

## *Advocates' Code of Ethics*

Advocates' mission is to help people achieve their hopes and dreams within the fabric of their communities. We partner with people with disabilities, elders, and those with other challenges to overcome personal obstacles and societal barriers so that they can obtain and keep homes, engage in work and other meaningful activities, and sustain satisfying relationships. We work to inspire communities to create opportunities for contribution and participation by all.

Advocates has acknowledged eight core values:

- We believe in the value of diverse, inclusive and interdependent communities that provide adequate, accessible supports such that all people have the opportunity to participate meaningfully to the fullest extent of their potential
- We believe that with the right blend of supports and services, all people can lead full and satisfying lives of their own design.
- We believe that our resources represent a community attempt to help its members achieve their potential for participation and contribution.
- We believe that we are charged with enormous responsibility for the well being of the people we serve; for the safety and vitality of the communities in which we live and work; and for the wise use of scarce and valuable resources with which we have been entrusted.
- We believe that family members have much to teach us about their loved ones. We expect our interactions with family members and the quality of our services should be equal to that which we would seek for ourselves as family members.
- We believe that our most effective professional interventions are those that empower people to make educated choice about lifestyles, work, and the relationships that sustain them.
- We believe that we have a responsibility to those we serve, our funders and our communities to develop shared goals; to measure outcomes; and to continuously improve the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of our interventions.
- We believe in the uniqueness and sanctity of every individual person. We also believe that great power flows from partnership. We always seek to collaborate, in the belief that synergies will lead to greater opportunities, richer options, and an overall greater good for all concerned.

In order to effect this mission and uphold these values, Advocates has adopted the following Code of Ethics, as developed by the Massachusetts Council of Human Service Providers. We also voluntarily adhere to other standards such as those set by accrediting organizations or licensing entities. The following Code does not supersede or substitute for those.

- Advocates is governed by an engaged Board of Directors who are reflective of the community served and committed to Advocates mission. This Board provides necessary oversight and guidance in major policy and governance issues.

- Advocates sustains and advances the integrity, honor and prestige of the human services profession by avoiding circumstance where professional conduct or perceived conflicts-of-interests of directors, management or paid consultant may result in improper personal gain;
- Advocates develops and operates an annual budget that reflects and anticipates the agency's needs and resources for realizing its goals;
- Advocates complies with all applicable laws and regulations and offers a level of transparency for public inquiry around finances and operations;
- Advocates conducts all fundraising ethically and in a fiscally responsible manner
- Advocates operates programs and provides services within the boundaries of its institutional expertise to ensure individuals receive services that are effective and provide optimal benefits;
- Advocates provides policies and procedures for human resource management that are respectful of gender, sexual orientation, national origin, race, religion, age, political affiliation or disability in all aspects of recruitment, hiring, training, supervision, career development and evaluation;
- Advocates ascribes to sound policies and procedures that ensure a diverse governing body, on-going training and education, proper disclosures of any and all potential conflicts of interests and the faithful discharge of fiduciary responsibilities; and,
- Advocates provides sound policies and procedures for selecting, evaluating and setting the compensation of the chief executive officer.

Accordingly, Advocates hereby attests to honor this code and to continually uphold these practices and related principles of sound governance on behalf of the organization.

*Principles for Ethical Conduct:*

Advocates strives to:

- Implement policies and procedures to preserve the basic human rights, dignity and confidentiality of those we serve while providing necessary and effective care;
- Remain accountable to all of those we serve;
- Make all services accessible to our defined service populations without discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, national origin, race, religion, age, political affiliation or disability, in accordance with all applicable legal and regulatory requirements;
- Promote the development of an adequately compensated, well-trained and committed workforce;
- Ensure the health and safety of the people we serve, our personnel and visitors by providing a safe, well-maintained physical environment; and
- Remain accountable to Advocates' Board, funding sources, government bodies and the public to ensure integrity in fiscal management.

