

BLUEBONNET TRAILS COMMUNITY SERVICES

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Approved:



Operating Procedure
Human Resources
Business Code of Conduct

Business Code of Conduct

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I. Statement of Policy

- A. Bluebonnet Trails Community Services (BTCS) employees and contractors of the organization will exhibit behavior based on honesty, integrity and a sense of fairness. It is the responsibility of each employee and contractor of the organization to maintain the highest standard of business ethics. This includes taking timely and responsive, positive action to prevent or correct any improper or inappropriate acts. Annually, the BTCS Board of Trustees reviews the Values Statements of the center driving expectations within this Business Code of Conduct. The BTCS Board of Trustees, management and staff are committed to providing and activating avenues through which ethical issues may be raised, reviewed and resolved openly and honestly.
- B. The Business Code of Conduct is accessible to all employees and contractors and can be found on the BTCS Intranet (BTNet). The appropriate personnel are notified of any changes or revisions to BTCS policies and procedures. Revised policies and procedures are made available for printing to facilitate further dissemination, as needed. Department Heads and Program Directors are responsible for ensuring that all employees and contractors of the organization receive information and training on policies and procedures in a timely manner. Questions concerning the Business Code of Conduct can be directed to BTCS supervisory staff, Department Head or the Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO).

II. Laws and Regulations

- A. BTCS abides by all federal and state laws requiring accuracy of billing. BTCS submits accurate claims for payment from any payer, including Medicare and Medicaid, commercial insurance and the persons we serve. Inaccurate documentation of services is prohibited and may lead to termination of employment.
- B. There are several State and Federal laws governing Medicaid fraud:
 - 1. The Federal Anti-Kickback Statute
 - 2. Stark Laws
 - 3. The Texas Illegal Remuneration Statute
 - 4. Civil Money Penalties Statute
 - 5. The Federal False Claims Act

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6. The Medicaid Fraud Prevention Act
7. The Program Fraud Civil Remedies Act (PFCRA)
- C. False Claims and Billing
 1. All billing and claims generated must accurately reflect services rendered are supported by relevant documentation and are submitted in compliance with applicable laws, rules, regulations, and program requirements. Employees and contractors should never knowingly make or present improper, false, fictitious or fraudulent claims to any government or private health care program, employee, department or agency.
 2. Improper activity can include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Misrepresentation of services
 - b. Submitting a claim when no services is provided
 - c. Falsifying start and stop times of services provided
 - d. Duplicate billing
 - e. False claims statements
 - f. Falsifying dates on services provided or claims statements
 3. Those responsible for completing and submitting financial reports will do so in accordance with acceptable accounting practices and legal obligations. Improper accounting practices include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Supplying false or misleading information in BTCS financial reports or other public documents; or
 - b. Providing false information to, or withholding material information from, BTCS auditors or state or federal oversight agencies.
 4. It is a crime to submit a "False Claim". A false claim occurs when a person or organization submits a record or claim for payment of services, property or other items, knowing that the information is not true. "Knowing" means that the person or organization:
 - a. Knows the record or claim is false, or
 - b. Is asking for payment and is deliberately ignoring whether the record or claim is false, or
 - c. Is asking for payment and does not care if the record or claim is false.

III. Business and Ethical Standards

- A. The business conducted by BTCS will be delivered in an environment with the highest ethical, legal and professional standards. Honesty, integrity and impartiality will be demonstrated when interacting with individuals accessing BTCS services, regulators, community members, employees and contractors of the organization. Interactions with individuals served by the organization should at all times promote the individual's sense of self-worth, self-reliance, trust, dignity and choice. The Board of Trustees, employees and contractors of the organization will make every effort to avoid even the appearance of illegal, unethical, or unprofessional conduct.
- B. Responsible Care and Abuse of Services
 1. All employees and contractors of the organization are required to provide responsible care to the persons we serve. Service providers can only perform duties within their expertise. Unintended harm can result from providing services by untrained or undertrained persons. Professional staff and the agency can be found liable for instances of malpractice if harm results from someone performing a service they were not trained to provide effectively.

