

MISSOULA HOUSING AUTHORITY CODE OF CONDUCT

The mission of the Missoula Housing Authority is to provide decent, safe, affordable housing, and to foster among the people we serve self-sufficiency, economic independence, upward mobility, and a sense of participation in the economic and political system. Each Housing Authority employee, officer, commissioner, or agent is expected to adhere to a Code of Conduct that supports this purpose and pledges to:

- Perform work responsibilities with the highest degree of integrity and professionalism in order to merit the respect of the beneficiaries of programs, elected officials, and the general public.
- Conduct business with active knowledge and affirmative compliance with federal, state and local laws and regulations.
- Comply with federal, state and local fair housing laws.
- Refrain from engaging in any discrimination against persons on the basis of their protected-class status.
- Exercise diligence, objectivity and honesty in executing professional responsibilities.
- Serve the public with dedication, concern, courtesy and responsiveness.
- Continually strive for professional excellence personally and encourage and support associates in their professional development efforts.
- Promote and encourage the highest level of ethics.

In addition, each employee, officer, commissioner, or agent acknowledges that:

- It is prohibited to engage in any activity that poses a real or apparent conflict of interest.
- It is prohibited to solicit or accept gifts or gratuities for personal benefit in excess of minimal value (the amount set by the Personnel Policy Manual at \$35.00).
- It is prohibited to disclose information given in confidence by anyone, or information acquired which is believed to be of a confidential nature, without the consent of a person authorized to give it, or unless they are required by law to do so; nor to prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law.

The *Equal Opportunity/Non-Discrimination, Affirmative Action, Workplace Harassment and Workplace Violence, Sexual Harassment*, pertinent portions of the *Standards of Conduct* and *Corrective Action* sections of the **Personnel Policy Manual**, adopted July 28, 2003, are attached and incorporated into this Code of Conduct by reference.

The Missoula Housing Authority reserves the right to deny, suspend or terminate business relationships with anyone who knowingly and repeatedly violates this Code of Conduct and fails to promptly and properly rectify any violations. Different funding

sources may have their own requirements for identifying and handling potential conflicts of interest, which generally will exclude the party from receiving project benefits. However if the potential conflict is not excluded, public disclosure, a legal opinion, and approval by the administering agency may be required.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT/NON-DISCRIMINATION

Equal opportunity is a fundamental principle at Missoula Housing Authority, where employment is based upon personal capabilities and qualifications. We are committed to ensuring that job applicants and staff are not subject to discrimination based on race, creed, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, age, physical or mental disability, marital status, sex, ex-offender status, public assistance status, sexual orientation or any other status protected by applicable laws. We may take relationship or marital status, age physical or mental disability, or sex into consideration when required to do so by the reasonable demands of the position

All staff is responsible for ensuring a work environment that is free from discrimination and where equal opportunity and respect are afforded all of our clients and co-workers.

MHA makes reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities and will make reasonable accommodations for religious beliefs. Any otherwise qualified applicant for employment or employee who requires reasonable accommodation may inform the Personnel Director of the accommodation required. All employees with access to such information shall maintain the confidentiality of the information to the extent reasonably possible and shall not release the information to anyone who does not have the right or need to know.

In compliance with the Immigration Reform Act of 1986, new employees must provide proof of identity and authorization to work in the United States.

If you at any time believe you are experiencing any form of employment discrimination or harassment, contact your supervisor immediately. The Communication and Conflict Resolution provisions of these policies are applicable to allegations of discrimination, including harassment. We are committed to investigating any complaints promptly and thoroughly and to imposing appropriate solutions.

Employees who commit acts of discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Retaliation against employees who file complaints is also a violation of this policy and grounds for disciplinary action.

1. Anti-Nepotism

No employee may hire or participate in the decision to hire a relative. "Relatives" are defined as mother, father, sister, brother, child, stepmother, stepfather, stepsister,

stepbrother, stepchild, niece, nephew, cousin, uncle, aunt, grandparent, grandchild, spouses, and in-laws within these categories.

Further, to avoid conflicts of interest and the appearance of favoritism or bias and to enhance supervision, security, and morale, MHA will take reasonable measures to ensure that relatives working in the same department are not supervising each other and in some cases, may reassign employees to prevent relatives from working in the same department.

