of all Impact Teams are responsible for informing and reminding volunteers of this policy as well as the overall United Way Conflict of Interest policy. Collectively, all volunteers are responsible for ensuring that this policy is carried out as outlined. In the event that a matter comes before a Community Solutions body that raises a potential conflict of interest for any volunteer, the volunteer(s) must disclose the nature of the potential conflict. If possible, disclosure should occur prior to any discussion; otherwise disclosure should be made immediately upon the volunteer's awareness of a potential conflict. The chair then decides whether a) the volunteer(s) should leave the room during all discussion, review and voting in connection with the matter; or b) whether the volunteer(s) remain in the room for any portion of the discussion, review and voting. Volunteer(s) with a conflict of interest must abstain from voting. Agency representatives (board, staff or volunteers) should offer to excuse themselves from any meeting when their organization is discussed in any manner whereby that organization might be materially affected. There may be times when it *will* be appropriate for agency representatives to participate in planning and decision-making. For the purposes of this statement, United Way decision-making means participating in a discussion and/or influencing the outcome of decisions under consideration. All disclosures, withdrawals and abstentions will be recorded duly in the minutes of the meeting.

## **Disclaimer**

A conflict of interest does not exist when a volunteer, solely by nature of his or her assigned role in United Way decision making, is representing the collective interests of a particular United Way constituency. This statement is not to be construed as preventing or discouraging any volunteer from disclosing relevant information or from answering or stating his or her position on matters under discussion or review.

## **For More Information**

If you have any questions or concerns, please discuss them with United Way of the Southern Tier staff at (607) 936-3753. Please complete and sign the attached disclosure form.