

CODE OF ETHICS AND CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

The Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct policy has been established to provide employees, directors of the Board, interns and volunteers of Rising Ground with a set of moral and ethical standards, and specific actions which will guide their relationships with others as representatives of Rising Ground and in the context of their work at Rising Ground.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all Rising Ground employees, Board members, officers, interns, and volunteers.

DEFINITIONS:

Code of Conduct for the purposes of this policy defined as a set of guidelines that influence employees' actions, specific practices, and behaviors. The Code of Conduct originates from the Code of Ethics and converts the values and ideals of Rising Ground into specific compliance and rules.

Code of Ethics for the purposes of this policy defined as a set of unique principles that focus on the guiding values and ideals of Rising Ground. Aspirational in scope, the Rising Ground Code of Ethics provides a broader frame of guidance to employees on how to carry out the business of Rising Ground with honesty and integrity.

Employee for the purposes of this policy means any person employed by Rising Ground, interns, contractors, directors of the Board and volunteers.

POLICY:

Code of Ethics

These are the principles of personal behavior which Rising Ground upholds as essential for the establishment of an open and honest relationship between its staff, directors, persons supported and their families, volunteers of both their time and talent, donors and anyone else with whom employees interact in other ways.

1. Dignity and respect

We will honor the importance, value and diversity of each individual and the personal choices they make, recognize and appreciate the rights of others and show mutual respect for one another by working together in a considerate and cooperative manner.

2. Professional Value

We will abide by accepted, generally-recognized principles of right and wrong in all our interactions with others and in our work. Our decisions and actions will reflect the care and concern we have for others and ourselves.

3. Diversity

We will acknowledge and embrace people of all backgrounds, including their culture, ethnicity, religion, race, gender identity and gender expression, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, age, ability, national origin, perspective and more, all of which we see as assets to Rising Ground's work.

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4. Fairness

We will manage the Organization and provide services to persons supported and employees to the greatest degree of equality possible, without favoritism or discrimination of any kind.

5. Belonging

We will affirm, accept, support, include, and create a safe environment for the people we serve. Additionally, we will foster an environment where our employees can contribute to and participate in the organization honestly and freely, elevating all of us and our work; creating a workplace where all feel welcomed, acknowledged, informed, valued, and able to bring their whole, unique selves to our work.

6. Personal Responsibility

We will hold ourselves accountable for the actions we take. We will take responsibility for assuring that the needs of the persons we serve are being met, either by attending directly to those needs when possible, or by promptly calling those needs to the attention of the responsible person or the appropriate level of authority.

7. Loyalty

We, as Board members, volunteers, employees and employers, will work for our mutual benefit and do only what is in the best interest of the agency and the individuals supported while avoiding all conflicts of interest.

8. Honesty

We will express ourselves with sincerity and candor in an accurate and impartial way refraining from cheating or lying. We will communicate openly and honestly and provide straight forward information to our individuals supported and each other.

9. Law Abiding

We will abide by all applicable federal, state and local laws at all times while engaged in Agency business or on Agency property.

10. Trust

We will be reliable in every aspect of our jobs and will not do anything that might compromise the confidence others have placed in us.

11. Helpfulness

We will give assistance to and contribute positively to the improvement of the lives of our individuals supported.

12. Competence

We will agree to only engage in those services which we can reasonably expect to complete with professional skill and offer professional advice only on those subjects on which we are informed and qualified.

13. Independence

We will assist our individuals supported to make independent choices and involve them, to the greatest extent possible, in decisions that affect their lives every day. We will respect their freedom of thought, expression and action.

14. Confidentiality

We will respect the right of each person to expect that information obtained, produced, recorded, maintained, or stored about them will be handled in a confidential

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manner and released only to appropriate parties under appropriate circumstances.

15. Cooperation

We will contribute to efforts to develop and improve team efforts and work cooperatively within them by freely sharing our expertise, experience and skills with one *another*.

Code of Conduct

Conduct reflects how well an employee echoes the values, culture and vision of Rising Ground. There are certain standards of conduct that Rising Ground employees must observe on a day to day basis. Rising Ground has a zero tolerance for behaviors or employee actions that cause or have the potential to cause harm to the persons it supports or employees. While it would be impossible to list all appropriate and/or inappropriate activities, the following are examples of some, but not all, **good conduct** and **misconduct**:

Good conduct

1. Open communication
2. Working honestly
3. Positive “can do” attitude
4. Courteous
5. Friendly
6. Punctual
7. Good attendance
8. Meet deadlines
9. Takes responsibility for actions
10. Maintain professional standards and manner when dealing with persons supported, visitors or fellow employees
11. Dress appropriately and professionally (see Rising Ground Employee Dress Code)
12. Refraining from giving money or gifts to persons supported
13. Does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, or sex; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersex status; veteran status, age, or disability
14. Employs strength-based behavior management approaches
15. Never hit, harass, humiliate or degrade person supported or other fellow employees
16. Cooperate with official investigations (Child Protective Services, State licensing, Justice Center, etc.) as well as other legally sanctioned investigations, such as those conducted by law enforcement; and investigations convened internally by Human Resources or PEM Incident Management Unit

Misconduct

Inappropriate activities or misconduct may subject a staff member to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Disciplinary action may consist of a verbal or written warning, suspension, or immediate discharge, depending upon the nature of the offense (Rising Ground Employee Manual, pgs. 34-35).

