

LAKE COUNTY BOARD OF DD/DEEPWOOD

BOARD POLICY

Reviewed and Adopted by the Board:
Date: March 23, 2020

Signature on File

Elfriede Roman, Superintendent

I. SUBJECT: CODE OF ETHICS FOR AGENCY STAFF

II. PURPOSE:

To establish clear and objective standards of ethical conduct for Agency Staff

III. REFERENCES:

ORC Chapters 102 and 5126;
County Board Administration LCBDD/DEEPWOOD Policy A-1: Board Bylaws

IV. POLICY:

Individual Agency staff members are expected to maintain the highest possible ethical and moral standards and to perform within the laws of the State of Ohio and other rules and regulations as may be set forth or interpreted by the Board. It is essential that the public maintain confidence in the Board and its employees. For this reason, it is important that individual employees refrain from any action that involves using a public office for private gain or giving unwarranted preferential treatment to any individual, group or entity.

A. Ethical Standards for Superintendent and Designee

1. The Superintendent shall take appropriate steps to keep the community continuously informed about the Agency, its programs and services.
2. The Superintendent shall recognize and seek to understand the social patterns of the community.
3. The Superintendent shall consistently assert the role of personal and professional leader in the best interests of the Agency and the community.

LCBDD/Deepwood **Policy A-34**
CODE OF ETHICS FOR AGENCY STAFF

Page 2

4. The Superintendent shall avoid the use of individuals, Agency staff, or Agency data in the promotion of partisan politics, commercial advertising, or personal gain.
5. The Superintendent shall use reasonable efforts to see that the abilities, personal characteristics, and qualifications of Agency staff are not misrepresented.
6. The Superintendent shall not attempt to influence Board members individually on matters that affect his/her personal or professional welfare.
7. The Superintendent shall keep the Board fully informed as to Agency operations through the proper channels.
8. The Superintendent shall, where appropriate, initiate or recognize requests for information from and promptly exchange with other management staff accurate, complete and relevant information and make certain that all such information is kept confidential.
9. The Superintendent shall assume responsibility in the selection, assignment, and supervision of all employees and, where reasonably possible, contribute to their professional and occupational improvement.
10. The Superintendent shall see that all salaries are consistent with existing adopted salary schedules.
11. The Superintendent shall acknowledge the good performances and contributions of employees and refuse to accept undue credit for the services or work of others.
12. The Superintendent shall not use the administrative position to unduly influence or force employees to subscribe to partisan political causes.
13. The Superintendent shall not unnecessarily jeopardize the welfare of individuals of Agency programs and services for any reason.
14. The Superintendent shall initiate procedures to recommend, secure and retain the most competent and best-qualified Agency staff and to authorize disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, for those who do not meet the standards of competency for qualified Agency staff, or who otherwise warrant disciplinary action.
15. The Superintendent shall show evidence of personal interest in the profession through continuous study and active participation in professional organizations.

B. Ethical Standards for Agency Business Officials (including Superintendent, Finance Director, Operations Director, Purchasing Director and Any Other Agency Manager in a Position to Influence the Awarding of Contracts to or Purchases from Outside Vendors (collectively referred to as “Administrator”).

1. An Administrator shall in no way use the authority of his/her position of employment to secure the authority for any contract from which he/she may derive a direct or indirect personal benefit.
2. An Administrator shall not obligate him/herself or the Board through the acceptance of individual gifts, remuneration or personal discounts/rewards, but shall award and/or authorize orders and contracts only on the basis of need and value and pursuant to Board Policies and state law.
3. An Administrator shall not act as an agent or salesperson for any item purchased, bid or otherwise proposed for purchase by the Agency.
4. An Administrator may not accept gifts, gratuities, services or other remunerations of more than a nominal value and token nature. As a guideline to avoid potential embarrassment to vendors, any activity, gift or service valued at over twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) will be considered imprudent and must be returned or refused. Calendars, pens, pencils and other similar advertising articles of nominal value as well as meals to discuss Agency business during regular business hours are acceptable.
5. All Administrators shall keep the Board fully informed as to Agency business and financial operations through proper channels.
6. All Administrators shall protect the confidentiality and not invade the privacy of other staff and individuals by making personal information or names and address lists available to agents, salesmen or other commercial interests where such disclosure is not required by law.

C. Ethical Standards for All Agency Management and Administrative Staff (including Superintendent and Managers)

1. Managers shall promote the interests of the Agency in a positive, public manner.
2. Managers shall use reasonable efforts to see that the abilities, personal characteristics, and qualifications of employees being supervised are not misrepresented.

