



**United Way of the Lowcountry, Inc.  
Code of Ethics**

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United Way of the Lowcountry (UWL) is committed to the highest ethical standards. Because of the unique trust placed in UWL to serve the public good, we have a special obligation to act ethically.

The success of UWL and our reputation depend upon the ethical conduct of everyone affiliated with UWL. Volunteers and staff set an example for one another by their pursuit of excellence as reflected in high standards of performance, professionalism and ethical conduct.

This Code of Ethics (Code) is based on our mission and is guided by our fundamental values of Stewardship/Accountability, Results, Responsiveness, Integrity, Courage, Diversity and Innovation.

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 every challenge that might arise, the Code communicates key guidelines to help UWL volunteers, staff, and representatives make good decisions that are ethical and in accordance with applicable legal and IRS requirements.

1. **STEWARDSHIP/ACCOUNTABILITY:** UWL is responsible to its stakeholders, which include partner organizations, donors and others who have placed faith in UWL. To uphold this trust, we:
  - Promote good stewardship of UWL resources including contributions and other grants.
  - Operate in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles for non-profit organizations with full disclosure and transparency.
  - Never use organizational resources for non-UWL purposes.
  - Observe and comply with all laws and regulations affecting UWL.
  - Make full and fair disclosure of all relevant information to stakeholders, who have a right to know how their dollars are spent.
  - Use donor resources wisely, efficiently and objectively.
  - Continually review the ever-changing needs of our community and invest in programs and services that maximize benefits to meet the critical needs.
  
2. **RESULTS:** UWL will focus on results in terms of positive community impact, as assessed by outcomes measurement. We are committed to being a progressive United Way that remains relevant to our community.
  
3. **RESPONSIVENESS:** We are committed to identifying and responding to the needs of our community by making a positive impact on the lives of our people. UWL volunteers and staff will be open and welcoming to any suggestion or expression of need from the Beaufort and Jasper County community, while reserving the right to make decisions on such input that comply with our core values and strategic plan.

4. **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 UWL mission.
  - Communicate honestly and openly and avoid misrepresentation.
  - Promote a working environment where honesty, open communication and opinions are valued.
  - Exhibit respect and fairness toward all those with whom we come into contact.
5. **COURAGE:** UWL will stand up for critical issues that are important to our community. Even when unpopular causes are involved, we will have the courage to do what is right for the people in need in our community.
6. **DIVERSITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY:** UWL is an equal opportunity organization and is committed to the principle of diversity. We therefore:
  - Value, champion and embrace diversity in all aspects of UWL activities and respect others without regard to race, color, religion, creed, age, sex, national origin or ancestry, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation or status as a qualified disabled or handicapped individual.
  - Support equal opportunity employment.
  - Strive to involve and include people from all segments of our community in every aspect of our organization.
7. **INNOVATION:** Recognizing that we must keep pace with the times to achieve maximum impact on our community, UWL will stay abreast of developments in technology, fund-raising techniques and resources, and methods of improving accuracy in gauging UWL's effect on the lives of people in the Beaufort and Jasper County community.

In addition to reinforcing our core values, this UWL Code of Ethics includes other important considerations.

- A. **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 fund-raising activities, including predicating professional advancement on response to solicitations.
- B. **VOLUNTEERISM:** We maintain that as an organization and as a community we are only as strong as our volunteers. To ensure this important element of our effectiveness continues:
  - We promote and encourage the spirit of volunteerism and realize that volunteers are essential to the successful achievement of UWL's mission and vision.
  - We believe that the most effective model of service and excellence is created through volunteer leadership.

UWL volunteers and staff will:

- Treat each other with fairness, equity and respect;
- Work as a team in all appropriate levels and phases of planning and decision-making; and
- Provide support and recognition that are consistent with the spirit of volunteerism and team work.

**C. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:** This is to certify that I, except with regard to carrying out my duties as an officer, volunteer, director or staff member of UWL, have not participated directly or indirectly in activities with any other party doing business with UWL which has resulted in personal profit or gain to me, my business affiliation or family.

As a member of UWL Board of Directors, Staff, or volunteer, I shall refrain from obtaining any list of UWL contributors or other constituencies or data for personal or private solicitation purposes at any time for any reason during the term of my affiliation with UWL.

Each individual shall disclose in writing herein to UWL any potential conflicts of interest and will excuse himself/herself from the room during any discussion pertaining to potential conflicts of interest and decline to participate in any discussion or decision on related matters.

I have disclosed below any potential conflicts of interest related to work with other organizations, business or personal endeavors that I consider to be a potential conflict of interest with the work of UWL.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

As a member of the UWL Board of Directors, staff, or volunteer, I will avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest that could tarnish the reputation of UWL or undermine the public's trust in UWL by:

- Avoiding any activity or outside interest that conflicts or appears to conflict with the best interest of UWL, including involvement with a current or potential UWL vendor, grantee or competing organization.
- Ensuring that outside employment and other activities do not adversely affect the performance of my UWL duties or the achievement of the mission of UWL.
- Ensuring that expenses related to the conduct of the organization's business are incurred on a basis consistent with the mission of UWL and not for personal gain or interests.
- Declining any gift, gratuity or favor in the performance of UWL duties except for promotional items of nominal value, and any food, transportation, lodging or entertainment unless directly related to UWL business.
- Refraining from influencing the selection of staff, consultants or vendors who are relatives, personal friends or affiliated with any relationship that adversely affects the appearance of impartiality.
- Knowingly takes any action or makes any statement intended to influence the conduct of UWL in such a way as 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.

**D. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY:** Confidentiality is a hallmark of professionalism. I therefore:

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

**E. POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS:** As a charitable corporation, UWL is prohibited from making contributions to any candidate for public office or to any political committee. UWL therefore:

- Refrains from making any contributions to any candidate for public office or political committee on behalf of UWL, including the use of UWL facilities for political campaign activities.
- Refrains 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 UWL.

*Amended and Approved by UWL Board of Directors 3/02/10*

As a volunteer and or staff of the United Way of the Lowcountry, I have read, understand and agree to abide by this code of ethics and conflict of interest statement.

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Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Please print your name