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Providers who are licensed are expected to abide by their professional codes of ethics as it pertains to practicing within the limits of their expertise.

2. Only medically necessary and therapeutically appropriate services will be provided to individuals served. Providers must not over or underutilize treatment or interventions with individuals served. Providers must not abuse the provision of services to individuals. Abuse is defined as provider practices that are inconsistent with sound fiscal, business or medical practice, and result in an unnecessary cost to the Medicaid program, or in reimbursement for services that are not medically necessary or that fail to meet professionally recognized standards for healthcare.
- C. Procurement of Services: BTCS is committed to the highest ethical, legal and professional standards and abides by the principle of competitive procurement to the extent that it is possible. All requests for proposals applications will be reviewed in an objective manner and in accordance with BTCS procedures. Purchasing decisions are based on objective criteria. The organization will not contract with any individual who is currently an employee of BTCS.
- D. Corporate Resources
1. Each employee and contractor of the organization is expected to use corporate assets economically and safeguard corporate assets at all times. Corporate assets include, but are not limited to, time, materials, supplies, equipment, intellectual property and information.
 2. Corporate assets must be used for business-related purposes only and employees should use resources only to further the mission and support of those we serve. The personal use of any BTCS asset without the prior approval from the supervisor is strictly prohibited.
 3. The use of BTCS assets for personal gain is strictly prohibited.
 4. The BTCS procedure regarding internet use is maintained on the BTCS Intranet (BTNet).
 5. When utilizing Microsoft Office products which contain an icon image, employees and contractors of the organization, may choose from one of the following images approved for business use: self-portrait head shot of the employee or contractor; an image of a bluebonnet from the BTCS logo; or no specified image.
- E. Political Activities: As good citizens, each employee and contractor of the organization is encouraged to participate in the political process. However, BTCS must ensure that the political activities and contributions of employees and contractors of the organization do not appear to represent the opinions of BTCS.
- F. Consumer Focus: As individuals served by BTCS are the primary focus of every activity, each employee and contractor of the organization will be committed to continually improving our products, services, and cost competitiveness to meet the individual needs of each person served by BTCS.

IV. Conflict of Interest

- A. Employees and contractors of the organization are expected to exhibit professional loyalty to BTCS. Employees and contractors of the organization are expected to avoid conflicts of interest and opportunities for personal gain for themselves, members of their immediate families, and others which may impede their best judgment. A conflict of interest could be described as an activity or personal interest that influences or appears to influence an individual's ability to make objective decisions in the course of their job duties. Employees are expected to use good

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judgment, adhere to high ethical standards, and avoid situations that create an actual or perceived conflict between their personal interests and those of the organization. Conflicts of interest or unethical behavior may take many forms, including but not limited to, the acceptance of gifts from persons served by BTCS. Employees are prohibited from employing or conducting business with persons served by BTCS.

