

Sample Whistleblower & Complaint Resolution Policy for CAAs/Head Start Grantees September 2012

This policy has not been approved by any outside authority, such as the Department of Health and Human Services. You should review this policy thoughtfully and modify it as necessary to meet the individual needs of your organization and to comply with any applicable state law requirements and grant terms and conditions. Thus, we strongly recommend that when working with this policy, you consult with an attorney from your state that is well versed in the laws affecting CAAs.

In keeping with the policy of maintaining the highest standards of conduct and ethics, Community Action Agency ("CAA") will investigate complaints of suspected fraudulent or dishonest use or misuse of its resources or property by staff, board members, consultants, volunteers, or clients. To maintain the highest standards of service, CAA will also investigate complaints concerning its programs and services.

Staff, board members, consultants, volunteers, clients, and community members are encouraged to report suspected fraudulent or dishonest conduct or problems with services provided, pursuant to the procedures set forth below. This policy supplements, and does not replace, any procedures required by law, regulation, or funding source requirements.

Reporting. A person's concerns about possible fraudulent or dishonest use or misuse of resources or property, or program operation, should be reported: to the CAA Vice President for Administration/Human Resources (if an employee or volunteer); to the Chairperson of the CAA Board of Directors (if a board member); to the CAA President/CEO (if a client or community member). If, for any reason, a person finds it difficult to report his or her concerns to such person, s/he may report the concerns directly to the President/CEO and/or the Chairperson of the CAA Board of Directors. Alternately, to facilitate reporting of suspected violations where the reporter wishes to remain anonymous, a written statement may be submitted to one of the individuals listed above.

Investigation. All relevant matters, including suspected but unproved matters, will be promptly reviewed and analyzed, with documentation of the receipt, retention, investigation, and treatment of the complaint. Appropriate corrective action will be taken, if necessary, and findings may be communicated to the reporting person and his or her supervisor if appropriate. Investigations may be conducted by independent persons such as auditors and/or attorneys. Investigators will endeavor to maintain appropriate confidentiality, but confidentiality is not guaranteed.

No Retaliation. No director, officer, employee, volunteer, or client who in good faith reports suspected fraudulent or dishonest use or misuse of its resources or property or complaints concerning the services it provides and programs CAA runs shall suffer harassment, retaliation, or adverse employment or other consequence. An employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment. This Complaint Resolution Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise serious concerns within the organization prior to seeking resolution outside the organization. The Policy is in addition to any non-retaliation requirements contained in the CAA Personnel Policies or required by law.

This protection from retaliation is not intended to prohibit supervisors from taking action, including disciplinary action, in the usual scope of their duties and based on valid performance-related factors. Individuals making complaints must be cautious to avoid baseless allegations; employees who intentionally make false allegations are subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the CAA Personnel Policies.