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Ethics Matter

United Way of America Code of Ethics Guide





A Message from the United Way of America Board of Governors

At the core, to care for one another, we have to trust one another.

As volunteers, employees, and representatives of United Way of America, we have a responsibility to uphold the highest of ethical standards—both for ourselves and for the benefit of our communities. We believe these standards go beyond compliance with laws and regulations—calling us to fulfill higher obligations as stewards of the public trust.

This Code of Ethics is an important way for us to reaffirm our ethical commitments. It sets forth the principles and standards that guide our decisions and actions. As you are probably aware, many of the ideas that are included within the Code have come from discussions with our employees and volunteers over the last few years. This collaborative process has been essential in developing the Code and has made it a document that reflects and is more responsive to our needs.

As we read the Code, we must remember that it is more than a set of standards and responsibilities. It is a way of connecting our values and our ideals with the work we do every day.

The Code is not just about what we should do, but why we do it.

Of course, no document can give us all the answers to our ethics questions. This Code is meant to help us further the discussion of ethics in our workplace. It also encourages us to seek guidance and clarification when we have questions about applying our principles and standards. The involvement of all our employees and volunteers is essential to upholding these principles and standards. Only by continuing to work together on these issues can we ensure that the United Way of America fulfills its commitment to build and maintain the public trust in all that we do.

CONTENTS

OUR CORE VALUES	1
CODE OF ETHICS	7
1. Personal and Professional Integrity	10
2. Accountability	10
3. Solicitations and Voluntary Giving	11
4. Diversity and Equal Opportunity	11
5. Conflicts of Interest	12
6. Confidentiality and Privacy	13
7. Political Contributions	14
CODE OF ETHICS GLOSSARY	17
CODE OF ETHICS EXAMPLES	21
CODE OF ETHICS CERTIFICATE	27



OUR COREVALUES

OUR CORE VALUES

The mission of United Way of America (UWA) is to provide leadership on behalf of the United Way System and member United Way organizations to improve people's lives by mobilizing the caring power of communities.

This critical role requires that all of us involved in the UWA, who foster such an essential public good, must assume the responsibility of earning public trust.

Accordingly, United Way of America plays a unique role both as a leader in the health and human services sector and as a major resource to member United Way organizations to build trust through all that we do. This bond of trust goes far beyond legal or regulatory requirements to include our core values, and ethics.

To fulfill this special obligation, five core values provide the foundation on which we base our actions and decisions.

OUR CORE VALUES

1. INTEGRITY

We act with integrity that inspires the highest truth.

- We stand as “one” in the relentless pursuit of instilling and promoting public confidence and trust.
- We maintain the highest standards of excellence and accountability, including prudent use of finances, and fair, accurate, and honest disclosures of information.
- We keep our promises. People know it: “United Way makes my caring count.”

2. IMPACT

We make a positive difference and have a measurable impact of enduring consequence.

- We make a difference in our community and collectively in our world. Our efforts change lives.
- We are committed to a United Way that is relevant to its people, its community, and the times.
- We assume responsibility as good stewards of and are accountable for our work and sustainable results.

3. VOLUNTEERISM

We are made relevant and impactful through the spirit of volunteerism.

- United Way is outstanding in the way it invites volunteers to express their philanthropic beliefs (expression of one’s “love of humanity”).

OUR CORE VALUES

- We believe that the most effective models of service and excellence are created through the leadership of volunteers.

4. INCLUSIVENESS

We are strong only when we are inclusive.

- We aspire to involve every segment of the community in every aspect of our work.
- We act in ways that respect the dignity, uniqueness, and intrinsic worth of every person—the community, the donors, our own staff and families, boards, and volunteers.
- We believe in a movement built from the rich diversity and gifts of all people in all systems.

5. CATALYTIC LEADERSHIP

We initiate catalytic leadership for community building to effect positive change.

- We are effective educators and conveners—bringing all segments of the community together to promote individual well being and common good.
- We are leaders of a process that multiplies the impact of people's innate desire and capacity to care for one another.
- We help transform visions of compassion and giving into dynamic reality.

