



**Berkshire United Way**

## Code of Ethics

Berkshire United Way (BUW) is committed to the highest ethical standards. Indeed, based on the unique trust placed in BUW to serve the public good, we have a special obligation to act ethically.

The success of the BUW and our reputation depend upon the ethical conduct of everyone affiliated with us. Volunteers, staff and representatives set an example for each other.

The BUW Code of Ethics (Code) is based on our mission:

"Improving the quality of life in Berkshire County by mobilizing resources to address community priorities and create sustainable change."

The Code also reflects our guiding principles:

**LEADERSHIP:** BUW provides ethical, thoughtful, and collaborative leadership in identifying, prioritizing, addressing and monitoring community needs and conditions.

**INCLUSION:** BUW engages all stakeholders in discussions and activities.

**TRANSPARENCY:** BUW is forthcoming with regards to its processes, information and financial management.

**MEASURABLE IMPACT:** BUW maximizes impact by using community level data to develop realistic goals and measurable outcomes, and develops systems to ensure accountability for investments made in community initiatives, programs and services.

**INNOVATION:** BUW embraces a culture of continuous learning and innovation, staying abreast of best practices and translating learning into actions that achieve results.

We are mindful that our mission and the guiding principles must be clearly articulated, communicated and continuously reinforced. In addition, more detailed policies, guidelines, explanations, definitions and examples are often needed to bring the mission and values into actual practice. While no document can anticipate all of the challenges that may arise, the Code communicates key guidelines and will assist the BUW volunteers, staff and representatives in making good decisions that are ethical and in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

### **Guidance and Disclosure**

All are encouraged to seek guidance as needed from the BUW president, Board chairperson or chair of the Governance Committee. In addition, staff and volunteers should report any suspected breaches of this Code of Ethics to their immediate supervisor, unless the breach is by the supervisor, in which case

contact should be made with the CEO or chairperson of the Governance Committee (Christine Ludwiszewski, 2011-12). Reports of suspected breaches will be handled in the following manner:

- All reports of suspected breaches will be treated in confidence as much as the organization's duty to investigate and the law allow. If confidentiality cannot be maintained, the individual disclosing the possible breach will be notified.
- All reported breaches will be investigated by the CEO and, if needed, referred to the Board Governance Committee for appropriate action.
- Retaliation against a person who suspects and reports a breach in good faith will be treated as an independent breach of the Code.
- BUW affirms prompt and fair resolution of all reported breaches.

### **Key Guidelines:**

#### **1. Personal and Professional Integrity**

A personal commitment to integrity in all circumstances benefits each individual as well as the organization. We therefore:

- Strive to meet the highest standards of performance, quality, service and achievement in working towards the BUW mission.
- Communicate honestly and openly and avoid misrepresentation.
- Promote a working environment where honesty, open communication and minority opinions are valued.
- Exhibit respect and fairness toward all those with whom we come into contact.

#### **2. Accountability**

BUW is responsible to the community including staff, volunteers, donors, partner organizations and others who have placed faith in BUW. To uphold this trust we:

- Promote good stewardship of BUW resources, including grant and other contributions that are used to pay operating expenses, salaries and employee benefits.
- Will not use organizational resources for non-BUW purposes.
- Observe and comply with all laws and regulations.

#### **3. Solicitations and Voluntary Giving**

The most responsive contributors are those who have the opportunity to become informed and involved. We therefore:

- Refrain from any use of coercion in fundraising activities, including predating professional advancement on response to solicitations.
- Promote voluntary giving.

#### 4. ***Diversity and Equal Opportunity***

BUW is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to the principle of diversity. We therefore:

- Value, champion, and embrace, in all aspects of BUW activities, respect for others without regard to race, color, religion, creed, age, sex, national origin or ancestry, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, or status as a qualified disabled or handicapped individual.
- Employ practices that do not tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment.

