

# CODE OF ETHICS

## UNITED WAY OF THE SOUTHERN TIER

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This United Way of the Southern Tier (UWST) Code of Ethics (Code) is based on our mission: To effectively mobilize the caring power of our community to help people improve their lives.

UWST is committed to the highest ethical standards. Indeed, based on the unique trust placed in UWST to serve the public good, we have a special obligation to act ethically.

The success of the United Way system and our reputation depend upon the ethical conduct of everyone affiliated with UWST. Volunteers, staff, and other representatives set an example for each other by their pursuit of excellence in high standards of performance, professionalism, and ethical conduct.

We are mindful that these values must be clearly articulated, communicated and continuously reinforced. While no document can anticipate all of the challenges that may arise, the Code communicates key guidelines and will assist UWST volunteers, staff and representatives in making good decisions that are ethical and in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

1. **PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY:** A personal commitment to integrity in all circumstances benefits each individual as well as the organization. We therefore:
  - Strive to meet the highest standards of performance, quality, service and achievement in working towards the UWST mission.
  - Communicate honestly and openly and avoid misrepresentation.
  - Promote a working environment where honesty, open communication and all opinions are valued.
  - Exhibit respect and fairness toward all those with whom we come into contact.
2. **ACCOUNTABILITY:** UWST is responsible to its stakeholders, which include its donors, Agency Partners, and others who have placed faith in UWST. To uphold this trust we:
  - Promote good stewardship of UWST resources, including donations, grants and other contributions.
  - Refrain from using organizational resources for non- UWST purposes.
  - Observe and comply with all laws and regulations affecting UWST.
3. **SOLICITATIONS AND VOLUNTARY GIVING:** The most responsive contributors are those who have the opportunity to become informed and involved. We therefore, refrain from any use of coercion in fundraising activities.
4. **DIVERSITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY:** UWST is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to the principle of diversity. We therefore:
  - Affirm that the affairs of our UWST organizations, including the selection of people to serve and be served, shall be conducted entirely on a non-discriminatory basis as defined by Federal and State Law.

- Support affirmative action and equal employment opportunity programs throughout UWST.
  - Refuse to engage in or tolerate any other form of discrimination or harassment.
5. **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:** To avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest which could tarnish the reputation of UWST, as well as undermine the public's trust in UWST staff and representatives:
- Avoid any activity or outside interest which conflicts or appears to conflict with the best interest of UWST, including involvement with a current or potential UWST vendor, grantee, or competing organization unless disclosed to and not deemed to be inappropriate by the UWST President and/or Board Chair.
  - United Way of the Southern Tier employees shall not serve on boards or committees of any 501(c)3 organization either funded by, or actively involved with United Way of the Southern Tier without written prior permission of the President, or in the case of the President, the Chair of the Board.
  - Engage in any outside employment, perform any contract services, or participate in other activities for any organization, which would create a conflict of interest, or the appearance of a conflict that would adversely affect the performance of their UWST duties or achievement of the UWST mission. (Employees are required to report any outside employment in writing to the Director of Finance and Administration prior to beginning the outside employment. Information should include the name and address of the employer, work schedule, and the nature of the work.)
  - Ensure that travel, entertainment and related expenses are incurred on a basis consistent with the mission of UWST and not for personal gain or interests.
  - Decline any gift, gratuity or favor in the performance of UWST duties except for promotional items of nominal value, and any food, transportation, lodging or entertainment directly related to UWST business.
  - Refrain from influencing the selection of staff, consultants or vendors who are relatives or personal friends or affiliated with, employ, or employed by a person with whom they have a relationship that adversely affects the appearance of impartiality.
  - If an employee or member of the employee's immediate family has a financial interest in any organization doing business or soliciting business from United Way of the Southern Tier, the employee is required to disclose the financial interest to the President, and is to avoid any involvement in decisions related to that business.

**Volunteers:**

- Should not knowingly take any action, or make any statement, intended to influence the conduct of UWST in such a way to confer any financial benefit on themselves, their immediate family members or any organization in which they or their immediate family members have a significant interest as stakeholders, directors or officers.
- Disclose all known conflicts or potential conflicts of interest in any matter before the Board of Directors, if they are Board members. Any volunteers serving on a committee should also disclose all known conflicts or potential conflicts of interest and maybe asked to withdraw from the meeting room during any discussion, review or voting in connection with such matter.