Employees who marry or become related by marriage may continue their employment if their working relationship does not present problems in supervision, safety, security, or morale. If there are problems, they should be reported to the Personnel Director. This policy will be applied in accordance with applicable state and federal law.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

As part of its effort to ensure equal employment opportunity, the Missoula Housing Authority is committed to implementing affirmative action to eliminate the effects of past employment discrimination against protected classes. The managers and supervisors of MHA are responsible for implementing our policy of affirmative action and will apply good faith efforts to achieve full utilization of underrepresented groups.

This responsibility will include assurance that employment decisions are based on furthering the principle of equal employment opportunities by imposing only valid requirements for employment and assuring that all personnel actions are administered on the basis of job necessity.

The Housing Authority will also seek out minority- and women-owned enterprises and utilize them where possible, and monitor subcontractor and vendor compliance with these policies. Failure of subcontractors and vendors to comply with this policy statement shall jeopardize initial, continued or renewed contracts. Violation of affirmative action and equal opportunity policies can result in termination of contracts or funding.

Our commitment is intended to promote equal opportunity in all employment practices and provide a positive program of affirmative action for the Missoula Housing Authority, its employees, trainees and applicants.

WORKPLACE HARASSMENT AND WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

The Missoula Housing Authority is committed to providing a working environment where all employees and members are treated with courtesy, dignity, and respect. We will therefore not tolerate or condone any actions by anyone that constitute any form of harassment, including sexual harassment, of our employees. We will likewise not tolerate any action of violence against anyone in the workplace. The Communication and Conflict Resolution provisions of these policies are applicable to allegations of discrimination, including harassment.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct of a sexual nature, including gestures, when:

- Submission to or rejection of the conduct is implicitly or explicitly made a term or condition of employment, or is used as the basis for an employment decision affecting the employee.
- The conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Examples of prohibited sexual harassment include, but are not limited to propositions or pressure to engage in sexual activity or assault, repeated unwelcome intentional body contact, sexual jokes, innuendoes, or comments, staring or leering, display or distribution of any materials with a sexual connotation, a pattern of hiring or promoting sex partners over more qualified persons, or any harassing behavior directed toward a person because of the person's gender.

Sexual harassment of employees, volunteers, clients, or agency partners will not be tolerated. Any employee who is the subject of, who has knowledge of, or who witnesses any possible prohibited harassment or discrimination has a responsibility to immediately bring such information to the attention of their supervisor or the Personnel Director. Anyone who receives a report of alleged harassment or discrimination must immediately notify the Executive Director in writing. Missoula Housing Authority pledges to promptly investigate concerns regarding prohibited harassment and discrimination and take appropriate action. Complaints will be kept confidential to the extent possible that still allows investigation and, if necessary, discipline. Missoula Housing Authority will determine the steps to be taken balancing the rights of the alleged victim, including the severity of the alleged conduct, and the rights of the alleged harasser. The Communication and Conflict Resolution provisions of these policies are applicable to allegations of discrimination, including harassment.

Neither Missoula Housing Authority nor any of its employees will retaliate against any employee for filing a complaint or for participating in the investigation of any complaint or in a discrimination proceeding. If you are subject to or witness prohibited retaliation, you should report it in accordance with the Communication and Conflict Resolution procedure.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

1. Ethical Conduct

We trust and expect our employees to perform their work based on the highest ethical standards of conduct and to devote their best efforts to the interests of the Missoula Housing Authority. We value our reputation, and it is important that you, as a

representative of Missoula Housing Authority, avoid any conduct that may be interpreted as unethical, either in appearance or in fact. In general, situations representing a conflict of interest include, but are not limited to, accepting gifts, money, or special favors with a monetary value over \$35.00 from an affiliated agency or supplier; having an undisclosed outside job or affiliation which creates a conflict of interest; or using Missoula Housing Authority's property, equipment, or facilities for unauthorized personal gain. Any situation that you feel might be construed as not being in MHA's best interest should be immediately resolved through early disclosure and discussion with the Executive Director.

2. Confidentiality

All records and files, oral and written communication and other data relating to our program participants, applicants, and personnel are to be safeguarded from unauthorized use and disclosure at all times. All employees must maintain confidentiality, even after leaving the organization. Breach of confidentiality will be reason for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Information requested by outside parties must be approved by the Executive Director or his/her designee. All media requests should be forwarded to the Executive Director.

