

Board Member Code of Ethics Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Code of Ethics is to ensure that all members of the Board of Directors uphold the highest standards of integrity, professionalism, and ethical conduct in service to the Rescue. This policy supports transparency, protects the Rescue's reputation, and reinforces the fiduciary responsibilities of board members.

2. Applicability

This policy applies to all directors of the Rescue. Officers, committee members, and key volunteers are expected to follow the same ethical standards, but this Code specifically governs board-level conduct.

3. Ethical Principles

a. Duty of Care

Board members shall make informed decisions, review materials in advance, participate actively in meetings, and exercise sound judgment in all matters affecting the Rescue.

b. Duty of Loyalty

Board members shall act in the best interest of the Rescue at all times, placing the organization's mission above personal or professional interests.

c. Duty of Obedience

Board members shall ensure that the Rescue complies with applicable laws, regulations, bylaws, and board-approved policies.

4. Integrity and Professional Conduct

Board members agree to:

- Conduct themselves with honesty, fairness, and respect
- Communicate professionally with fellow board members, volunteers, fosters, adopters, and the public
- Maintain a drama-free, collaborative environment
- Avoid harassment, bullying, intimidation, or gossip
- Represent the Rescue positively in all interactions
- Use their position only for the benefit of the Rescue, never for personal gain

5. Confidentiality

Board members shall:

- Maintain confidentiality of sensitive information
- Protect private information about volunteers, fosters, adopters, donors, and partners
- Refrain from sharing internal discussions, documents, or deliberations outside the board unless authorized

Confidentiality continues even after a board member leaves the Board.

6. Conflicts of Interest

Board members shall:

- Avoid actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest
- Disclose conflicts promptly
- Recuse themselves from related discussions and votes
- Complete the annual Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form

This Code works in conjunction with the Rescue's Conflict of Interest Policy.

7. Use of Resources

Board members shall:

- Use Rescue funds, assets, and resources only for authorized purposes
- Avoid waste, misuse, or personal benefit
- Follow all financial controls and reimbursement procedures

8. Compliance With Laws and Policies

Board members shall comply with:

- Federal, state, and local laws
- The Rescue's bylaws
- Board-approved policies
- Ethical and professional standards

9. Reporting Concerns

Board members are encouraged to report:

- Ethical violations
- Policy violations
- Financial concerns
- Safety issues
- Harassment or misconduct

Reports may be made to the Board President, Secretary, or through the Whistleblower Policy once adopted.

Retaliation against individuals who report concerns in good faith is strictly prohibited.

10. Accountability

Failure to uphold this Code of Ethics may result in:

- Coaching or corrective action
- Removal from officer roles
- Removal from the Board under Article IV of the bylaws

The Board of Directors is responsible for enforcing this policy.

11. Annual Acknowledgment

All board members shall sign the Annual Board Member Acknowledgment Form affirming their commitment to this Code of Ethics and all other board-approved policies.

Approved by the Board of Directors

Date: 06-06-2026