- An employee of a funded agency, program or service may not serve as a member on the Board of Directors.
6. **CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY:** Confidentiality is a hallmark of professionalism. We therefore:
    - Ensure that all information which is confidential, privileged, or nonpublic, is not disclosed inappropriately.
    - Respect the privacy rights of all individuals in the performance of their UWST duties.
  7. **POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS:** As a charitable corporation, UWST is prohibited from making contributions to any candidate for public office or to any political committee. We therefore:
    - Refrain from making any contributions to any candidate for public office or political committee on behalf of UWST, including the use of UWST facilities for political campaign activities.
  8. **GUIDANCE AND DISCLOSURE:** Volunteers, staff, and representatives are encouraged to seek guidance from the President or the Board Chair. Any known or possible breaches of the Code of Ethics should be disclosed. Reports of possible breaches will be handled in the following manner:
    - All reports of possible breaches will be treated in confidence as much as the organization's duty to investigate and the law allow. If confidentiality cannot be maintained, the individual disclosing the possible breach will be notified.
    - All reported breaches will be investigated and, if needed, appropriate action taken based upon the policies of the organization.
    - Any retaliation against a person who suspects and, in good faith, reports a breach in the Code will be treated as an independent breach of the Code.
    - UWST affirms prompt and fair resolution of all reported breaches.

Volunteers and staff shall disclose conflicts of interest (existing and/or potential) annually by completing the Conflict of Interest Disclosure form to be filed at UWST.

This Code and its policies are not intended to be an exhaustive discussion of each and every ethical behavior. Its intent is to describe major areas associated with ethical attitudes and behaviors. Failure to adhere to this Code of Ethics and policies described may result in disciplinary action and could include immediate termination of employment.

## **WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY**

The United Way of the Southern Tier's (UWST) Code of Ethics requires directors, officers, volunteers and employees to observe high standards of ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. As employees and representatives of the Organization, we must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling our responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

It is the responsibility of all directors, officers, volunteers and employees to comply with the Code and to report violations or suspected violations in accordance with this Whistleblower Policy. Directors, Officers, volunteers and employees are required to report suspected violations of the Code of Ethics to the President, or the Chair of the Board of Directors, or the chair of the Audit Committee

No director, officer, volunteer or employee who, in good faith, reports a violation of the Code shall suffer harassment, retaliation or adverse employment consequence. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, adverse employment action such as termination, compensation decreases, or poor work assignments and threats of physical harm. An employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment. This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise serious concerns within the Organization prior to seeking resolution outside the Organization.

Employees and others are encouraged to share their questions, concerns, suggestions or complaints with someone who can address them properly. In most cases, an employee's supervisor is in the best position to address an area of concern. However, if you are not comfortable speaking with your supervisor or you are not satisfied with your supervisor's response, you are encouraged to speak with the President, the Chair of the Board of Directors, or the Chair of the Audit Committee.

The President is responsible for investigating and resolving all reported complaints and allegations concerning violations of the Code and, at his discretion, shall advise the Executive Committee and/or the Audit Committee. The President will notify the complainant and acknowledge receipt of the reported violation or suspected violation within five business days.

All reports will be promptly investigated and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation.

In matters of suspected fraud or complaints regarding finances, accounting practices, internal controls or auditing, individuals should contact the President, the Chairman of the Board of Directors or the Chairman of the Auditing Committee. The President or Chair of the Board of

Directors shall immediately notify the Audit Committee of any such complaints and work with the Audit Committee until the matter is resolved.

Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation of the Code must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation of the Code. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense.

Violations or suspected violations may be submitted on a confidential basis by the complainant or may be submitted anonymously. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

## EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

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The employee handbook describes important information about the United Way of the Southern Tier, and I understand that I should consult my supervisor regarding any questions not answered in the handbook. I have entered into my employment relationship with United Way of the Southern Tier voluntarily and acknowledge that there is no specified length of employment. Accordingly, either I or United Way of the Southern Tier can terminate the relationship at will, with or without cause, at any time, so long as there is no violation of applicable federal or state law.

Since the information, policies, and benefits described herein are necessarily subject to change, I acknowledge that revisions to the handbook may occur, except to United Way's policy of employment-at-will. All such changes will be communicated through official notices, and I understand that revised information may supersede, modify, or eliminate existing policies.

Furthermore, I acknowledge that this handbook is neither a contract of employment nor a legal document. I have received the handbook, and I have read and understand the policies included in it.

**My signature indicates that I agree to abide by the Policies and Procedures outlined in this United Way of the Southern Tier Employee Handbook.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee's Name (Typed or Printed)

# CODE OF ETHICS

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**My signature indicates that I agree to abide by the code of ethics of United Way of the Southern Tier.**

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Employee's Signature

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Date

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Employee's Name (Typed or Printed)