

# UNITED WAY OF SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA

## Code of Ethics



### **Introduction**

The vision of the United Way of Southwest Minnesota is to improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of the communities in Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Yellow Medicine and Redwood Counties in Minnesota. Based on the unique trust placed in the United Way of Southwest Minnesota to serve the public good and to provide the best stewardship of funds entrusted to us, we have a special obligation to act ethically at all times.

This Code of Ethics defines the expectations for the ethical behavior of everyone involved in the activities of the United Way of Southwest Minnesota, including its Board of Directors, staff and volunteers. In its simplest form, ethical behavior means doing the right things for the right reasons. While no document can address all of the situations we may face, this code provides guidelines to assist in making decisions that are ethical and in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

The Board of Directors shall review the Code of Ethics annually and make revisions as necessary.

### **Personal & Professional Integrity**

A personal and professional commitment to integrity in all circumstances benefits each individual as well as the organization. With respect to integrity, expectations of board members and staff are to:

- Honor the right of privacy of all people, including co-workers, contributors and beneficiaries.
- Strive to meet the highest standards of performance, quality, service and achievement in working towards the mission of United Way of Southwest Minnesota.
- Communicate honestly and openly and avoid misrepresentation.
- Promote a working environment where honesty, open communication and a diversity of opinions are valued.
- Exhibit respect and fairness toward all those with whom contact is made.
- Promote public confidence in philanthropic institutions.

### **Accountability and Efficiency**

The United Way of Southwest Minnesota has responsibilities to its supporters, which include donors and other stakeholders. They have placed faith in the United Way of Southwest Minnesota. To uphold this trust, board members and employees will make full and fair disclosure of all relevant information to supporters, and will spend supporters' money wisely, efficiently and objectively.

### **Transparency**

The United Way of Southwest Minnesota is open and candid about its activities and operations. In addition to responding to questions, the United Way of Southwest Minnesota will regularly and broadly share relevant information with the communities served.

### **Voluntary Giving**

The most responsive contributors are those who have the opportunity to become informed and involved. Fund raising is always conducted in a voluntary manner; coercion creates animosity, hinders communications and understanding and eventually leads to decreased support. The coercion of

donors, whether real or implied, is contrary to the operating principles of United Way. Giving is a personal matter and decision—no form of coercion is acceptable.

### **Diversity and Equal Opportunity**

The United Way of Southwest Minnesota is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to the principle of diversity.

Diversity, which enriches our community and its neighborhoods and organizations, is valuing people without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, sexual orientation, membership or activity in a local commission, veteran status, age or any other protected status. Our ability to embrace diversity and make it an integral part of our business will enable us to serve our community more effectively. It will also help us attract new volunteers, new employees, and new contributors.

### **Privacy and Confidentiality of Information**

Confidentiality is a hallmark of professionalism. United Way of Southwest Minnesota will:

- Ensure that all information which is confidential or privileged or which is not publicly available is not disclosed inappropriately.
- Ensure that all non-public information of other persons or firms acquired by the United Way of Southwest Minnesota in dealing with outside firms on behalf of the United Way of Southwest Minnesota is treated as confidential and not disclosed.
- Donor lists and other information respecting United Way fundraising shall be held in confidence and not be used for any purpose external to the organization except upon approval by the board of directors.

### **Accuracy, Storage and Retention, Tampering With or Destroying Records**

The United Way of Southwest Minnesota shall keep and retain minutes of board and committee meetings indefinitely. Financial records, including financial statements, fund-raising and allocation statements and other financial records must accurately reflect the operations and decisions of the United Way of Southwest Minnesota. All such records shall be retained/destroyed consistent with the “document retention/destruction policy” attached as appendix A. No minutes or financial records shall be destroyed without the express permission of the board’s finance or audit committee. No records shall be tampered with or destroyed so as to impede an official proceeding, and individuals shall not corruptly alter, destroy, mutilate or conceal any document with the intent to impair the objective’s integrity or availability for use in an official proceeding.

### **Acceptance of Gifts or Loans**

No member of the Board of Directors, staff or volunteers of the United Way of Southwest Minnesota will accept personal gifts or loans from any actual or potential donor or current or potential agency or any third party dealing or competing with the United Way of Southwest Minnesota.

### **Use of Assets**

All assets of the United Way of Southwest Minnesota will be used only for official United Way business. Use of such assets for personal reasons is prohibited.

