



Whistleblower Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Whistleblower Policy is to encourage and protect individuals who report concerns about unethical behavior, policy violations, financial misconduct, safety issues, or other improper actions within the Rescue. This policy ensures that concerns can be raised without fear of retaliation and that the Rescue maintains the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and accountability.

2. Applicability

This policy applies to:

- Directors
- Officers
- Committee members
- Volunteers
- Fosters
- Contractors
- Any individual acting on behalf of the Rescue

3. Reportable Concerns

Individuals are encouraged to report, in good faith, any concerns related to:

a. Financial Misconduct

- Fraud
- Theft or misuse of funds
- Falsification of records
- Improper financial reporting

b. Ethical or Policy Violations

- Violations of bylaws
- Violations of the Code of Conduct
- Violations of the Conflict of Interest Policy
- Misuse of authority or position

c. Safety Concerns

- Unsafe animal handling practices
- Unsafe volunteer or foster conditions
- Neglect or mistreatment of animals

d. Harassment or Misconduct

- Harassment
- Bullying
- Discrimination
- Retaliation

e. Legal or Regulatory Violations

- Violations of federal, state, or local law
- Violations of nonprofit regulations

4. Reporting Process

Concerns may be reported to:

- The Board President
- The Board Secretary
- Any officer of the Rescue
- A designated Whistleblower Officer (if appointed)

Reports may be made:

- In writing
- By email
- Verbally (followed by written confirmation)
- Anonymously, if desired

Anonymous reports will be reviewed to the fullest extent possible.

5. Confidentiality

The Rescue will maintain confidentiality to the maximum extent possible. Information will be shared only with individuals who need to know in order to investigate and address the concern.

Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if:

- Disclosure is required by law
- Disclosure is necessary to conduct a thorough investigation
- Disclosure is necessary to protect individuals or animals

6. Protection From Retaliation

Retaliation against any individual who reports a concern in good faith is strictly prohibited.

Prohibited retaliation includes:

- Termination or removal from a role
- Demotion or loss of responsibilities
- Harassment or intimidation
- Negative treatment or exclusion
- Any action intended to discourage reporting

Any individual who engages in retaliation may face corrective action, including removal from the Board or termination of volunteer roles.

7. Investigation of Reports

Upon receiving a report, the Board President or designated officer shall:

1. Acknowledge receipt (unless anonymous)
2. Conduct a preliminary review
3. Determine whether a formal investigation is warranted



4. Assign investigators (disinterested directors or an external party)
5. Document findings and recommended actions

All investigations shall be conducted promptly, fairly, and objectively.

8. Corrective Action

If a concern is substantiated, corrective action may include:

- Coaching or training
- Policy changes
- Removal from volunteer or foster roles
- Removal from officer roles
- Removal from the Board under Article IV
- Referral to legal authorities if required

9. Good-Faith Requirement

Reports must be made in good faith. Knowingly false or malicious reports may result in corrective action.

10. Board Oversight

The Board of Directors is responsible for:

- Ensuring compliance with this policy
- Reviewing investigations
- Taking appropriate corrective action
- Updating the policy as needed

11. Annual Acknowledgment

Board members shall acknowledge this policy annually as part of the Annual Board Member Acknowledgment Form.

Approved by the Board of Directors

Date: 06-06-2026