

United  
Way of  
Ross  
County

2022

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Revision of March 18, 2015 United Way of Ross County Code of  
Ethics with the addition of an updated contact list  
*July 16, 2020*

Code of Ethics  
and  
Whistleblower  
Policy

# United Way of Ross County, Code of Ethics and Whistleblower Policy | 2022

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October 14, 2022

It is United Way's intent, through annual compliance training, to ensure that all of its employees and volunteers have the knowledge and training to act ethically and legally, in compliance with United Way's Code of Ethics and Whistleblower policy.

It is United Way of Ross County's policy to provide equal opportunity for all employees and volunteers without regard to race, religion, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, marital status, covered veteran status, mental or physical disability, pregnancy, or any other basis prohibited by state or federal law. This policy extends to recruitment and employment, promotion, demotion, transfer, layoff, termination, rate of pay and other forms of compensation, education and training.

United Way of Ross County's Anti-Discrimination, Harassment and Equal Opportunity Policy prohibits employees and volunteers from harassing any other employee or volunteer, guest or other person in the course of the organization's business for any reason prohibited by law, including, but not limited to race, religion, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, marital status, covered veteran status, mental or physical disability, pregnancy, or any other basis prohibited by state or federal law.

Employees and volunteers must remember that United Way of Ross County's success depends on the maintenance of the trust placed in the organization by the community and our stakeholders. Our employees and volunteers must continually strive to maintain the respect, trust and confidence of the community.

Best Regards,

*Darin Simms*

Darin Simms  
President/CEO  
United Way of Ross County

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## Code of Ethics

### Introduction

The United Way of Ross County (UWRC) has been a leader in charitable service in Ross County since 1935. Our success depends on the maintenance of the trust placed in the organization by the community and our stakeholders. Our employees and volunteers must have the respect, trust and confidence of the community.

Each person associated with UWRC must make a personal commitment to lawful and ethical conduct and to follow our Code of Ethics. The Code of Ethics (Code) is intended to guide all employees and volunteers in their ethical commitment and conduct.

UWRC's leadership has the responsibility of fostering a culture of compliance in relation to the Code. Additionally, each individual is responsible for raising questions or concerns about what proper conduct for you is, or anyone else affiliated with the organization. The Governance Committee Chair (UWRC's Ethics Officer) will address concerns about inappropriate conduct with care and respect.

UWRC is committed to the highest standard of ethical conduct. The unique trust, given to use by the public gives us a special obligation to ensure this ethical conduct.

## Core Values

- **Integrity:** Trustworthy, accountable, and transparent
- **Leadership:** Engaging our community to develop greater capacity and maximize assets while advancing opportunities for all.
- **Stewardship:** Responsible management of community dollars and resources
- **Collaboration:** We can do more together
- **Inclusiveness:** We respect, reflect and reach out to the diverse members of our community.

## Responsible Parties

United Way of Ross County staff: The UWRC Code of Ethics applies to all employees of the organization.

United Way of Ross County volunteers: The UWRC Code of Ethics applies to all individuals serving as volunteers of the organization.

United Way of Ross County representatives: The UWRC Code of Ethics applies to all individuals serving as representatives of the organization, such as consultants, agents or independent contractors.

## Responsibilities

UWRC staff, volunteers and representatives must follow these basic obligations common to all policies:

- Have a basic understanding of issues covered by each provision included in the Code, and a detailed understanding of the provisions related to your specific job.
- Seek assistance from your supervisor or other UWRC compliance contacts when you have a question about the application of the Code provisions. (See How to Report Violations on page 13).
- Promptly raise any concern you or others have about a potential request that may violate the Code provisions.
- Understand the options and procedures available for raising ethical concerns. These are detailed in the Whistleblower section.
- If an issue is raised, but not resolved, raise it again with another one of the compliance contacts. (See How to Report Violations on page 13).
- Cooperate fully in any investigation into concerns about unethical behavior.
- Understand UWRC prohibits any form of retaliation or adverse action against anyone raising or helping to resolve an ethical question.

*In addition, UWRC leadership is expected to:*

- Build and maintain a culture of compliance, leading by example and using personal behavior as a model for staff, volunteers, and representatives.
- Ensure staff, volunteers and representatives are educated so they understand the requirements of the Code.
- Identify and communicate special risk areas that exist within the organization's operation.
- Conduct periodic compliance reviews.
- When compliance issues are identified, take prompt corrective or disciplinary action, and consult the executive committee and/or legal counsel as required.

## **Noncompliance**

Individuals who violate these policies are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, volunteer participation, or cancellation of representative contracts.