### **Disclosure of Potential Conflict of Interest**

The United Way of Southwest Minnesota consistently follows a policy of identifying and addressing any conflict of interest or the appearance of any conflict of interest on the part of its Board of Directors, staff and volunteers in funding grants, community impact work and all other matters. It is recognized that members of the Board of Directors and volunteers may serve in many capacities in the partner agencies or organizations that are operated by or directly related to the partner agencies. Such roles give rise to a dual interest, which is permissible and likely beneficial to both organizations. When dual interests become conflicts of interest the mission of the United Way of Southwest Minnesota and its relationships with agencies and donors may be compromised. To avoid such conflicts of interest, the following will occur:

- No employee of the United Way of Southwest Minnesota shall serve in any official capacity with an organization that is a partner agency.
- No partner agency with which any member of the Board of Directors of the United Way of Southwest Minnesota or his/her family members are involved in any way shall receive any special consideration during the grant making process or at any other time.
- A contract or other transaction between the United Way of Southwest Minnesota and a member of its Board of Directors is not void or voidable because the member is a party to the contract or is present at the meeting at which the contract or transaction is authorized, approved or ratified
- Each member of the Board of Directors of the United Way of Southwest Minnesota, upon commencing each term and annually, thereafter, shall disclose any and all dualities of interest that may become a conflict of interest. Such disclosure shall include personal or family interests related to the United Way of Southwest Minnesota partner agencies or organizations that are operated by or directly related to the partner agencies. The disclosure shall be on a form adopted by the board, a copy of which is attached hereto as Appendix B. The duty to disclose is an ongoing duty. Each member of the Board of Directors shall immediately disclose new dualities of interest as they arise.

### **Disclosure**

The United Way of Southwest Minnesota employees and representatives are encouraged to promptly, openly and forthrightly disclose any perceived breach of the Code of Ethics or a reasonable belief that there has been financial fraud or a violation of laws. Disclosure should be made to the Executive Director or to the board president. Any reported breach will be investigated and appropriate action taken. Confidentiality will be maintained for the employee disclosing the breach, unless the matter raises legal implications. In such instances, the employee disclosing the breach will be notified. The United Way of Southwest Minnesota will not discharge, demote, suspend, threaten, harass, or discriminate in any other way against employees solely for disclosing perceived breaches, fraud or misconduct.

### **Conflict or Dispute Resolution**

The Board of Directors of the United Way of Southwest Minnesota shall have the responsibility to review conduct by members of the Board of Directors, employees and volunteers that violates the provision of this Code of Ethics or that could compromise the mission of the United Way of Southwest Minnesota, and take necessary measures to correct past improper situations and prevent future inappropriate conduct.

Adopted: January 13, 2003  
Reviewed: January 12, 2004  
Reviewed/Revised: August 15, 2005  
Reviewed/Revised: April 19, 2010

## APPENDIX A

### UNITED WAY OF SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA DOCUMENT RETENTION/DESTRUCTION POLICY

#### ACCOUNTING RECORDS

Auditor's reports	permanent
Bank deposit slips	3 years
Bank statements	7 years
Bills of lading	3 years
Budgets	3 years
Cancelled checks	7 years
Cancelled checks (inc. tax)	permanent
Cash disbursement journal	permanent
Cash projections	3 years
Credit memos	3 years
Depreciation records	3 years
Employee expense reports	7 years
Employee payroll records	15 years
Financial statements	permanent
Freight bills	3 years
General journal & ledger	permanent
Internal work orders	3 years
Inventory lists	3 years
Invoices	3 years
Sales & cash register tapes	3 years
Purchases	3 years
Payroll journal	7 years
Pension/profit-sharing	permanent
Plan and trust agreements	permanent
Actuarial reports	permanent
IRS approval letter	permanent
Petty cash vouchers	3 years
Production and sales reports	3 years
Purchase journal	permanent
Subsidiary ledgers	7 years
Time cards and time records	3 years

#### CORPORATE RECORDS

Articles of Incorporation	permanent
Bylaws	permanent
Capital stock/bond records	permanent
Contracts and agreements	permanent
Copyrights/trademark regis.	permanent
Legal correspondence	permanent
Minutes	permanent
Mortgages/notes	15 years
patents	permanent
personnel files	permanent

#### INSURANCE RECORDS

Accident reports	7 years
Fire inspection reports	7 years
Group disability records	7 years
Insurance policies	permanent
Safety records	7 years
Settled insurance claims	7 years

#### TAX RECORDS

Tax returns, cancelled ck's.	permanent
Sales & use tax returns	permanent
Payroll tax returns	permanent
Informational returns	permanent

Note 1: Unless otherwise noted, all retention periods begin with filing the tax return to which the document applies. If the statute of limitations concerning a tax year is extended, retention should be extended accordingly.

Note 2: Employee records of exposure to workplace hazards must be retained 30 years after employment. Retention periods begin after termination, expiration, disposal, etc.

**APPENDIX B  
United Way of Southwest Minnesota  
Code of Ethics Policy**



**United Way  
of Southwest Minnesota**

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\_\_\_\_\_ I have carefully read and understand the Code of Ethics of the United Way of Southwest Minnesota. I acknowledge that the Code of Ethics and the requirements set forth herein are necessary to ensure that my actions will not adversely affect or reflect unfavorably upon the United Way of Southwest Minnesota. I agree to adhere to the Code of Ethics and to disclose dualities of interest that exist. In addition, I agree to immediately disclose new dualities of interest as they may arise.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please note a potential conflict affiliation or relationship below:

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Name printed legibly

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date