

CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT GUIDE

United Way of Southeast Minnesota



UNITED WAY

Southeast Minnesota

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

As volunteers, employees, and representatives of United Way of Southeast Minnesota, we have a responsibility to uphold the highest of ethical standards—both for ourselves and for the benefit of our community. 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 Southeast Minnesota fulfills its commitment to build and maintain the public trust in all that we do.

OUR CORE VALUES 3

CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT 4

A. Personal & Professional Integrity

B. Accountability

C. Solicitations & Voluntary Giving

D. Diversity & Equal Opportunity

E. Conflicts of Interest

F. Confidentiality and Privacy

G. Political Contributions

H. Prohibition of Loans

CODE OF ETHICS: GLOSSARY 6

CODE OF ETHICS: EXAMPLES..... 7

CODE OF ETHICS: CERTIFICATE 9

ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

Our values are a declaration of our core beliefs and the defining features of United Way of Southeast Minnesota's culture. Five words have been selected that best describe our values, who we are and the conditions we strive to see expressed in the world around us. These values embody a host of qualities that can be expressed in a variety of ways; example behaviors or included here and are further described in our Code of Ethics and Conduct. These values reflect the enduring character of United Way of Southeast Minnesota. To achieve our Mission, we affirm our primary values as:

Organizational Values	Value Statement	Individual & Organizational Behavior
Integrity	We maintain and strengthen the trust of our customers (donors, partners and the community). We serve in all our actions. Our actions are honest and open in every regard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands and abides by the organization's ethical business practices and code of ethics. • Follows through on commitments and agreements, taking responsibility for own actions. • Is trusted by colleagues. • Makes information transparent and accessible.
Equity	We value the intentional inclusion of everyone in our community. We strive to dismantle systemic, institutional, and historical barriers based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and other identities so they no longer determine socioeconomic, education and health outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks to understand diverse experiences and viewpoints as a means of organizational learning and change. • Understands the social and historical context of exclusionary practices in our community, organization and areas of work. • Acknowledges and interrupts individual, institutional, and systemic bias. • Focuses on impact of actions and decisions rather than intent. • Calls attention to and addresses patterns of inequitable outcomes. • Critically reassesses own practices. • Takes personal and organizational responsibility for creating a culture where people of different identities and experiences belong and can thrive.
Excellence	Our efforts exceed our customers' expectations. We lead our peers in every performance measure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solicits feedback on actions, behavior, and progress and adjusts actions to provide continuous improvement. • Earns customer trust and loyalty through high quality products, superior service and timely responsiveness. • Is forward thinking and focused on opportunities versus problems. • Pays attention to detail. • Produces high quality work. • Continuously develops and applies knowledge and skills gained through study and experience.
Accountability	We establish and demonstrate with every opportunity the highest standards of stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes personal responsibility. • Stays focused on the result, even when challenges occur. • Communicates expectations and priorities consistently and clearly.
Leadership	We participate in solving problems facing our community by mobilizing resources for collective action. Our leadership gives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspires confidence, trust, and respect. • Conveys a vision or goal that inspires others to action.

	<p>direction to the community in the pursuit of optimizing our community's well-being.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens others through collaboration and information sharing. • Models behavior desired in others; leads by example. • Fosters teamwork. • Leverages relationships, skills, and knowledge to meet challenges. • Actively participates by offering opinions, ideas, and perspectives. • Fosters an environment of responsibility, creativity, and bold actions.
--	--	---

CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT

United Way of Southeast Minnesota (UWSEMN) is committed to the highest ethical standards. Indeed, based on the unique trust placed in UWSEMN to serve the public good, we have a special obligation to act ethically.

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

This UWSEMN Code of Ethics (Code) is based on our mission and guided by our fundamental values. (See Our Core Values): Integrity, Equity, Excellence, Accountability, and 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 UWSEMN volunteers, staff, and representatives in making good 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 UWSEMN President.