## **Commitment**

UWRC staff, volunteers, and representatives are asked to acknowledge their commitment to the Code of Ethics and Whistleblower policy with their signature on the Code of Ethics Certification page. Newly hired and/or recruited individuals will be asked to sign the Certification as part of their orientation process.

## **Code of Ethics Provisions**

### **1. Personal and Professional Integrity**

To establish the highest standards of personal and professional conduct to maintain respect and credibility within the community and among our stakeholders, we:

- Maintain the highest standards of performance, quality, service and achievement in working towards UWRC's mission.
- Communicate honestly and openly to avoid any misrepresentation.
- Promote a work environment which fosters open, honest communication and where all opinions are valued.
- Exhibit respect and fairness toward all with whom we come in contact.

### **2. Accountability**

To ensure full, fair and accurate disclosure of organizational activities and to perform duties and responsibilities in the best interest of the organization and community, we:

- Comply with applicable laws and regulations

- Promote good stewardship of all UWRC resources (dollars and people), including allocations, grants, and other contributions which are used to pay for program operating expenses, salaries, and employee benefits.
- Use UWRC resources for only United Way purposes.

### **3. Conflicts of Interest**

Volunteers should not knowingly take any action or make any statement intended to influence the conduct of UWRC in such a way as to confer any financial benefit on themselves, their immediate family members, or on any organization in which they or their immediate family members have a significant interest as shareholders, directors or officers.

To avoid the appearance of actual, apparent, or potential conflicts of interest, which could undermine the public's trust in the organization, we:

- Avoid any activity or outside interest which conflicts or appears to conflict with the best interest of the UWRC, including involvement with a current or potential United Way vendor, grantee, or competing organization, unless disclosed to and not deemed to be inappropriate by the UWRC Board of Directors.
- Ensure that outside employment and other activities do not adversely affect the performance of one's UWRC duties or the achievement of United Way's mission.
- Ensure travel, entertainment, and related expenses are incurred on a basis consistent with the mission of UWRC and not for personal gain or interest.
- Refrain from influencing the selection of staff, consultants, or vendor who are relatives or personal friends or who are affiliated with, employ or are employed by a person with whom they have a relationship which could raise a question of impartiality.



- Require volunteers and employees to complete a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement and Affirmation of Compliance annually. They shall disclose any actual or potential conflict as soon as it is known, or reasonably should be known, to the Board of Directors, Council of Advisors, or other Committee upon which they serve.
- Require volunteers with a declared conflict of interest to disqualify themselves from voting on a motion relative to the area of conflict. In some cases, it may be appropriate to leave the room when the vote is taken. If the conflict of interest is publically announced and cleared by the Chair of the body involved, the volunteer may usually participate in any discussions relative to the area of conflict.
- Recognize that UWRC Board membership by officials of Agencies is not, in and of itself, a conflict of interest, nor is eligibility for services from the Agency, provided such interest is known to the Chair and members of the UWRC Board, Council, Committee or Panel involved.

Agencies funded through UWRC must be treated fairly to avoid favoritism, discrimination, or appearance of impropriety. UWRC will:

- Communicate honestly and openly with agencies at all times.
- Treat agency personnel with respect and dignity in all dealings.
- Avoid favoritism in the allocation process.
- Include agency input on UWRC committees whenever appropriate.
- Ensure all agency information which is confidential, privileged, or non-public is not inappropriately disclosed.
- Ensure that each agency contract includes a non-discrimination statement provided by UWRC.
- Decline any gifts, gratuities or favors from agencies except for promotional items of nominal value.

- Base no allocation decisions on an agency’s performance in the United Way campaign.

#### **4. Confidentiality/Privacy**

As professionals, we must consider and protect the privacy of our stakeholders including donors, in the acquisition and dissemination of information. To maintain privacy and confidentiality of individual information in the performance of our duties and responsibilities, we:

- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of individual information at all times and utilize this information strictly in the performance of duties/responsibilities.
- Do not discuss access or display confidential information in the presence of unauthorized individuals.
- Ensure all confidential information is handled, stored and disposed of as required by UWRC policy.
- Do not disclose confidential information to anyone who does not have a need to know, unless prior written consent has been obtained or is required by law.
- Do not use intrusive methods to gather private information.
- Respect the privacy of all individuals in the performance of their United Way duties. UWRC will maintain information and records about employees for the purpose of supporting normal business functions such as the administration of benefit programs, compensation programs, and payroll. We will manage such records in a manner that serves the employee and UWRC’s interests while respecting privacy and confidentiality.

#### **5. Voluntary Giving**

Contributors include all individuals and entities that make charitable or in-kind contributions to UWRC. We understand and agree that the most

responsive contributors are those who are educated, informed and involved in the organization's activities.

