

**United Way Suncoast  
Code of Ethics**

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**A Message from the United Way Suncoast Board of Directors**

At the core, to care for one another, we have to trust one another. As volunteers, employees, and representatives of United Way Suncoast, we have a responsibility to uphold the highest of ethical standards – both for ourselves and for the benefit of community. We believe these standards go beyond compliance with laws and regulations – calling us to fulfill higher obligations as stewards of the public trust. Upholding these ethical standards is at the heart of what we do and who we are as an organization. Conducting our activities with honesty, integrity, and in the best interest of the organization we serve, is essential to preserving and growing the United Way brand and reputation.

In order to effectively address ethical challenges, there must be a mutual commitment between the organization, and its volunteers and staff, to seek and provide guidance and clarification when there are questions about applying our principles and standards. Only by continuing to work together on these issues can we ensure a strong United Way culture that fulfills its commitment to build and maintain the public trust.

Thank you for taking the time to review the Code of Ethics guidance contained in these pages. Your signature on and return of the Certification of Receipt will help ensure the continued commitment of this organization to live to the highest and best standards of the industry.

Sincerely,

Dan Vigne  
Board Chair

## **Our Core Values**

The mission of United Way Suncoast is to improve lives and create lasting community change by mobilizing the caring people of Tampa Bay. This critical role requires that all of us involved in the United Way Suncoast (UWS), who foster such an essential public good, must assume the responsibility of earning public trust. Accordingly, UWS plays a unique role both as a leader in the health and human services sector and as a major resource to other United Way organizations and community partners 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.

These are the values, which guide and direct us:

1. **Integrity** – *Our actions support our mission with transparency.*
2. **Innovation** – *We are agile, creative and adaptable to our community needs and changing environment.*
3. **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion** – *We seek to understand cultural and community differences and embrace these differences through our words and actions.*
4. **Stewardship** – *We respect time, resources and generosity.*
5. **Collaboration** – *We build relationships for the greater good.*

## Code of Ethics

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

The UWS Code of Ethics (Code) is based on our mission and guided by our fundamental values. We are mindful that these 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 UWS 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, the Human Resources Department, the President/CEO, or the UWS Ethics Officer.

**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 toward the UWS 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.

**Accountability** – UWS is responsible to its stakeholders, which include donors and others who have placed faith in UWS.

To uphold this trust we:

- Promote good stewardship of UWS resources.
- Refrain from using organizational resources for non-UWS purposes.
- Observe and comply with all laws and regulations affecting UWS.

**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.

**Inclusion** – UWS values diversity in its employees and volunteers as a resource, which adds to our ability to understand and to respond to our total community. This respect for differences is reflected in our responsiveness to our fellow co-workers, volunteers and to the people we serve.

We therefore:

- Provide equal employment opportunities to all people without regard to race, color, religion, gender, age, national origin, sexual orientation, disability or any other characteristic protected by law.
- Assure equal opportunity and equal consideration to all applicants and employees.
- Are committed to understanding the political, economic, social, and cultural context of our work activities.
- 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.

**Conflict of Interest – General** - Our goal is to avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest, which could tarnish the reputation of UWS, as well as undermine the public's trust in all United Way organizations, staff and representatives.

We therefore:

- Avoid any activity or outside interest which conflicts or appears to conflict with the best interest of UWS, including involvement with a current or potential UWS vendor, grantee, or competing organization unless disclosed to and not deemed to be inappropriate by the UWS or UWS Board.
- Refrain from influencing the selection of staff, consultants or vendors who are relatives or personal friends affiliated with, employ, or employed by a person with whom they have a relationship that adversely affects the appearance of impartiality.
- Refrain from making any payments that may improperly influence government officials, business partners or other individuals. Exercise due diligence to ensure funds are not used or diverted to illegal payments of any kind. Ensure payments are in accordance with UWS financial policies.

## **Rules of Conduct**

### **Volunteers**

- Should not knowingly take any action, or make any statement, intended to influence the conduct of UWS in such a way to confer any financial benefits 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 Board Ethics Officer a disclosure of all known potential conflicts of interest.

### **Staff**

- Should not knowingly take any action, or make any statement, intended to influence the conduct of UWS in such a way to confer any financial benefits 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.
- Ensure that outside employment and other activities do not adversely affect the performance of UWS duties or the achievement of UWS's mission.

- Ensure that travel, entertainment and related expenses are incurred on a basis consistent with the mission of UWS and not for personal gain or interest.
- Decline any gift, gratuity or favor in the performance of UWS duties except for promotional items of nominal value, and any food, transportation, lodging or entertainment unless directly related to UWS business.
- Refrain from employing any relatives of current employees or Board members.
- Avoid appearance of impropriety.
- Disclose all known conflicts or potential conflicts of interest in any matter to Human Resources.
- Members of the staff shall annually file with Human Resources a disclosure of all known potential conflicts of interest.

**Confidentiality and Privacy** – Confidentiality is a hallmark of professionalism.

We therefore:

- Refer all questions (including job references) concerning current or past personnel to the Human Resources Department and release salary information only as authorized by the Human Resources Department, unless there is a written release signed by the employee attached to the request. Information on volunteers, UWS campaigns, or clients is released only on the basis of need-to-know as appropriate to the job responsibility. Upon hire, each employee is required to sign a confidentiality agreement and it is filed with the Human Resources Department.
- Ensure that all information, which is confidential, privileged or nonpublic, is not disclosed inappropriately.
- Refrain from use of information acquired in the course of work for personal gain.
- Respect the privacy rights of all individuals in the performance of their UWS duties.

**Political Contributions** – UWS encourages individual’s participation in civic affairs. However as a charitable organization, UWS may not make contributions to any candidate for public office or political committee and staff 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 UWS.
- 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 UWS.
- 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 UWS, while engaging in political activities in an individual capacity.
- Refrain from engaging in political activities in a manner that may create the appearance that such activity is by or on behalf of UWS.

**Guidance and Disclosure** – Volunteers, staff, and representatives are encouraged to seek guidance from the Audit & Ethics Committee and/or Board 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 to a supervisor or the Board Ethics Officer. Staff and representatives should contact a supervisor or the Ethics Officer. Volunteers should contact the Audit & Ethics Committee Chair/Board Ethics Officer with reports of suspected or known accounting, auditing, or financial impropriety.

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, including termination of employment for serious misconduct, fraud, theft, falsification of records, dishonesty or violation of UWS policies.
- Retaliation against a person who suspects and reports a breach in good faith will be treated as an independent breach of the code.
- UWS affirms prompt and fair resolution of all reported breaches.

#### **Definition of Terms**

- **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 UWS.
- **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 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 a retail value of \$200 or less.
- **Representatives:** individuals who provide personal services to UWS as independent contractors, consultants or loaned executives.
- **Staff:** all individuals, who provide services to UWS as employees or leased employees.
- **Vendors:** entities which provide goods and services to UWS for a fee.
- **Volunteers:** all members of the UWS Board of Directors, and all Board Committee members, and others who perform their UWS duties without compensation.

**Created:** June 23, 2004

**Revised:** March 28, 2012 (Updated for Suncoast name change 10/8/12)

**Revised:** May 16, 2016

**Approved:** May 25, 2016

**United Way Suncoast  
Code of Ethics Certificate of Receipt**

I acknowledge that I have received and read my personal copy of the United Way Suncoast Code of Ethics. I understand and confirm that I will conduct myself in accord with the principles and standards of the code.

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Printed Name

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Signature

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Date