



Code of Conduct

The Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council (BFWDC) is committed to maintaining the highest of standards of ethical conduct. All BFWDC representatives are expected to read, understand and apply this policy.

The BFWDC recognizes that by its very composition conflicts of interest and issues concerning the appearance of fairness may arise. Therefore, it is essential for BFWDC representatives to be sensitive and err on the side of caution when potential or real conflict or fairness matters occur.

The BFWDC recognizes that many members of the board are selected because of their expertise and involvement in youth, adult and dislocated worker services, training, education, employment, and employer services. Members should have every opportunity to share their talent, knowledge, and experience within the parameters of fairness. The BFWDC representatives may have professional and/or personal associations which could lead to conflicts of interest or unfairness – real or apparent.

The BFWDC is required to guard against problems arising from real, perceived, or potential conflicts of interest and to maintain an appearance of fairness. To accomplish these purposes, the following guidelines have been established for problem resolutions.

Guidelines:

During the performance of duties, your actions are a reflection upon the BFWDC as well as a reflection upon you. It is extremely important that all BFWDC representatives act in a courteous, friendly, helpful and prompt manner in dealing with the public, customers, other employees, supervisors, officials, and members of both internal and external organizations.

No board member shall cast a vote on the provision of services by that member (or by any organization with which that member is directly affiliated) or vote on any matter which would provide direct or indirect financial benefit to that member or their immediate family (or to any agency with which that member is affiliated).

Whenever a board member or staff is in doubt about a possible problem with appearance of fairness, he/she will disclose the association from which the problem arises. Disclosure of association(s) does not prohibit a board member from voting or participating in other BFWDC business unless prohibited by the Board of Directors. Associations are those which pertain to memberships in organizations or contractual agreements such as those between partners, stockholders, or employers and employees as well as those which arise out of custom, shared interests, friendships, or other relationships.

Ethical Principles:

All BFWDC representatives will conduct themselves in an honest and ethical manner, including the ethical handling of perceived, potential and actual conflicts of interest between BFWDC interests and the personal or financial interests of a BFWDC representative.

1. **Compliance with the Law:** It is the BFWDC's policy to be knowledgeable of and comply with all applicable laws and regulations of the United States and the State of Washington in a manner that will reflect a high standard of ethics. Compliance does not comprise one's entire ethical responsibility; rather it is a minimum, and an essential condition for adherence to mission and duties.
2. **Professional Standards:** It is the BFWDC's policy that its representatives be knowledgeable of emerging issues and professional standards in the field and conducts themselves with professional competence, fairness, efficiency and effectiveness.
3. **Responsibility to BFWDC Staff:** BFWDC is committed to treating staff with honesty and respect, and to provide a safe and healthy work environment. The BFWDC fully supports all relevant laws to protect and safeguard the rights and opportunities of all people to seek, obtain, and hold employment without regard to race, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, national origin or other protected status. The intent to provide an environment free of unlawful harassment and discrimination.

Standards of Policy:

Areas of concern are those actions or lack of actions which may lead to conflict of interest or the appearance of conflict of interest or to a perception of unfairness related to BFWDC business or the actions of BFWDC representatives outside meetings. Specific areas which may pose problems include, but are not limited to, comments made in public, information sharing, and disclosure of associations.

1. **Comments Made in Public:** BFWDC representatives are encouraged to act in a public relations capacity. This includes public speaking engagements and comments in a public forum. BFWDC representatives should differentiate between descriptive comments, which relate to actions already taken by the BFWDC, and statements, which imply future decision-making, or the ability to influence decision-making.
2. **Information Sharing:** BFWDC representatives are encouraged to share information with the community about BFWDC activities. It is important to protect against implying that actions taken by a specific interested party may result in favorable consideration by the BFWDC. To the extent possible, access to information regarding procurement of services should be available at the same time and under the same circumstances to all parties. Such information includes the Strategic and Operations Plans, Requests for Proposals, Notice of Meetings, Meeting Minutes and Policies.
3. **Disclosure of Associations:** BFWDC representatives have professional and personal associations throughout the community. Such associations have been and will continue to be of significant benefit. Where a direct or indirect financial conflict of interest exists, a BFWDC representative may not vote or serve on a rating team. BFWDC representatives must disclose all such associations. When associations raise appearance of fairness as an issue, BFWDC representatives should qualify statements in public by disclosing the association: minutes of the meeting should

reflect the disclosure. BFWDC staff shall not serve on boards of directors or advisory boards of organizations which are sub-recipients of BFWDC funds.

Procedures for Resolution:

The BFWDC recognizes that the above guidelines do not address all areas of possible interpretation of conflict of interest and appearance of fairness. BFWDC representatives are encouraged to seek further guidance as the need arises. The goal is to resolve such issues informally whenever possible as outlined in the following procedures.

1. **Verbal Concern:** Any concerns about the actions of a BFWDC representative should be expressed verbally to the CEO. The CEO will interpret these guidelines or offer other resolution as appropriate. If no acceptable resolution is found, a written concern may be addressed to the CEO.
2. **Written Concern:** The CEO will review the written concern and may elect to offer a verbal resolution, a written recommendation for resolution, or convene an ad hoc committee to study and resolve the concern. If an ad hoc committee is convened, it will issue a written resolution. If no acceptable resolution is reached, or if the concern is regarding the CEO, the matter will be referred to the Executive Committee.
3. **Executive Committee's Concern:** If the matter is referred to the Executive Committee, the Executive Committee shall have responsibility for taking steps to achieve resolution which may include mediation or other action as appropriate. If no resolution is achieved, the matter will be referred to the Board of Directors for consideration and resolution.

Sanctions:

1. Willful violations by a board member may result in removal from the Board.
2. All violations by staff shall be subject to the Personnel Policies and Handbook after a determination by the Executive Committee that the violation was willful.

Signature: _____ **Date** _____

Printed Name: _____