

# Tulsa Area United Way Code of Ethics



The Tulsa Area United Way (TAUW) has a unique role as a regional leader in philanthropy, benefiting those in need in the communities that we serve. Indeed, for many people, TAUW is the primary expression of their commitment to help their fellow human beings. The value and credibility of TAUW's mission and its success relies on the public trust, earned by years of ethical, honest and responsible charitable service. Our future as an effective organization can only be assured by the continued dedication of TAUW employees, volunteers and representatives to these seasoned principles of ethical conduct.

TAUW has adopted the guiding principles of the attached Standards of Excellence Code. By implementing the performance benchmarks in the code, the organization meets the highest ethical standards for effective services in the public interest.

Every TAUW employee, volunteer and representative is personally committed to:

## **Integrity**

- Respect and seek out the clarity of truth with objectivity, fairness and compassion in all activities and decisions;
- Honor the confidentiality of information and the right to privacy of our peers, contributors and beneficiaries;
- Avoid and/or disclose any activity which is or appears to be a conflict of interest; and
- Honor this Code of Ethics.

## **Excellence**

The TAUW recognizes that our people are our greatest asset. In order to achieve excellence, every TAUW employee, volunteer and representative sustains and encourages each other in the performance, growth and enrichment of their roles in the mission of TAUW. We show respect and empathy for others and their opinions, support their commitment to do their best, and refrain from any misuse or waste of TAUW resources.

## **Accountability**

The TAUW fulfills its responsibilities to its constituents by making full and fair disclosure of how wisely, efficiently and objectively our services are performed, needs are identified, and financial resources are utilized. We are also obligated to be good stewards of those funds used directly by TAUW in its operations, and have in place sufficient rules, guidelines and controls to safeguard the public trust.

## **Responsibility**

Every TAUW employee, volunteer and representative accepts the charge of regular, orderly evaluation of their roles and responsibilities. Review and oversight of the proper function of the organization ensures that the trust and good faith of the communities we serve are well deserved.

# STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

*The Standards for Excellence®: An Ethics and Accountability Code for the Nonprofit Sector*  
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## **I. MISSION, STRATEGY, and EVALUATION**

Guiding Principle: Nonprofits are founded for the public good and operate to accomplish a stated purpose through specific program activities. A nonprofit should have a well-defined mission, and its programs should effectively and efficiently work toward achieving that mission. Nonprofits have an obligation to ensure program effectiveness and to devote the resources of the organization to achieving its stated purpose.

## **II. LEADERSHIP: BOARD, STAFF, and VOLUNTEERS**

Guiding Principle: Nonprofits depend upon effective leadership to successfully enact their missions and programs. Effective leadership consists of a partnership between the board and management, each of which plays an essential role. Understanding and negotiating these shared and complex elements of leadership is essential to the organization's success. A nonprofit's employees and volunteers are fundamental to its ability to achieve its mission.

Board members are in a position of trust to ensure that resources are used to carry out the mission of the organization. An organization's board leadership should consist of volunteers who are committed to the mission and who demonstrate an understanding of the community served. An effective nonprofit board should determine the mission of the organization, establish management policies and procedures, assure that adequate human and financial resources are available, and actively monitor the organization's allocation of resources to effectively and efficiently fulfill its mission.

Nonprofits should also have executive leadership which carries out the day-to-day operations of the organization, ensures financial and organizational sustainability, and provides adequate information to the board of directors. An organization's human resource policies should address both paid employees and volunteers and should be fair, establish clear expectations, and provide meaningful and effective performance evaluation.

## **III. LEGAL COMPLIANCE and ETHICS**

Guiding Principle: Nonprofits enjoy the public's trust, and therefore must comply with a diverse array of legal and regulatory requirements. Organizations should conduct periodic reviews to address regulatory and fiduciary concerns. One of a leadership's fundamental responsibilities is to ensure that the organization governs and operates in an ethical and legal manner. Fostering exemplary conduct is one of the most effective means of developing internal and external trust as well as preventing misconduct.

Moreover, to honor the trust that the public has given them, nonprofits have an obligation to go beyond legal requirements and embrace the highest ethical practices. Nonprofit board, staff, and volunteers must act in the best interest of the organization, rather than in furtherance of personal interests or the interests of third parties. A nonprofit should have policies in place, and should routinely and systematically implement those policies, to prevent actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest. Ethics and compliance reinforce each other.

#### **IV. FINANCE AND OPERATIONS**

Guiding Principle: Nonprofits should have sound financial and operational systems in place and should ensure that accurate records are kept. The organization's financial and nonfinancial resources must be used in furtherance of tax-exempt purposes. Organizations should conduct periodic reviews to address accuracy and transparency of financial and operational reporting, and safeguards to protect the integrity of the reporting systems.

#### **V. RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

Guiding Principle: The responsibility for resource development is shared by the board and staff. Nonprofit organizations depend on an array of sources of financial support. An organization's resource development program should be maintained on a foundation of truthfulness and responsible stewardship. Its resource development policies should be consistent with its mission, compatible with its organizational capacity, and respectful of the interests of donors, prospective donors, and others providing resources to the organization.

#### **VI. PUBLIC AWARENESS, ENGAGEMENT, and ADVOCACY**

Guiding Principle: Nonprofits should represent the interests of the people they serve through public education and public policy advocacy, as well as by encouraging board members, staff, volunteers, and stakeholders to participate in the public affairs of the community. When appropriate to advance the organization's mission, nonprofits should engage in promoting public participation in community affairs and elections. As such, they should communicate in an effective manner to educate, inform, and engage the public.