Board Member Code of Conduct

The _____ Board recognizes the need for decision-making and public responsiveness, which requires a commitment to ethical, business-like and lawful conduct including proper use of authority and appropriate decorum when acting as a board member. Accordingly, each board member will:

1. When outside of board meetings, avoid making individual pronouncements and public conjectures about agency matters not yet decided by the board.
2. Represent all the people of the community while avoiding partisanship based on special interests.
3. Engage in no self-dealing or the conduct of any private business of personal services between any board member and the organization except as procedurally controlled to assure openness, competitive opportunity and equal access to "inside" information.
4. Recuse him- or herself from discussing or voting on an issue about which he or she has an unavoidable conflict of interest.
5. Not promise in advance of a meeting how he or she will vote on any issue, reserving judgment until all facts have been presented.
6. Not use his or her position to obtain employment for him- or herself, for family members or close associates. (Should a member desire employment, he or she must first resign.)
7. Make decisions involving the welfare of the agency based on study and evidence, recognizing that personal feelings, opinions and other such factors are not conducive to sound decision-making; and understand that respecting the opinions of fellow board members is vital.
8. Accept the principle of board unity by supporting majority decisions of the board.
9. Respect the board's commitment to work with the executive by:
    a. requesting desired information about the agency's programs directly from him or her
    b. referring to his or her suggestions for new policies
    c. seeking his or her professional advice
    d. refraining from acting on any complaint until after the executive has had an opportunity to investigate fully and report to the board, and
    e. Wholeheartedly supporting board-approved actions of the executive and his or her staff.
10. Recognize that the individual board member has no more authority over agency policies or operations and shall speak or act for the board only when specifically authorized to do so by action of the board.
11. Understand and respect the separation of board responsibilities and functions from those of the executive and staff. The board's responsibility is to ensure that the agency is well managed — not to manage the agency.
12. Consider unethical and thus avoid "secret" sessions of the board held without the presence of the executive.
13. Respect the confidentiality appropriate to issues of a sensitive nature.
14. Commit to regular attendance at board meetings and be properly prepared for board deliberation.
15. Understand and follow all provisions of the Illinois Open Meetings Act, as well as any other applicable statutes that govern the conduct of elected officials.
16. Evaluate the executive at least annually.
17. Participate in community activities.
18. Participate in board development opportunities.
19. Develop productive relationships with other elected officials at the state, local and national levels.
20. Be available and responsive to residents by interpreting the needs of citizens to the agency and by interpreting the actions of the agency to citizens without favor of any particular geographic area or interest group.
21. Keep the best interests of the agency in mind by considering him- or herself a "trustee" of the agency and doing his or her best to ensure that it is well maintained, financially secure, growing and always operating in the best interests of those the agency serves.
22. Respect, listen and communicate with fellow board members and the executive.
23. Make a committed effort to continuing education and to be well informed about issues and trends that could affect the agency.

Signed this _____ day of ____, 20__

_____	_____
	Board member
_____	_____
President	Board member
_____	_____
Board member	Board member

The Board Member's Creed

1. As an individual member of the board, I will:

- Recognize the integrity of my fellow board members and the merit of their work;
- Be motivated only by a desire to serve the people of my community;
- Recognize that it is my responsibility, together with my fellow board members, to see that the agency is properly run — not to attempt to run it myself;
- Work with the executive of the agency — not over or around him or her;
- Conduct board business only at legally called board meetings;
- Remain politically nonpartisan on agency issues;
- Attend continuing education programs to learn about the proper duties and functions of a board member and to stay abreast of the trends and issues affecting the field.

2. In performing my proper functions as a board member, I will:

- Deal in terms of general agency policies;
- Function in meeting the legal responsibility that is mine, as part of a legislative, policy-forming body, not as an administrative officer.

3. In maintaining desirable relations with other members of the board, I will:

- Respect the opinions and decisions of fellow board members;
- Recognize that authority rests with the board as a whole, not with me as an individual;
- Make no disparaging remarks in or out of meetings about fellow board members;
- Recognize that promising in advance how I will vote on any proposition under consideration closes my mind to other considerations, facts and points of view that may be presented in the meeting;
- Make decisions in board meetings only after all sides of the question have been presented;
- Consider unethical (and thus avoid) secret meetings of the board held without the presence of the executive.

4. In meeting my responsibility to my community, I will:

- Attempt to appraise fairly both the present and the future needs of the community;
- Attempt to procure adequate financing and support for agency programs, facilities and services;
- Interpret, as best I can, the needs and attitudes of the community to fellow board members and the executive;
- Insist that business transactions of the agency be ethical, open and above board.

5. In working with the executive, I will:

- Hold the executive responsible for the administration of the agency and give her or him the authority commensurate with that responsibility;
- Expect the agency to be administered by the best-trained professionals available;
- Participate in board decisions only after considering the recommendations of the executive;
- Expect to spend more time in board meetings on policies, programs and procedures than on day-to-day operations;
- Give friendly counsel and advice to the executive;
- Refer all complaints to the executive and, if necessary, for other issues, insist that the source present them in writing to the board as a whole;
- Present any personal criticisms of employees to the executive and not to the employees;
- Provide adequate safeguards for the executive and other personnel so they may perform their duties on a professional basis.