To uphold the highest standards in soliciting gifts and to avoid any semblance of pressure or coercion to give, whether real, implied or perceived, we:

- Refrain from any use of coercion in fundraising activities, including predicating professional advancement on response to solicitations.
- Do not allow "finder's fees" or kickbacks of any kind.
- Ensure all solicitation materials are accurate and correctly reflect UWRC's mission and the use solicited funds.
- Ensure contributions are used in accordance with the donors' intention.
- Obtain consent by the donor before altering the condition of a gift.
- Give contributors the option of not having their names published in recognition material
- Endeavor to preserve and honor the fundraising boundaries of other United Way organizations.

## **6. Anti-Discrimination, Harassment and Equal Opportunity**

UWRC will provide its representatives with a work environment free from discrimination and harassment. We are responsible for fostering and promoting diversity and equal opportunity in all of our endeavors. To create and sustain an environment that encourages all representatives to reach their fullest potential in a positive and productive manner, we:

- Respect others without regard to race, religion, color, sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity, national origin, age, marital status, covered veteran status, mental or physical disability, pregnancy, or any other basis prohibited by state or federal law.
- Treat individuals with dignity, respect and compassion.

- Foster a trusting work environment free of harassment, intimidation, and unlawful discrimination.
- Identify harassment as verbal, sexual, text, email and/or physical conduct which is made a condition of employment, used as a basis for employment decisions, or has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

## **7. Political Contributions/Activities**

As a charitable organization, UWRC is prohibited from making contributions to any candidate for public office or to any political committee. Individual participation in political activities must not create the appearance that such activity is by, or on behalf of, the organization. UWRC must ensure that no substantial part of the organization's activities is directed toward attempting to influence legislation. We therefore:

- Refrain from making any contributions to any candidate for public office or political committee on behalf of UWRC, including the use of UWRC facilities for political campaign activities.
- 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 UWRC.
- Prohibit all campaign activity at UWRC activities and on United Way property, including posting of campaign signs, wearing buttons promoting a candidate, and distributing campaign literature. Bumper stickers and similar small campaign signs on automobiles on UWRC property are not governed by this prohibition.
- Within the limitations stated above, participation in grassroots advocacy in support of issues, rather than candidates, is permitted.

## **Whistleblower Policy**

### **Responsibility to Report Known or Suspected Violations**

It is the responsibility of all UWRC representatives to comply with the code of Ethics and to report violations or suspected violations in accordance with this policy. The policy is intended to encourage and enable representatives to raise serious concerns within the organization through a standardized process.

### **Non-Retaliation Statement**

No representative who in good faith reports a violation of the Code of Ethics shall suffer harassment, retaliation or adverse employment and/or service consequence. Anyone who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline action up to and including termination of employment or service.

### **How to Report Violations/Suspected Violations**

The Code of Ethics and Whistleblower policy addresses United Way of Ross County's open-door policy and suggests representatives share their questions, concerns, suggestions or complaints with someone who can address them. You are encouraged to speak first with your supervisor with whom you are comfortable. Supervisors are required to report suspected ethics violations to the organization's Chair of the Governance Committee of the Board of Trustees, who has specific responsibilities related to the investigation and resolution of reported violations (contact information found on page 16 of this document). For suspected fraud, or when you are not satisfied or comfortable with the UWRC's open door policy, individuals should contact the Organization's Chairman of the Governance Committee of the Board of Trustees (Ethics Officer).

## **What Happens After a Violation is Reported?**

The Organization's Ethic's Officer is responsible for notifying the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of all reported violations. The Board Chairman and the Ethics Officer are responsible for investigating and resolving all complaints and allegation of violations of the Code of Ethics and Whistleblower policy. The Board Chairman is required to report all complaints and allegations to the Governance Committee to be dealt with by the Governance Committee. If the Board Chairman is named in the report, the Chairman of the Governance Committee of the Board of Trustees (Ethics Officer) will perform all the duties the Board Chairman would otherwise have performed in a review and investigation.

If the complaint was not made anonymously, the Chairman of the Governance Committee of the Board of Trustees (Ethics Officer) will acknowledge receipt of the reported violation or suspected violation within five business days. All reports will be promptly investigated, and appropriate corrective action taken as determined by the investigation and stated in a written report.

## **Accounting and Auditing Matters**

The Governance Committee has determined the Finance and Audit Committee of the Board of Directors shall address all complaints and allegations regarding accounting and financial impropriety and misuse of the Organization's resources. The Board Chairman is responsible for immediately notifying the Governance Committee of any such complaint and shall work with the Finance and Audit Committee to resolve the matter.