- B. The BTCS Chief Executive Officer appoints the BTCS Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) to be the system Corporate Compliance Officer (CCO).
- C. Employees and contractors are encouraged to seek assistance from their manager or the BTCS Corporate Compliance Officer at 512-244-8352 with any legal or ethical concern. Should the matter relate to a concern that may not be discussed with a manager or the BTCS Corporate Compliance Officer, the employee or contractor will report concerns to the BTCS Director of Quality Management.
- D. Gifts and Favors
 - 1. BTCS employees and contractors will not solicit money, gifts, favors, services, entertainment, or other things of value. Soliciting monetary gifts or any favors in attempt to gain unfair influence or advantage are never acceptable.
 - 2. Gifts from Individuals and Families Receiving Services
 - a. Accepting gifts from individuals served by BTCS is on a limited basis. BTCS strives to benefit the individuals and families in services. Receiving or rejecting a gift should cause no harm nor create a harmful or exploitative relationship.
 - b. In general, one should consider their respective licensing agencies, clinical implications, cultural sensitivity and personal ethics when deciding if a gift may be accepted.
 - c. In no circumstances should a BTCS employee or contractor accept a gift exceeding value of \$5.00 from an individual or family in services.
 - 3. Gifts from Vendors
 - a. Gifts of entertainment and products from vendors should be limited to common business courtesies. Any gifts accepted should have an assessed value of less than \$10.00.
 - b. For breakfasts, lunches, dinners or coffee breaks offered from vendors:
 - 1) Any offer of a meal must be accompanied by training,
 - 2) A training roster including the signatures of all participants must be captured at the time of the training and submitted to Human Resources, and
 - 3) Only the registered participants in the training may share in the meal.
- E. Outside Business and Financial Interests.
 - 1. Employees, or members of their respective families, and contractors will not have substantial financial or business interest with a person in services or supplier of BTCS without first reviewing the nature of the activity with the appropriate BTCS Executive Leadership Team member.
 - 2. Employees, or members of their respective families, and contractors of the organization involved in grant-supported activities shall provide advance disclosure of outside activities, relationships, or financial interest to avoid actual or perceived conflicts of interest.
 - 3. BTCS employment, and achievement of the expectations of that employment, is the first business priority of each employee. Any other employment or business activity will be

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considered secondary and should not interfere with individual employee job performance and responsibilities.

V. Confidentiality

In accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) professional and ethical guidelines, employees and contractors of the organization must maintain the privacy and security of protected health information. All employees and contractors of the organization are expected to diligently safeguard against loss, damage, or unauthorized use of all BTCS records, whether paper or electronic, that are deemed confidential, as described in BTCS policy and federal and state law. This includes information about individuals served by BTCS and their families, internal operations, and fellow employees and contractors of the organization. BTCS policies and procedures related to confidentiality are located on the BTCS Intranet (BTNet). Employees and contractors of the organization are expected to keep information about other employees of the organization confidential.

VI. Human Resources

- A. BTCS cultivates a work environment where employees are treated honestly and respectfully, where their health and safety are respected, and where they are recognized and rewarded for their achievements without prejudice or discrimination.
- B. Employee Relations: Each employee and contractor of the organization is expected to perform assigned tasks in a responsible, reliable, and cooperative manner and to treat one another with fairness, mutual respect, dignity, and trust. BTCS does not tolerate any form of harassment or discrimination.
- C. Controlled Substances, Alcohol and Tobacco
 1. BTCS is committed to maintaining a drug, tobacco, and alcohol-free workplace for the benefit of the overall health of persons served by the organization, employees, contractors, volunteers, vendors, and visitors. Alcohol, tobacco, and drug use in the workplace has many detrimental effects to the organization and the individuals served by the organization. Alcohol, tobacco, and drug use impacts morale, lowers productivity and increases health care costs. In addition, tobacco use is a leading cause of preventable disease and premature death in the United States. This policy applies to all employees, contractors, volunteers, visitors, vendors, and persons served by BTCS.
 2. Tobacco
 - a. BTCS prohibits the use of tobacco on owned or leased property of BTCS and in the community while providing services on behalf of BTCS. This includes inside facility buildings, center vehicles and during program activities. This policy covers any tobacco product, to include smokeless or "spit" tobacco and electronic nicotine delivery devices. In addition, staff shall not provide or facilitate access to tobacco products for individuals served by the organization.
 - b. Thirdhand smoke is also prohibited. Thirdhand smoke is defined as the residual contamination from tobacco smoke that lingers in rooms long after smoking stops and remains on clothes after leaving a smoky place. It may seem merely like an offensive smell, but it is also indicative of the presence of tobacco toxins.