1. Theft, conversion or intentional destruction of property (including from the agency, another employee, or from persons supported)

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2. Fighting
3. Falsification of records (including timecards, time sheets, job applications and I-9 forms)
4. Sleeping on the job
5. Unauthorized or careless use of or damage to person supported or agency property, tools or vehicles
6. Possession, use, sale, transfer or reporting to work under the influence of an intoxicant or unlawful or un-prescribed drug
7. Poor work performance
8. Abusive or threatening language or conduct
9. Abuse, maltreatment or neglect of persons supported. *See Rising Ground Mandated Reporter policy*
10. Abandonment of job duties
11. Disclosure or transfer of proprietary or confidential information about the agency, its employees or the individuals we support
12. Use of agency resources for personal use
13. Gambling
14. Engaging in any form of sexual abuse or sexual harassment of persons supported or employee
15. Engaging in sexual contact with anyone while on duty or while acting in the official capacity of their position.
16. Exchanging letters, gifts, pictures, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, or social media information with any person supported.
17. Initiating or encouraging physical contact of any kind with person supported ex: hugging.
 - a. Refer to program specific protocol for any exceptions in accordance with respective regulatory oversight guidance.
18. Contact with any person supported outside of Rising Ground beyond what is necessary to carry out job duties
19. Engaging in a romantic or sexual relationship with a person supported
20. Failure to disclose any misconduct relating in any way to Rising Ground, its employees or its persons support, whether committed on or off duty
21. Providing legal advice to any persons supported
22. Employee must report knowledge, suspicion, or information about sexual abuse, sexual harassment, or inappropriate sexual behavior according to mandatory reporting laws, Federal laws and regulations
23. Using inappropriate language, proselytizing religion or campaigning on behalf of a political party, politician or interest group

EXPECTED PERFORMANCE:

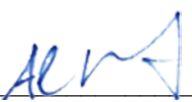
1. Upon employment, this Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct policy will be included in the Employee Handbook. It will be read, described and discussed with each new employee at orientation. Similarly, this Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct policy will be distributed to each new Board member and volunteer. Each employee, volunteer and Board Member will agree to adhere to the standards set above.
2. Witnessing of legal documents: Any employee, volunteer or intern who witnesses documents must read the contents and only sign with full knowledge that the information is accurate to their

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knowledge.

3. This Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate or as circumstances warrant.
4. Governing bodies such as the Justice Center, OPWDD, ORR, etc., might have additional code of conduct expectations that will be reviewed at the program level.

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REVISION HISTORY		
Rev	Reason for Change	Effective
A	Combined Code of Ethics with Code of Conduct; revised Statement of Purpose; added Definitions; added Diversity and Belonging; added Code of Conduct: <i>Conduct reflects how well an employee echoes the values, culture and vision of Rising Ground. There are certain standards of conduct that Rising Ground employees must observe on a day to day basis. Rising Ground has a zero tolerance for behaviors or employee actions that causes or has the potential to cause harm to the persons it supports or employees. While it would be impossible to list all appropriate and/or inappropriate activities, the following are examples of some, but not all, good conduct and misconduct.</i> ; Added "Diversity" and "Belonging"; Added examples of "good conduct" and "misconduct"	1/31/23
B	Added to Misconduct, #17: <i>Initiating or encouraging physical contact of any kind with person supported ex: hugging.</i> A. <i>Refer to program specific protocol for any exceptions in accordance with respective regulatory oversight guidance.</i> Added to Expected Performance 2. <i>Witnessing of legal documents: Any employee, volunteer or intern who witnesses documents must read the contents and only sign with full knowledge that the information is accurate to their knowledge.</i>	1/14/25
Approved by:  Date: 1/14/2025 Title: <u>Chief Executive Officer</u>		

Policy Training Plan

Policy category	How we train	Who develops	Who delivers	How we track	Oversight provided by
Corporate Compliance	Employee Handbook, New Employee Orientation, Volunteer Orientation, BoD Manual	Human Resources, Training	Human Resources, Training, Inst. Adv., BoD Manual	Annually	Training, Human Resources