CODE OF ETHICS



CODE OF ETHICS

United Way of America (UWA) is committed to the highest ethical standards. Indeed, based on the unique trust placed in UWA 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 UWA. Volunteers, staff, and representatives set an example for each other, and for member United Way organizations, by their pursuit of excellence in high standards of performance, professionalism, and ethical conduct.

This UWA Code of Ethics (Code) is based on our mission and guided by our fundamental values. (See *Our Core Values*): Integrity, Impact, Volunteerism, Inclusiveness, and Catalytic Leadership.

We are mindful that these core values must be clearly articulated, communicated and continuously reinforced. In addition, more detailed policies, guidelines, explanations, definitions and examples 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 UWA volunteers, staff and representatives in making good

CODE OF ETHICS

decisions that are ethical and in accordance with applicable legal requirements. All are encouraged to discuss any questions or concerns they have with a supervisor or with the UWA Staff Ethics Officer.

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 UWA mission.
- Communicate honestly and openly and avoid misrepresentation.
- Promote a working environment where honesty, open communication and minority opinions are valued.
- Exhibit respect and fairness toward all those with whom we come into contact.

2. ACCOUNTABILITY

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

- Promote good stewardship of UWA resources, including membership fees, grants and other contributions that are used to pay operating expenses, salaries, and employee benefits.
- Refrain from using organizational resources for non-UWA purposes.

CODE OF ETHICS

- Observe and comply with all laws and regulations affecting UWA.

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 predicating professional advancement on response to solicitations.

4. DIVERSITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

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

- Value, champion, and embrace diversity in all aspects of UWA 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 UWA.
- Refuse to engage in or tolerate in any other form of discrimination or harassment.

CODE OF ETHICS

5. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

To avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest which could tarnish the reputation of UWA as well as undermine the public's trust in all United Way organizations, UWA staff and representatives:

- Avoid any activity or outside interest which conflicts or appears to conflict with the best interest of UWA, including involvement with a current or potential UWA vendor, grantee, or competing organization unless disclosed to and not deemed to be inappropriate by the UWA Staff Ethics Officer and UWA Board Ethics Committee.
- Ensure that outside employment and other activities do not adversely affect the performance of their UWA duties or the achievement of UWA's mission.
- Ensure that travel, entertainment and related expenses are incurred on a basis consistent with the mission of UWA and not for personal gain or interests.
- Decline any gift, gratuity or favor in the performance of UWA duties except for promotional items of nominal value, and any food, transportation, lodging or entertainment unless directly related to UWA business.
- Refrain from influencing the selection of staff, consultants or vendors who are relatives or personal friends or affiliated with,

CODE OF ETHICS

employ, or employed by a person with whom they have a relationship that adversely affects the appearance of impartiality.

UWA VOLUNTEERS:

- Should not knowingly take any action, or make any statement, intended to influence the conduct of UWA 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 Governors, 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 annually file with the Staff Ethics Officer a disclosure of all 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 UWA duties.

CODE OF ETHICS

7. POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

UWA encourages individual participation in civic affairs.

However as a charitable organization, UWA 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 UWA.
- 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 UWA.
- 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 UWA, while engaging in political activities in an individual capacity.
- Refrain from engaging in political activities in a manner that that may create the appearance that such activity is by or on behalf of UWA.

CODE OF ETHICS

GUIDANCE AND DISCLOSURE

Volunteers, staff, and representatives are encouraged to seek guidance from the Board Ethics Committee and Staff Ethics Officer concerning the interpretation or application of this Code of Ethics. Any known or possible breaches of the Code of Ethics should be disclosed. Staff and representatives should contact a supervisor or the Staff Ethics Officer. Volunteers should contact a member of the Board Ethics Committee. 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.
- UWA affirms prompt and fair resolution of all reported breaches.

CODE OF ETHICS GLOSSARY



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 UWA.

Immediate family members: An individual's spouse, children, parents, siblings, and spouses of children and 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.

CODE OF ETHICS GLOSSARY

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 as retail value of \$25 or less.

