



Code of Ethical Conduct - *Recommended by Personnel Committee 1/29/01*
Revised by Leadership Team 5/29/03
Reviewed by Personnel Committee 6/3/03
Reviewed by Legal Counsel 9/5/03
Reviewed Program Committee 2/2/09
Approved Board of Directors 2/09/09

Aspire adheres to the highest code of ethical conduct in all facets of business and service provision. This includes; 1) treatment of the persons served, their families, and community members, 2) actual practice, 3) staff, 4) governance authority, 5) business and financial practices, and 6) marketing. This code is evident throughout agency policies.

Staff

This agency believes that a highly qualified and strongly valued staff is its greatest resource in making Aspire's mission a reality. The following practices affirm this value:

1. Aspire is an equal opportunity employer. We do not discriminate in hiring or employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, ancestry, national origin, age, disability, medical condition, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, political affiliation or belief, or any other basis prohibited by applicable law.
2. Staff may have family member(s) who are served at Aspire. A staff member is always assigned to a program location or caseload other than the one in which the family members(s) is served. The office of a staff member who is a family member may not be located in the same building where a participant resides.
3. Staff may not serve as guardians of persons served at Aspire unless the person needing guardianship is a family member and is served in a program location other than where the staff member works.
4. Family members, or those who reside in the same household, may work at Aspire and even in the same program though family members may not supervise each other except in an emergency situation or in grandfathered situations disclosed to the President and CEO. Family members may not conduct performance reviews, impose disciplinary action, sign time sheets, or approve raises for one another. In the rare case of grandfathering, performance reviews, disciplinary action, and merit raises must be reviewed with the President and CEO. Where these situations may exist there must be full disclosure and approval by or review of the event/situation prior to decision-making or communication.
5. Families of staff do not receive preferential treatment in the services of Aspire.
6. Aspire recognizes the right of the employees to collective bargaining and makes every effort to be a responsible partner in bargaining unit matters.
7. Individual staff may not serve as representative payee for participants; however Aspire as an entity can serve in that capacity.

8. Aspire strives to provide good work environments in safe settings, with fair policies and procedures for employees.
9. Aspire strives to provide training necessary for staff to have the tools required to reach the high service standard set by the agency organization and deserved by the persons with disabilities who are served.
10. Aspire makes every effort to protect staff from all forms of discrimination and harassment in the workplace by policy and procedure, training, and when necessary, disciplinary action.
11. Aspire strives to provide a fair living wage and competitive benefit package.
12. Aspire recognizes the right of individuals to acquire extra income outside of their work for Aspire as long as their work does not adversely affect their work for Aspire. Any employment, consulting or other reimbursed activity while employed by Aspire may not be for services to potential participants in any of the programs of Aspire.

Governance Authority

1. The Governance of Aspire is provided by a self selecting volunteer Board of Directors. At least half members of the Board of Directors shall be individuals who are parents, guardians, family members, or household members, of persons with a disability. All directors must have an interest in serving people with developmental disabilities.
2. Individual Directors or their companies that do business with Aspire are subject to competitive bids. No business or financial gain is awarded to a Director because of his/her standing on the Board. Therefore, a Director must abstain himself/herself from any vote that would directly provide or exclude financial gain. Business relationships between Aspire and a Board Director will be disclosed to the Board of Directors.
3. Family members of Directors and Association members do not receive preferential treatment in services of Aspire.
4. Neither Aspire staff nor their immediate families may sit on the Board of Directors with the exception of the CEO as ex officio member of the Board of Directors.
5. Staff that are Association members and their immediate family have limited privileges relative to their membership.

Business/Financial Practices

1. Aspire follows all laws applying to financial transactions and business practices of the organization so as to operate in a fiscally sound manner.
2. By-Laws require an annual independent audit to assure that accepted business practices are maintained.
3. Review and approve any first time purchase of an item by having a unit cost in excess of \$5,000 purchase of contractual services for property improvements or additions having a contract cost in excess of \$5,000. Capital Budget purchases of capital or capital improvements having a unit cost

in excess of \$5,000 and not related to building, grounds, or transportation shall be reviewed by the Finance Committee. In the case of an emergency where immediate purchase of an item or service is necessary to prevent threats to participants, staff and/or visitor safety or to prevent the disruption of services delivery, the procedures noted in the preceding paragraph may be foregone. However, in such an instance the Facilities Manager shall make every effort to contact the Chairman of the Finance Committee and if appropriate the Building and Grounds Committee for approval.

4. Aspire will not knowingly enter into any business arrangement that is illegal or infringes on the rights of any person or organization.
5. Aspire seeks to protect the assets and entitlements of those persons it serves. In situations where the organization or staff assist in the management of funds for persons with disabilities a full accounting is available at least quarterly and must be reviewed by the Case Manager. Aspire does not co-mingle funds. A separate account is maintained for each person for whom Aspire manages funds. Appropriate safe guards are in place to protect the financial interests of individuals served by Aspire, the organization, and staff through policy and procedures.

Marketing Activities

1. Aspire publications will be accurate, truthful and seek to enhance community acceptance of persons with disabilities and services to those persons through marketing activities that convey dignity, potential, and their inherent rights.
2. Aspire will only solicit reputable media coverage and join in marketing efforts with other organizations that have the reputation for high ethical practice.

Treatment of Persons Served

1. Persons served by Aspire are guaranteed their constitutional rights and rights through adherence to the Department of Human Services procedure of safeguards for early intervention, the Illinois Mental Health Code and Aspire's Human Rights Committee all of which actively promote the rights of persons with disabilities while closely monitoring restrictions proposed through service provision.
2. Persons served by Aspire are offered choice, empowerment and confidentiality in the provision of services that promote dignity and respect.
3. Persons served by Aspire are served in a safe environment free of harm, discrimination, exploitation, ridicule, or abuse or neglect by strongly enforced policy, procedure and daily practice.
4. Persons served by Aspire receive treatment that embraces positive training before restrictive procedures are implemented.

Community Members

Community members are encouraged to partner with Aspire in the accomplishment of its mission through volunteer activities: participation on committees of the Board, advisory committees to the staff, participation in special events and sharing of resources.

1. Volunteers are valued, trained and thanked for sharing of time, treasure, and talent.
2. Volunteers are provided an environment free from discrimination or harassment.
3. Funders, donors and volunteers do not receive preferential treatment in services at Aspire.
4. In accordance with just standards set by the Council of Better Business Bureau and the National Charities Information Bureau. All donations, be they monetary or in-kind, are used for the purpose intended by the donor. Benefactors who designate a specific purpose for their donation are provided with a financial accounting, upon request. Best practice is that \$.80 out of every dollar goes to provision of the mission. Aspire strives to exceed best practice.
5. Community partners, Association Members, and family members are entitled to receive an annual report listing outcome, management results, accomplishments, on-going projects and programs, as well as a financial overview.

Allegations of violations of its code of ethical conduct.

The codes are contained in Agency policy and practices and allegations are handled as per policy. Each type of violation must be considered in terms of the Board committee that monitors organizational activity in the area. Generally violations of corporate compliance are handled in the following manner:

1. Violations are reported to the appropriate Vice President, who with the Vice President for Human Resources and Team Building, will implement an investigation of the allegation and makes a full report and recommendation to the President and CEO.
2. The President and CEO will present the allegation and the recommendation for resolution to the appropriate committee of the Board of Directors and the Chairman of the Board.
3. If the allegation is founded or if the situation is deemed founded by the committee of the Board of Directors or Chairman of the Board, it will be brought to the full Board in Executive Session for review and action.
4. The Vice President for Human Resources and Team Building maintains a record of allegations and resolutions.