

Merrill Area United Way, Inc. Code of Ethics

Merrill Area United Way, Inc., is committed to the highest ethical standards. Based on the unique trust placed in the Merrill Area United Way to serve the public good, we have a special obligation to act ethically.

The success of the United Way system and our reputation depends upon the ethical conduct of everyone affiliated with the Merrill Area United Way. Volunteers, staff, and representatives set an example for each other, and for partner programs, by their pursuit of excellence in high standards of performance, professionalism, and ethical conduct.

This organization is mindful that our core values must be clearly articulated, communicated and continuously reinforced. In addition, more detailed policies; guidelines, explanations, definitions and examples are often needed to bring these values into actual practice. While no document can anticipate all of the challenges that may arise, the Code of Ethics communicates key guidelines and will assist the Merrill Area United Way Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, and representatives in making good decisions that are ethical and in accordance with applicable requirements.

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 Merrill Area United Way mission.
 - 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 we come into contact.

2. **ACCOUNTABILITY:** Merrill Area United Way is responsible to its stakeholders, which include affiliate agencies, partner programs, donors and others who have placed faith in the Merrill Area United Way. To uphold this trust, we:
 - Promote good stewardship of Merrill Area United Way resources, donations and other contributions that are used to pay operating expenses, salaries, administer the annual campaign and overall administration.
 - Ensure that travel, entertainment and related expenses are incurred on a basis consistent with the mission of the Merrill Area United Way and not for personal gain or interests.
 - Refrain from using organizational resources for non-United Way purposes.
 - Observe and comply with all laws and regulations affecting the Merrill Area United Way.

3. **DIVERSITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY:** Merrill Area United Way is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to the principle of diversity. We therefore:
 - Value, champion, and embrace diversity in all aspects of the Merrill Area United Way activities and respect 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 individual with a disability or handicap.
 - Refuse to engage in or tolerate in any form of discrimination or harassment.

4. **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:** To avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest which could possibly tarnish the reputation of the Merrill Area United Way as well as undermine the public trust in all United Way organizations, the Merrill Area United Way staff and representatives support the following:
 - Avoid any activity or outside interest which conflicts with the best interest of the Merrill Area United Way.

- Decline any gift, gratuity, or favor in the performance of the Merrill Area United Way duties except for those provided to United Way specifically or promotional items of nominal value. Food, transportation, lodging or entertainment is also unacceptable unless directly related to the Merrill Area United Way business.

Merrill Area United Way Volunteers:

- Should not knowingly take any action, or make any statement, intended to influence the conduct of the Merrill Area United Way in such a way to confer any financial benefit on themselves, their immediate family members, or any organization in which they or their immediate family members have a significant interest as stakeholders, directors or officers.
 - During the fund distribution process by the Community Impact Committee and Review Panels, such member shall, if actively engaged as a participating member of the allocation function, abstain from the discussion and decision process with respect to said **specific** agency creating the conflict of interest.
 - Disclose all known conflicts or potential conflicts of interest in any matter before the Board of Directors, if they are Board members, or any committee upon which they serve and withdraw from the meeting room during any discussion, review and voting in connection with such matter.
 - As an Equal Opportunity Employer, the Merrill Area United Way prohibits nepotism by not granting employment and contracts to family members, unless the relationship is disclosed and the employment/contract is approved by United Way's governing board.
5. **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.
 - Annual agency allocations, budget, financial reports and financial status are confidential. 990's is public information.
 - Respect the privacy rights of all individuals in the performance of their Merrill Area United Way duties.
6. **POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS:** As a charitable organization, the Merrill Area United Way, United Way is prohibited from making contributions to any candidate for public office or to any political committee. We therefore:
- Refrain from making any contributions to any candidate for public office or political committee on behalf of the Merrill Area United Way United Way including the use of the Merrill Area United Way facilities for political campaign activities.
 - Refrain from making 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 the Merrill Area United Way.

GUIDANCE AND DISCLOSURE

Volunteers, staff, and representatives are encouraged to seek guidance from the President concerning the interpretation or application of this Code of Ethics. Any known or possible breaches of the Code of Ethics should be disclosed. Staff, representatives and volunteers should contact the President. Reports of possible breaches will be handled in the following manner:

- All reports of possible breaches will be treated in confidence as much as the organization's duty to investigate and the law allows. If confidentiality cannot be maintained, the individual disclosing the possible breach will be notified.
- All reported breaches will be investigated.
- Retaliation against a person who suspects and reports a Breach in good faith will be treated as an independent breach of the Code.
- The Merrill Area United Way affirms prompt and fair resolution of all reported breaches.

AT THIS TIME, I HAVE THE FOLLOWING KNOWN OR POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST. IF ANY FUTURE CONFLICTS ARE IDENTIFIED, I WILL OPENLY SHARE THOSE CONFLICTS AND ABSTAIN FROM ACTION ON THOSE ISSUES:

Print Name _____

Signed _____

Date _____

Reviewed 10.6.2025 by Policy Committee
Approved 10.23.2025 by Executive Committee
Approved 12.8.2025 by Board of Directors