LCBDD/Deepwood **Policy A-34**
CODE OF ETHICS FOR AGENCY STAFF

Page 4

3. Managers shall not attempt to influence Board members individually on matters that directly or indirectly affect the manager's personal or professional welfare.
4. Managers shall keep the Board fully informed as to Agency operations through proper channels.
5. Managers shall provide the Board through proper channels with concise, meaningful financial, business and program data as requested.
6. Managers shall assume appropriate responsibility in the selection, assignment and supervision of employees and to the extent possible, contribute to their professional and occupational development.
7. Managers shall recognize and follow procedures, to the extent possible, to make recommendations to the appointing authority to, secure and retain the most competent and best-qualified employees and to recommend to the appointing authority disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, for those who do not meet the standards of competency, or who otherwise warrant disciplinary action.
8. Managers shall refuse payment or reimbursement of expenses, such as conference/seminar registration fees, travel, meal and/or lodging expenses, or honoraria, from vendors, contractors, service providers, or other persons or entities engaged in or seeking to do business with the Agency.

D. Ethical Standards for All Agency Staff (including Management Staff, Bargaining Unit Staff, Confidential/Exempt Staff and Substitute Staff)

All employees of the Board, regardless of classification, shall at all times adhere to the following standards of conduct:

1. All Employees shall recognize and maintain the dignity and worth of each individual when dealing with, individuals, parents, or legal guardians and not release information about such persons except to authorized persons or agencies.
2. Employees shall not disclose or use, without proper authorization, any confidential information acquired in the course of their official duties and shall maintain such information confidential even after their employment with the Board has ended.
3. All Employees shall maintain a professional demeanor with all individuals served by the Board. Employees shall refrain from developing romantic, sexual, or other inappropriate emotional attachments to or relationships with individuals. Employee dating of individuals is strictly prohibited. All such

LCBDD/Deepwood **Policy A-34**
CODE OF ETHICS FOR AGENCY STAFF

Page 5

actions may be grounds for immediate termination of an Employee's employment with the Board.

4. Employees shall not engage in outside employment that creates an actual or perceived conflict of interest with his/her duties as a Board employee.
5. All Employees shall understand that certain restrictions apply to Employees entering into contracts directly with the Board to supply direct care services separate from their employment by the Board. At a minimum such contracts must be reviewed and approved by the Board's Ethics Council. Questions relating to the propriety of employees entering into separate contracts with the Board to provide direct care services may also have to be submitted to the local prosecuting attorney and Ohio Ethics Commission.
6. All Employees shall understand that certain restrictions apply to Employees who desire to also be employed by a Direct Services Provider with which the Board contracts. Board Policy G-3 Conflict of Interest with Direct Service Providers shall be referred to and complied with in such situations.
7. All Employees shall understand that certain restrictions may apply for a period of time after their employment with the Board has ended to their involvement in any matter in which the Employee personally participated through decision, approval, disapproval, recommendation, the rendering of advice, investigation, or other substantial exercise of administrative discretion.
8. Employees shall not solicit anything of value for direct or indirect personal gain or benefit from any individual or entity engaged in business dealings or seeking to engage in business dealings with the Agency.
9. All Employees shall avoid actual or perceived conflicts of interest and the use of Board employment for personal gain or to receive for a member of their immediate family preferential treatment or an unfair advantage over other eligible persons in the delivery of Board services.
10. Employment of a person by a county board of developmental disabilities does not affect the eligibility of any member of that person's family for services provided by the Board or any entity under contract with the Board.
11. Employees shall not use Agency property for other than proper or authorized activities or purposes.
12. All Employees shall report to their immediate supervisor all gifts received as a result of their employment with the Agency totaling to an economic value of \$25.00 or greater during any calendar year. All Employees shall abide by the policies of the Board.

LCBDD/Deepwood **Policy A-34**
CODE OF ETHICS FOR AGENCY STAFF

Page 6

13. All Employees shall use the following guidelines when acting as a witness for official documents being executed by individuals served by the Lake County Board of DD. First, Employees should only act as a witness for documents that are related to the services being provided through the Lake County Board of DD. In general, Employees should not act as a witness for any document that is unrelated to these services, the Individual's plan, their plan budget, or their guardianship status. Second, Employees should avoid acting as a witness for documents related solely to the Individual's personal business that has no connection to the Lake County Board of DD. Finally, Employees may not serve as a witness for a document wherein the Employee is personally named, or wherein they, or any family member, receive something of value.

E. Enforcement

1. Any violation of this Policy shall be reported to the Superintendent or his/her designee, who shall investigate and take appropriate action.
2. Any violation of this Policy by the Superintendent or his/her designee shall be reported to the President of the Board, who shall have the matter investigated for full Board review and action.

V. DISTRIBUTION:

Board Members
All Management Staff
All Staff (via Department Managers)
LEADD President

VI. REVIEWED:

3/20, 3/18, 3/17, 3/16, 3/15, 3/14, 12/13, 2/13, 2/11, 2/09, 2/07, 2/05, 2/03, 11/00, 8/97