



United Way  
of the Southern Tier

88 East Tioga Avenue, Suite 102  
Corning, NY 14830-2882

(607) 936-3753

[www.uwst.org](http://www.uwst.org)

## CODE OF ETHICS

United Way of the Southern Tier, Inc. (UWST) unites and prioritizes resources to improve the quality of life for every person and every family in our community. We envision a thriving community where all children have the foundation for life-long success and our collective well-being is secure. There is no other organization that mobilizes the community the way United Way does; planning, coordinating and helping people succeed. We bring people together to decide what needs to be done in our community and how to do it – and we hold ourselves accountable for results. This critical role requires that all of us involved in UWST, who foster such an essential public good, must assume the responsibility of earning public trust. Accordingly, UWST plays a unique role as both a leader in the health and human services sector and as a major resource to donors and partners in service to build trust through all that we do.

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. To that end, volunteers and staff shall disclose conflicts of interest (existing and/or potential) annually by completing the Conflict of Interest Disclosure form.

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.

**LIVE UNITED.**

# CREATING A THRIVING COMMUNITY.

## 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, its staff, volunteers and representatives, we shall:

- 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 absence 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 President & CEO 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.

# IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR EVERY PERSON AND EVERY FAMILY.

## **UWST 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 as specified in the Conflict of Interest Disclosure Policy.
- 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**

UWST encourages individual participation in civic affairs. However, 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.
- We clearly communicate that we are not acting on behalf of the organization, if identified as such, while engaging in political activities in an individual capacity.
- Refrain from using any organization financial resources, facilities, or personnel to endorse or oppose a candidate for public office.
- Refrain from engaging in political activities in a manner that may create the appearance that such activity is by or on behalf of UWST.

## **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.