

United Way of Sevier County

Code of Ethics

# **CODE OF ETHICS**

The United Way of Sevier County (UWSC) is committed to the highest ethical standards. Indeed, based on the unique trust placed in UWSC 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 the UWSC. Volunteers, staff and representatives set an example for each other, and for member organizations, by their pursuit of excellence in high standards of performance, professionalism, and ethical conduct. This UWSC Code of Ethics (Code) is based on our mission.

We are mindful that these core values must be clearly articulated, communicated and continuously reinforced. In addition, more detailed policies, guidelines, explanations, and definitions are often needed to bring these values into actual practice. While no document can anticipate all of the challenges that may arise, the Code communicates key guidelines and will assist UWSC 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 UWSC mission.
- Communicate honestly and openly and avoid misrepresentation.
- Promote a working environment where honest, open communication and minority opinions are valued.
- Exhibit respect and fairness toward all those with whom we come into contact.

## **2. ACCOUNTABILITY**

UWSC Is responsible to its stakeholders, which include member organizations, donors, and others who have placed faith in UWSC. To uphold this trust we:

- Promote good stewardship of UWSC resources which includes any contributions used to pay operating expenses, salaries, and employee benefits.
- Refrain from using organizational resources for non-UWSC purposes.
- Observe and comply with all laws and regulations affecting UWSC.

## **3. SOLICITATIONS AND VOLUNTARY GIVING**

The most responsive contributors are those who have the opportunity to become informed and involved. We therefore:

- Promote voluntary giving in dealing with donors and vendors.
- Refrain from any use of coercion in fundraising activities, including predicated professional advancement in response to solicitations.

## **4. DIVERSITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**

UWSC is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to the principle of diversity. We therefore:

- Value, champion, and embrace diversity in all aspects of UWSC activities and respect others without regard to race, color, religion, creed, age, sex, national origin or ancestry, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, or status as a qualified disabled or handicapped individual.
- Support affirmative action and equal employment opportunity programs throughout UWSC.
- Refuse to engage in or tolerate in 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 UWSC as well as undermine the public's trust in our member organizations.

UWSC Staff and representatives:

- Avoid any activity or outside interest which conflicts or appears to conflict with the best interest of UWSC, including involvement with a current or potential UWSC vendor, grantee, or competing organization unless disclosed to and not deemed to be inappropriate by the UWSC Executive Board of Directors.
- Ensure that outside employment and other activities do not adversely affect the performance of their UWSC duties or the achievement of UWSC's mission.
- Ensure that travel, entertainment, and related expenses are incurred on a basis consistent with the mission of UWSC and not for personal gain or interests.
- Decline any gift, gratuity or favor in the performance of UWSC duties except for promotional items of nominal value, and any food, transportation, lodging or entertainment unless directly related to UWSC 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.

UWSC Volunteers:

- Should not knowingly take any action, or make any statement intended to influence the conduct of UWSC 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, or any committee upon which they serve and withdraw from the meeting room during any discussion, review and voting in connection with such matter.
- Members of the Board shall disclose in writing to the Executive Director any known potential conflicts of interest.

## **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 UWSC duties.

## **7. POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

UWSC encourages individual participation in civic affairs. However as a charitable organization, UWSC may not make contributions to any candidate for public office or political committee and may not intervene in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. We therefore:

- Refrain from making any contributions to any candidate for public office or political committee on behalf of UWSC.
- Refrain from making any contributions to any candidate for public office or political committee in a manner that may create the appearance that the contribution is on behalf of UWSC.
- Refrain from using any organizational financial resources, facilities, or personnel to endorse or oppose a candidate for public office.
- Clearly communicate that we are not acting on behalf of the organization, if identified as an official of UWSC, while engaging in political activities in an individual capacity.
- Refrain from engaging in political activities in a manner that may create the appearance that such activity is by or on behalf of UWSC.

### **Guidance and Disclosure**

Volunteers, staff, and representatives are encouraged to seek guidance from the UWSC Executive Director or Board of Directors concerning the interpretation or application of this Code of Ethics. 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.
- Retaliation against a person who suspects and reports a breach in good faith will be treated as an independent breach of the Code.
- UWSC affirms prompt and fair resolution of all reported breaches.

## CODE OF ETHICS GLOSSARY

***Candidate for Public Office:*** An individual who offers herself or himself or is proposed by others as a contestant for an elected public office, whether such office is federal, state, or local.

***Contribution, political:*** Anything of value, including monetary and in-kind gifts, provided for the purpose of influencing the outcome of an election.

***Donors:*** All individuals and entities that make charitable or in-kind contributions to UWSC.

***Immediate family members:*** An individual's spouse, children, parents, sibling, and spouses or children and their siblings.

***Nonpublic information:*** Any business, financial, or personal information, which is not publicly known or available.

***Political Committee:*** Any party, committee, association, fund or other organization organized and operated primarily for accepting contributions to influence the selection, nomination, or election of any individual to any federal, state, or local office.

***Privileged Information:*** Information that is protected from involuntary disclosure by legally recognized privileges such as attorney-client, doctor-patient, and others.

***Promotional Items of Nominal Value:*** Gifts used to promote an organization's name, products, or services which have a retail value of \$25 or less.

***Representatives:*** Individuals who provide personal services to UWSC as independent contractors, consultants, or loaned executives.

***Staff:*** All individuals, who provide services to UWSC as employees or leased employees.

***Vendors:*** Entities which provide goods and services to UWSC for a fee.

***Volunteers:*** All members of the UWSC Board of Directors and committees appointed by the Board of Directors, who perform their UWSC duties without compensation.