#### 5. ***Duality and/or Conflicts of Interest***

BUW acts so as to address any duality of interest and to avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest which could jeopardize or impugn its trust or reputation. We therefore:

- If a Board member has a duality of interest with respect to a matter, it also should be disclosed and the Board member should not vote on or discuss the transaction. A duality of interest arises when the Board member or one of his/her immediate family members\* or other person with which he/she has a close relationship has an institutional conflict of interest due to service in a position of importance with another organization at a time when the interests of both organizations might be affected by a transaction, an investment decision or an investment opportunity.
- Avoid any activity or outside interest which conflicts or appears to conflict with the best interest of BUW, including involvement with a current or potential BUW vendor, grantee, or competing organization unless disclosed to and not deemed to be inappropriate by the BUW Board and/or Governance Committee.
- Decline any gift, gratuity, favor, food, transportation, lodging or entertainment unless directly related to BUW business (this does not include promotional items of nominal value).
- Do not influence the selection of staff, consultants or vendors on the basis of personal relationships.
- Do not knowingly take any action, or make any statement, intended to influence the conduct of BUW in such a way as to confer any financial benefit to ourselves, our immediate family members, or any organization in which we or our immediate family members have a material personal interest\*\* as stakeholders, directors or officers.

\*An immediate family member is considered a spouse, partner, child, parent, or sibling.

\*\*A material personal interest means that there is an actual or potential benefit or detriment including any familial, financial, professional, employment, or other relationship that would reasonably be expected to impair the objectivity of your judgment when participating in the action to be taken.

- Require members of the Board of Directors, Board Committees, staff and volunteers to disclose all known conflicts or potential conflicts of interest in any matter before the Board of Directors, if they are Board members, or to any committee upon which they serve. Such members shall refrain from discussion, review and voting on any such matter and may be requested to withdraw from the meeting room during this process.
- Require members of the Board and volunteers, upon accepting a term of service, and staff upon employment and periodically upon request to update their disclosure of all known potential conflicts of interest.

## 6. ***Confidentiality and Privacy***

Confidentiality is a hallmark of professionalism. We therefore:

- Ensure that all information which is confidential, privileged or nonpublic is not disclosed inappropriately.
- Expect that members of the Board of Directors and Board Committees, as well as all staff, will not disclose details of discussions or decisions made that have been designated as confidential.

## 7. ***Political Contributions***

As a charitable organization, BUW may not make contributions to any candidate for public office or political committee and may not intervene in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. We therefore:

- Do not make any contributions to any candidate for public office or political committee in a manner that may create the appearance that the contribution is on behalf of BUW.
- Do not use any BUW financial resources, facilities or personnel to endorse or oppose a candidate for public office.

## 8. ***Participation in Civic Activities***

BUW encourages individual participation in civic affairs. When exercising rights in an individual capacity to participate in civic affairs, it should be clearly communicated by the individual that is an employee, Board member or volunteer that he or she is not acting on behalf of the BUW.

# ANNUAL CODE OF ETHICS CERTIFICATION

I acknowledge that I have received and read my personal copy of the BUW Code of Ethics. I understand that each BUW volunteer, staff member and representative is responsible for adhering to the principles and standards of the Code, and I confirm that I have and will conduct myself in accord with the principles and standards of the Code. The certification process is mandatory on an annual basis for all BUW staff, volunteers and members of the Board of Directors.

Please list any known or potential conflicts of interest as well as situations where you have a duality of interest; these include whether you, an immediate family member (spouse, partner, child, parent, sibling) or close relation is employed by, a board member of, or uses the services of any organization that is funded by BUW and/or a business that BUW contracts with for services. Please include the organization/business, the related person’s name (list yourself if you have the direct relationship) their relationship to you and the relationship of that person to the organization/business.

Organization/ Business	Name of Related Party *	Nature of Relationship to You*	Relationship w/ organization (e.g., board member, staff, use services) *

\*If disclosing would breach confidentiality, just write “confidential.”

\_\_\_\_\_  
**PRINTED NAME**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**SIGNATURE**