If the Board Chairman is named in the complaint/allegation the Chairman of the Governance Committee of the Board of Trustees (Ethics Officer) will perform all the duties the Board Chairman would otherwise have performed in a review and investigation.

## **Acting in Good Faith**

Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation of the Code of Ethics must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the

information disclosed indicates a violation of the Code. Any allegations that are proven to be unsubstantiated and/or were proven to have been made maliciously or were knowingly false will be viewed as a serious offense requiring disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or service.

## Confidentiality

Violations or suspected violations may be submitted on a confidential basis or may be submitted anonymously. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

## Appeal Review

Depending on the circumstances and at the discretion of the Governance Committee, persons implicated in a report and investigation of unethical behavior may be given the opportunity to meet with the Executive Committee for further review and discussion. The involved party (ies) must submit a written request for review of the matter by the Executive Committee to the Chairman of the Governance Committee of the Board of Trustees and to the Chairman of the Board. Upon completion of the appeal review, the person(s) will receive an explanation of the conclusions reached and the reasons for those conclusions within 10 business days of submitting the appeal. Decisions resulting from appeal reviews by the Executive Committee will be final.

## Persons to Contact

Chief Executive Office	Darin Simms	69 East Water Street Chillicothe Ohio 45601 Darin.Simms@unitedwayross.org	(740) 773-3280
Ethics Officer	Adrienne D'Souza	69 East Water Street Chillicothe Ohio 45601 Dsouza.adrienne@gmail.com	(740) 773-3280

Chair of the Board      James Hill      69 East Water Street      (740) 773-3280  
Chillicothe Ohio 45601  
jhill@crcpl.org

## Glossary

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

**Confidential information** – information entrusted to another person, with an understanding of privacy.

**Coercion**- the threat of the intention of forcing someone to do something

**Nonpublic information** - business, financial or personal information that 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.

**Political Contributions**- anything of value, including monetary and in-kind gifts, provided for the purpose of influencing the outcome of an election.

**Privileged Information**- information protected from involuntary disclosure by legally recognized privileges such as attorney-client, et al.

**Promotional Items of Nominal Value**- gifts used to promote an entity's name, product, or services with a retail value of \$25 or less.

**Representatives**- individuals who provide personal services to the United Way of Ross County, employees, volunteers, independent contractors, consultants, or loaned campaign specialists.

**Sexual Harassment** - occurs when any representative requests dates, sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature as a condition of employment or used as a basis for employment decisions. 2. Fosters an intimidating, offensive, or hostile work



environment, which is created by unwelcome sexual advances, offensive jokes, or other offensive verbal and physical behavior.

**Staff-** individuals who provide services to UWRC as employees

**Stakeholders-** individuals or entities that shares a vested interest in the vision/mission of UWRC.

**Transparency-** implies openness, communication and accountability.

**Vendors-** entities that provide goods and services to UWRC for a fee.

**Volunteers-** all members of the UWRC Board of Trustees, all committees appointed by the Board of Trustees, and others working on behalf of the Organization that perform duties without compensation.

**Whistleblower-** someone who exposes wrongdoing inside an organization.

## Examples

### **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 their behavior is unwelcome and ask them to stop. If it continues, he should bring it to the attention of his supervisor.

### **Conflict of Interest**

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

*Solution:* You must notify your supervisor and the 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 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 vendor from a hotel who learns you are planning a regional conference for UWRC. 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 UWRC. However, picking up the lunch tab on a relationship-building call should be considered a normal development activity, not a conflict of interest.

### **Confidentiality**

*Situation:* A reporter from a newspaper calls you and asks you for your comments concerning United Way'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 United Way, it is necessary that you refer the call to the Chief Executive Officer.

### **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 UWRC?

*Solution:* Solicitations are permitted at UWRC provided prior approval is obtained from the Executive Director. 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 that 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 UWRC.

*Solution:* Favoritism based on family or close personal relationships is unfair to other employees. The appearance of such favoritism is easily perceived, even when such situations are harmless. To avoid such an appearance, UWRC employees may not supervise or exercise management authority, directly or indirectly, over staff with which 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 coworkers or other potential employees.

### **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 United Way's political contribution policy?

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

## CODE OF ETHICS CERTIFICATION

I acknowledge that I have received and read my personal copy of the United Way of Ross County Code of Ethics and Whistleblower Policy.

I understand that every United Way of Ross County representative is responsible for adhering to the principles and standards of the Code. I affirm that my conduct is in accord with the principles and standards of the Code; to the best of my ability and understanding,

I have listed below any actual or potential conflicts of interest or ethical concerns.

Any known issues or concerns:

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Please list any actual or potential conflicts of interest:

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To the best of my knowledge, I do not have any conflicts: (initials)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name \_\_\_\_\_