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

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

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

Volunteers: All members of the UWA Board of Governors and committees appointed by the Board of Governors, who perform their UWA duties without compensation.



CODE OF ETHICS EXAMPLES

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These examples are provided only to illustrate how provisions of the Code of Ethics may be applied under certain circumstances. The outcome of any particular situation depends on the facts presented and in all cases, the language of the Code of Ethics is controlling.

Harassment

Situation: Joe is continually teased by his younger co-workers for being an “old-geezer” “out of touch” and not able to keep up with the pace of the office.

Solution: This could be considered harassment and is, at least, contrary to maintaining a positive work environment. Joe should tell his co-workers that their behavior is unwelcome and ask them to stop. If it continues, he should bring it to the attention of his supervisor, Human Resources Representative, or the Staff Ethics Officer.

Conflict of Interest

Situation: A firm that your father owns is interested in bidding on a contract to supply goods to UWA.

Solution: You must notify your supervisor and the Staff Ethics Officer. It is important to avoid even the appearance of conflict of interest or favoritism, especially in situations that could appear to personally benefit you or your family. However, as long as you do not participate in, or are able to

CODE OF ETHICS EXAMPLES

remove yourself from the decision making process, and thereby do not have influence in the awarding of the contract, he will likely be allowed to submit a bid.

Situation: While at a conference you bump into a representative from a hotel who learns you are planning UWA's next conference. He invites you to dinner and then offers you tickets for you and your spouse to attend the theater.

Solution: This could be considered a conflict of interest. You should decline any gift or entertainment that exceeds a nominal value. Similarly, you should not offer any entertainment or gift to a potential donor or supplier that could be interpreted as inappropriately influencing their decision about interaction with UWA.

Solicitation

Situation: Your daughter is in the school band and at your previous job you sold gift wrapping paper for her to your colleagues at work. Can you do that here at UWA?

Solution: Solicitations are permitted at UWA provided prior approval is obtained from Human Resources. However, solicitations should be done in such a manner to avoid coercion, whether real or implied, and also to avoid conducting personal business during working time. You therefore should

CODE OF ETHICS EXAMPLES

not directly solicit those members of the staff over whom you exercise supervisory authority. You may however solicit in a manner which is non-personal such as posting your request on a bulletin board.

Nepotism/favoritism

Situation: Your sister-in-law is graduating at the top of her class from college this spring. You think she would be a great asset to your department at UWA.

Solution: Favoritism based on family or close personal relationships are unfair to other employees. The appearance of such favoritism is easily perceived, even when such situations are harmless. To avoid such an appearance, UWA employees may not supervise or exercise management authority, directly or indirectly, over staff with whom they have a relationship that may adversely affect impartiality. While it may seem like a mutually beneficial situation to bring your sister-in-law into your department, this may create an awkward or unfair situation for co-workers or other potential employees.

Confidentiality

Situation: A reporter from a magazine calls you and asks you for your comments concerning UWA's new fundraising strategy towards its largest donors.

Solution: Although you may want to be helpful, it is important

CODE OF ETHICS EXAMPLES

that you do not give out potentially proprietary or confidential information. For your protection and that of the organization, it is necessary that you refer the call to the Marketing and Communications Team Leader.

Political Contributions

Situation: I serve on the board of my local United Way organization. I would like to make a personal donation to my Congressman. Is this something I can do under UWA's political contribution policy?

Solution: UWA, as a charitable corporation, legally cannot make political contributions. There is no legal restriction on our volunteers, staff or other representatives. However, in making contributions in an individual capacity, volunteers, staff and representatives should refrain from actions or representations which may imply or create the appearance that the contribution is on behalf of UWA such as use of UWA stationery, name or logo.

Code of Ethics Certificate

I acknowledge that I have received and read my personal copy of the United Way of America Code of Ethics. I understand that each United Way of America volunteer, staff member and representative is responsible for adhering to the principles and standards of the Code, and I confirm that I have conducted myself in accord with the principles and standards of the Code. The certification process is mandatory for all UWA staff and members of the Board of Governors.

PRINTED NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE



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