A. 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 UWSEMN 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.

B. Accountability

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

- Promote good stewardship of UWSEMN resources, including donations, grants, and other contributions that are used to pay operating expenses, salaries, and employee benefits.
- Refrain from using organizational resources for non-UWSEMN purposes.
- Observe and comply with all laws and regulations affecting UWSEMN.

C. 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 on response to solicitations.

D. Diversity and Equal Opportunity

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

- Value, champion, and embrace diversity in all aspects of UWSEMN activities and respect others without regard to race, color, religion, creed, age, sex, national origin or ancestry, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, or disability status.
- Support affirmative action and equal employment opportunity programs throughout UWSEMN.
- Refuse to engage in or tolerate in any other form of discrimination or harassment.

Procedures for making complaints and reporting violations: If you believe that you have been sexually harassed—or harassed because of your race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, or sexual orientation—by a co-worker, supervisor, customer, vendor, or volunteer, you should immediately report the incident to the President. The complaint will be immediately and thoroughly investigated in a professional manner. If the incident is regarding the President, the incident should be reported directly to the Board Chair or Vice Chair.

E. Conflicts of Interest

Any conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest which could tarnish the reputation of UWSEMNM, as well as undermine the public's trust in all United Way organizations, must be avoided as outlined in the Conflict of Interest Policy. Members of the board shall annually file with the United Way office a disclosure of all known potential conflicts of interest. In addition, at each board meeting, members must disclose any potential conflict of interest which would disallow them from discussion or voting.

UWSEMNM Volunteers:

- Should not knowingly take any action, or make any statement, intended to influence the conduct of UWSEMNM 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 annually file with the United Way office a disclosure of all known potential conflicts of interest.

F. Confidentiality and Privacy

Confidentiality is a hallmark of professionalism. We therefore:

- Ensure that all information that is confidential, privileged, or nonpublic is not disclosed inappropriately.
- Respect the privacy rights of all individuals in the performance of their UWSEMNM duties.

G. Political Contributions

UWSEMNM encourages individual participation in civic affairs. However, as a charitable organization, UWSEMNM 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 UWSEMNM.
- 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 UWSEMNM.
- 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 UWSEMNM 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 UWSEMNM.

H. Prohibition of Loans

UWSEMNM prohibits loans or the extension of credit to employees, board members or volunteers. Travel advances are not considered loans and must be reconciled within 45 days of the conclusion of associated travel.

Guidance and Closure

Volunteers, staff, and representatives are encouraged to seek guidance from the President or Board Chair 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 the President. Volunteers should contact the Board Chair. 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. UWSEMNM affirms prompt and fair resolution of all reported breaches.

GLOSSARY

Candidate for Public Office: An individual who offers themselves 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 UWSEMNI.

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.

Privileged Information: Information 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 UWSEMNI as independent contractors, consultants, or loaned executives.

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

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

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

EXAMPLES

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 coworkers 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 or the president.

Conflict of Interest

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

Solution: You must notify your supervisor. 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 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 UWSEM N’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 UWSEM N.

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 UWSEM N?

Solution: Solicitations are permitted at UWSEM N provided prior approval is obtained from the President. 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 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 UWSEM N.

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, UWSEM N 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 UWSEM N’s new fundraising strategy towards its largest donors.

Solution: Although you may want to be helpful, it is important 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 an appropriate member of the management team.

Political Contributions

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

Solution: UWSEMNs, as a charitable corporation, cannot legally 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 UWSEMNs, such as use of UWSEMNs stationery, name or logo.

DATES:

Established:

- December 20, 2006

Revised:

- Section H added February 5, 2010
- Section E revised November 18, 2014
- Section D revised September 18, 2018
- Organizational values revised January 21, 2020
- Roles and committee names updated to reflect current practice August 20, 2024
- Updated to reflect new organization name, United Way of Southeast Minnesota, January 21, 2025

CERTIFICATE

I acknowledge that I have received and read my personal copy of the United Way of Southeast Minnesota Code of Ethics and Conduct. I understand that each United Way of Southeast Minnesota 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 UWSEM staff and members of the Board of Directors.

Potential Conflicts:

Signed: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Print Name: _____