

Goal: To establish a set of principles and practices of the Lee County Continuum of Care (CoC) Governing Board that will set parameters and provide guidance and direction for board conduct and decision-making.

Code: Members of the Governing Board of the Continuum of Care are committed to observing and promoting the highest standards of ethical conduct in the performance of their responsibilities on the board of CoC. Board members pledge to accept this code as a minimum guideline for ethical conduct.

I. Purpose

The Governing Board for the Lee County Continuum of Care (CoC) has adopted the following Code of Conduct. This Code is intended to focus directors, officers and support staff on areas of ethical risk, provide guidance to help them recognize and deal with ethical issues, provide mechanisms to report unethical conduct, foster a culture of honesty and accountability. No code or policy can anticipate every situation that may arise. Accordingly, this Code is to serve as a source of guiding principles.

II. Introduction

Each board member, officer and support staff is expected to adhere to a high standard of ethical conduct. The good name of the Continuum of Care depends on the way board members, officers and support staff conduct business and the way the public perceives that conduct. Unethical actions, or the appearance of unethical actions, are not acceptable. Board members, officers and support staff are to be guided by the following principles in carrying out their responsibilities:

III. Accountability

1. Faithfully abide by the governing charter and policies of Continuum of Care.
2. Exercise reasonable care, good faith and due diligence in organizational affairs.
3. Fully disclose, at the earliest opportunity, information that may result in a perceived or actual conflict of interest.
4. Fully disclose, at the earliest opportunity, information that would have significance in board decision-making.

IV. Professional Excellence

1. Maintain a professional level of courtesy, respect, and objectivity in all Continuum of Care activities.
2. Adhere to the highest standards of conduct to inspire public confidence and trust in public service.
3. Respect the confidentiality of sensitive information known due to board service.
4. Ensure when communicating CoC information that it is fair, accurate, and complete.
5. Reject knowingly making any misrepresentations relating to CoC recommendations, actions, or activities.
6. Refuse to engage in any professional conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, or deceit.
7. Act in such a manner as to enhance personal and professional honor, integrity, and dignity.
8. Treat with respect and consideration all persons, regardless of race, religion, gender, abilities, age, or national origin.
9. Respect the diversity of opinions and register dissent as appropriate.
10. Exercise the powers invested in your position for the good of all members and the organization.
11. Promote collaboration, cooperation, and partnership among CoC members.

V. Social Media Policy

The CoC appreciates that social media can be a rewarding way for board members and staff to share information about themselves, and to interact with people in the community and around the world. Because board members and staff serve the public, however, and potentially are subject to public scrutiny of their on and off-duty conduct, use of social media carries with it risks and responsibilities of which board members and staff must be aware. This is especially true for those board members or staff who are in a leadership capacity, although it applies to everyone. This policy sets forth the CoC's guidelines on board members and staff social media usage.

Definition: “Social media” shall include all ways of communicating with others via internet, including, but not limited to, use of Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Snapchat, Pinterest, Reddit, or Instagram; communications on blogs, bulletin boards, wikis, chat rooms and on-line journals; file-sharing including, but not limited to, Dropbox, Airdrop, or Google Drive; and items posted in comment sections to stories published on-line by traditional media outlets such as newspapers and television stations.

1. Board members and staff are solely responsible for what they post on social media. Remember that many postings can be viewed worldwide and are archived “forever,” meaning that they cannot be deleted once posted, or are archived even if deleted and that seemingly “private” posts can easily be shared with a wide audience via a single contact in your closed network. It is also easy to capture short-lived messages (like Snapchat) and rebroadcast them in a more permanent format despite the originator’s intent.
2. Unless communications via social media are part of a board member or staff’s regular job duties, they are not to represent themselves as spokespeople for the CoC. Similarly, if commenting about the CoC or its policies or services, board members and staff whose job duties do not include social media communications must make clear that they are speaking in a personal capacity, rather than in an official capacity, and that their views do not represent those of the CoC or of other board members or staff. Board members and staff may not post something about the CoC, or about the Lee County Government, that they know to be false
3. In general, while board members and staff have the right to comment freely on social media about matters of public concern—issues or events of political, social, or other importance to our community—the comments must not be unduly disruptive to the CoC’s operations, or interfere/distract from board duties.
4. Whether a comment is on a matter of public concern or not, board members and staff must always be courteous when interacting on social media. The CoC’s and Lee County’s Government policies on discriminatory remarks, unlawful harassment, and threats of violence all apply to board members and staff posts on social media.
5. Board members and staff must avoid posting material about their board work that could be construed as malicious, obscene, or threatening, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. An example of prohibited conduct would be offensive or obscene posts deliberately intended to harm a collaborator’s reputation, or the use of racial, ethnic, or gender slurs to refer to other board members or staff.
6. Board members and staff may not use their board title to register on social networks or blogs that are not official Lee County social media accounts.
7. Board members and staff may not use social media or file sharing applications to evade the requirements of Florida’s Public Records Law, or the Government-in-the-Sunshine Law, or to reveal information that is confidential or exempt from disclosure under the Public Records Law.
8. Board members or staff may not evade these guidelines by posting anonymously or under a screen name.

VI. Penalties

1. Penalties imposed for breach of the CoC’s Code of Ethics Policy may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Excluding the member from portions of all future meetings and discussions which relate to the breach, and/or
 - b. Censure of the member in private, public, or both, and/or
 - c. Removal of the member from the board by a resolution passed by a vote of two-thirds of the Board of Directors.

I have read the Code of Ethical Conduct for the Lee County Continuum of Care and agree to uphold the aforementioned responsibilities –

Print Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____