

National Assembly of Health & Human Service Organizations

Code of Ethics
Adopted: June 15, 2004

I. Introduction

The National Assembly recognizes that as an association it is accountable to its members and as a nonprofit organization it is accountable to the government and the public as well. It must earn the support of its members and the trust of the public every day, trust that can only be earned by adhering to the highest ethical standards for the nonprofit sector. The Assembly aspires to no less than this.

Adhering to relevant laws and regulations is the minimum standard of expected behavior for a government-sanctioned nonprofit organization. We aspire not just to obey the law but to embrace the spirit of the law, going beyond legal requirements to ensure that what the Assembly does is consistent with what it is established to do. As such, transparency, openness and responsiveness to public concerns are integral to our practices.

The Assembly embraces this Code of Ethics with gratitude to Independent Sector for establishing a model code of ethics, from which the present document is liberally adapted, and Boys and Girls Clubs of America, from which the Conflict of Interest section was adapted.

II. Statement of Values

The National Assembly embraces these values:

- Commitment to the public good;
- Accountability to the public;
- Commitment beyond the law;
- Respect for the worth and dignity of individuals;
- Inclusiveness and social justice;
- Respect for pluralism and diversity
- Transparency, integrity and honesty;
- Responsible stewardship of resources;
- Commitment to excellence and to maintaining the public trust; and
- Commitment to collaboration with other entities and with and among its members.

III. Code of Ethics

A. Personal and Professional Integrity

All staff, board members and volunteers of the organization act with honesty, integrity and openness in all their dealings as representatives of the organization. The organization promotes a working environment that values respect, fairness and integrity.

B. Mission

The organization has a clearly stated mission and purpose, approved by the board of directors, in pursuit of the public good. All of its programs support that mission and all who work for or on behalf of the organization understand and are loyal to that mission and purpose. The mission is responsive to the constituency of the Assembly and is of value to the society at large.

C. Governance

The organization has an active voluntary¹ governing body that is responsible for setting the mission and strategic direction of the organization and oversight of the finances, operations, and policies of the organization. The governing body:

- Ensures that its board members have the requisite skills and experience to carry out their duties and that all members understand and fulfill their governance duties, acting for the benefit of the organization and its public purpose;
- Is responsible for the hiring, firing, and regular review of the performance of the chief executive officer, and ensures that the compensation of the chief executive officer is reasonable and appropriate;
- Ensures that the CEO and appropriate staff provide the governing body with timely and comprehensive information so that the governing body can effectively carry out its duties;
- Ensures that the organization conducts all transactions and dealings with integrity and honesty;
- Ensures that the organization promotes working relationships with board members, staff, volunteers, and program beneficiaries that are based on mutual respect, fairness and openness;
- Ensures that the organization is fair and inclusive in its hiring and promotion policies and practices for all board, staff and volunteer positions;
- Ensures that policies of the organization are in writing, clearly articulated and officially adopted;
- Ensures that the resources of the organization are responsibly and prudently managed; and,
- Ensures that the organization has the capacity to carry out its programs effectively.

D. Legal Compliance

The organization is knowledgeable of and complies with all laws, regulations and applicable international conventions.

E. Responsible Stewardship

The organization manages its funds responsibly and prudently. This should include the following considerations:

- It spends a reasonable percentage of its annual budget on programs in pursuance of its mission;

¹ Voluntary in the sense of being comprised of unpaid members, with the exception of the CEO, who serves on the board ex-officio.

- It spends an adequate amount on administrative expenses to ensure effective accounting systems, internal controls, competent staff, and other expenditures critical to professional management;
- The organization compensates staff, and any others who may receive compensation, reasonably and appropriately;
- The organization does not accumulate operating funds excessively;
- The organization ensures that all spending practices and policies are fair, reasonable and appropriate to fulfill the mission of the organization;
- All financial reports are factually accurate and complete in all material respects;
- The finances are audited annually by a qualified external auditor or auditing firm selected by the Board of Directors.

F. Conflicts of Interest

The National Assembly, its staff, directors and volunteers place the purposes and integrity of the organization above their own interests in the course of their efforts on behalf of the National Assembly. To ensure that no conflicts of interest or appearances thereof occur, staff members shall annually and directors as they are elected shall sign a statement providing that they:

- Will not place their personal or professional interests in conflict with the interests of the National Assembly;
- Will not benefit personally or financially from any dealing with the National Assembly;
- Will avoid any impropriety or appearance of impropriety in the performance of their duties on behalf of the National Assembly;
- Will not request or accept personal payments, favors, or gifts of substantial value from current or potential vendors;
- Will not participate in activities that are competitive with the interests of the Assembly;
- Will declare any personal, business or professional involvements or conflicts of interest with the interests of the Assembly and recuse themselves from all affected activities if called upon to do so by the Board or CEO of the Assembly; and
- Will abide by this Code of Ethics.

G. Openness and Disclosure

The organization provides is responsive in a timely manner to reasonable requests for information. All information about the organization fully and honestly reflects the policies and practices of the organization. Basic informational data about the organization, such as the Form 990, reviews and compilations, and audited financial statements are available to the public. All financial, organizational, and program reports will be complete and accurate in all material respects.

H. Program Accountability

The organization regularly reviews program effectiveness and has mechanisms to incorporate lessons learned into future programs. The organization is committed to improving program and organizational effectiveness and develops mechanisms to promote learning from its activities and the field. The organization is responsive to changes in its field of activity and is responsive to the needs of its constituencies.

I. Inclusiveness and Diversity

The organization embraces diversity and inclusiveness among its staff, board and volunteers. The organization takes meaningful steps to promote inclusiveness in its hiring, retention, promotion, board recruitment and constituencies served.

J. Fundraising

The organization is truthful in soliciting funds from public sources, institutions, businesses, and individuals. The Assembly respects the privacy concerns of donors and expends funds consistent with donor intent. The organization discloses important and relevant information to potential donors.

In raising funds, the organization respects the rights of donors, as follows:

- To be informed of the mission of the organization, the way the resources will be used and their capacity to use donations effectively for their intended purposes;
- To be informed of the identity of those serving on the organization's governing board and to expect the board to exercise prudent judgment in its stewardship responsibilities;
- To have access to the organization's most recent financial reports;
- To be assured their gifts will be used for the purposes for which they were given;
- To receive appropriate acknowledgement and recognition;
- To be assured that information about their donations is handled with respect and with confidentiality to the extent provided by the law;
- To expect that all relationships with individuals representing organizations of interest to the donor will be professional in nature;
- To be informed whether those seeking donations are volunteers, employees of the organizations or hired solicitors;
- To have the opportunity for their names to be deleted from mailing lists that an organization may intend to share; and,
- To feel free to ask questions when making a donation and to receive prompt, truthful and forthright answers.