3. Solicitations

Employees are expected to focus on their work during work time. Solicitation and distribution by non-employees is prohibited on MHA's premises. The solicitation and distribution of nonwork-related materials by employees is prohibited: (a) in any work area at any time; (b) in non-work areas by employees who are supposed to be performing assigned tasks at the time of the solicitation or distribution; (c) by non-working employees if the solicitation or distribution interferes with the work of other employees performing assigned tasks. Solicitation and distribution by non-working employees in non-working areas during break and meal periods, and before and after work is permitted so long as it is not disruptive to the work environment or to any employee.

4. Alcohol and Drug (Legal and Illegal) Use

MHA promotes the safety of the workplace by having a policy requiring the workplace to be free from the effects of substance abuse. Missoula Housing Authority has the right to ensure the workplace is drug and alcohol free. As a recipient of federal grants, the Housing Authority must comply with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988. Employees are expected to work free from the effects of alcohol and other performance-impairing substances and are prohibited from engaging in either the unlawful or unauthorized use, possession, manufacture, distribution, dispensing, or sale of any controlled substance or alcohol while at work or at work sites. Any arrest or conviction for a violation of a criminal drug statute occurring in the workplace must be reported to the Executive Director within five (5) days of the arrest or conviction. The appropriate use of legally

prescribed drugs and non-prescription medication is not prohibited. However, the use of any substance which carries a warning label indicating that mental functioning, motor skills, or judgment may be adversely affected must be reported to your supervisor and medical advice must be sought, as appropriate, before starting work.

CORRECTIVE ACTION

In carrying out our mission, professionalism, reliability and the quality of the services we provide are important. We expect each employee to contribute to the high standards maintained by this organization within the scope of his or her job responsibilities. Failure to meet these standards of performance and conduct may be the basis for disciplinary action up to and including discharge. Appropriate action will be taken based on the seriousness of the situation and the circumstances. Corrective action and discipline less than termination may take the form of counseling, oral or written schedules for corrective action and improvement, oral or written warnings, or, on occasion, suspensions with or without pay. Under some circumstances immediate termination is appropriate. Which of these is selected as appropriate and whether any of them is used prior to termination will depend upon the situation and the seriousness of any disciplinary problem. Some examples of the kind of conduct that may result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate discharge are set forth below. This list is by no means exhaustive and is simply given by way of example so that you will understand some of the kinds of conduct that are of concern to us:

- Failure or refusal to carry out job assignments and management directions
- Unauthorized release of confidential information, both that of clients and co-employees
- Swearing, verbal abuse, or unprofessional conduct
- Falsification or alteration of any work, personnel, or other organizational records
- Unauthorized removal of funds or property of either the authority or any client or unauthorized charge to any Authority accounts
- Dishonesty
- Discrimination against or harassment of coworkers, clients or guests
- Possession, consumption or being under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance at work or on facility premises. The use of medication prescribed by a physician is allowed, so long as it does not interfere with your ability to safely and accurately perform your job.
- Deliberate damage to facility property or that of a client, another employee, or a visitor
- Fighting with or threatening of clients, visitors, or co-employees
- Unauthorized handling or use of firearms, explosives, or a weapon at any worksite.
- Neglect of duty; insubordination; refusing to follow the reasonable directions or instructions of a supervisor or management of the MHA
- Inefficient, negligent or substandard performance
- Abandonment of your work while scheduled to be working

- Excessive absenteeism, tardiness or failure to report in when absent or late for work
- Unreported conflict of interest
- Sleeping on the job
- Making or filing false or misleading reports regarding the Authority
- Smoking in unauthorized areas or disabling smoke detectors
- Violation of or disregard for established policies and procedures of the authority, including all safety rules
- Failing to attend to assigned work by indulging in activities other than job-related ones. Examples of this would include non-emergency personal telephone calls, devoting time to visiting and gossiping, reading magazines, books, doing handicrafts.
- Endangering the health and safety of any person, or failing to report incidents involving the safety of visitors, members or employees.
- Repeated unexcused lateness or absenteeism; walking off the job without the knowledge or permission of your supervisor.
- Conviction of a felony while an employee.

If an employee is placed on disciplinary suspension, he or she may not during that time, use any accrued leave.

Any employee who feels the corrective or disciplinary action he or she receives to be inappropriate or unjustified is urged to take advantage of MHA's conflict resolution procedure.