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3. Use or Possession of Drugs and Alcohol at Work
 - a. BTCS is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and efficient working environment for all employees and those who do business with BTCS, as well as protecting its reputation in the community. To help achieve this goal, employees are prohibited from:
 - 1) Possessing, distributing, selling, manufacturing, or being under the influence of any illegal drug.
 - 2) Consuming alcoholic beverages while on BTCS premises, in BTCS vehicles, or while on BTCS business or time.
 - 3) Abusing inhalants or prescription drugs or possessing prescription drugs that have not been prescribed for the employee by a physician.
 4. An employee who violates this policy is subject to corrective action up to and including termination of employment.
- D. Intoxication/Impairment
 1. BTCS is a tobacco, drug, and alcohol-free workplace.
 2. It is BTCS policy that there is zero-tolerance for the consumption of, or being under the influence of, drugs and/or alcohol on any BTCS property, during a BTCS activity or during hours of work. These acts are illegal and/or jeopardize the safety of employees and contractors of the organization and individuals served by BTCS, as well as reduce productivity, reliability, and trustworthiness.
 3. "Zero-tolerance" means that consuming or being under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, if determined by reasonable suspicion, can result in immediate termination from employment without review or administrative recourse.
- E. Legal Drugs
 1. The use of legal drugs (over the counter or prescription medication) in accordance with doctor's orders and/or manufacturer's recommendation is not prohibited.
 2. Employees using prescription drugs according to a physician's instructions or using over-the-counter drugs for medicinal purposes are required to notify their supervisor in the event such drugs would impair their physical, mental, emotional, or other faculties.
- F. Exceptions for Clergy Members
 1. BTCS will allow a clergy member to bring four ounces or less of alcohol on site or to a program activity for purposes of presiding over a religious or spiritual rite, if the alcohol remains in the possession, custody, or control of the presiding clergy member at all times while on the program site or at the program activity, is not distributed, and is consumed only by the presiding clergy member, if at all.
 2. BTCS is responsible for informing any clergy member bringing alcohol on site or to a program of this restriction. BTCS must maintain a log reflecting each date and time when alcohol is permitted to be brought onto the program site or to a program activity. This log must include the name, address, and title of the clergy member, and shall document staff verification that the clergy member was self-identified as such, that alcohol was brought on site or to a program activity and that it was thereafter either removed from the site or program activity or represented by the presiding clergy member to have been personally consumed.

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- G. Right of Inspection: With reasonable suspicion, BTCS reserves the right to inspect a desk or any other BTCS property used by an employee.
- H. Drug, Tobacco, and Alcohol Testing Policy
 1. BTCS may require an employee or job applicant to submit to a blood, breath and or urine test for drugs, tobacco, or alcohol in the following circumstances:
 - a. Pre-employment testing – Testing is required of all applicants considered for employment
 - b. Post-accident testing
 - c. Reasonable Suspicion – BTCS will require any employee to be tested for the presence of drugs, or alcohol based on reasonable suspicion. If a supervisor suspects that an individual is at work and under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, the supervisor should notify the CHRO or the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to seek authorization to test the employee. The supervisor will be granted permission to test the employee if sufficient objective symptoms exist to indicate the employee may be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. Determination of reasonable suspicion may be based on a variety of factors, but not limited to:
 - 1) Direct observation or reliable reports from co-workers or others
 - 2) Possession of drugs or alcohol on the premises, or use of drugs, or alcohol at work, prior to work or on a break
 - 3) Behavior, speech, or other physical signs consistent with impairment
 - 4) A pattern of abnormal conduct or erratic behavior, which is not otherwise satisfactorily explained
 - 5) Unexplained accidents, on the job injuries or property damage
 - 6) A combination of some of the above factors and/or other factors in the judgment of the CHRO or CEO.
 2. Testing an injured employee: An employee who is seriously injured and cannot provide a specimen at the time of the accident shall provide the necessary authorization to obtain hospital reports and other documents that may indicate whether there were any controlled substances or alcohol in their system.
 3. Notification of results: Employees and applicants will receive notification of positive test results and will be given the opportunity to explain such results.
 4. Use of some drugs is detectable for several days. Detection of such drugs or the presence of alcohol will be considered being “under the influence.” Refusal to submit to a drug and/or alcohol screen is grounds for immediate termination.
- I. Rehabilitation
 1. While the organization does not condone the abuse of alcohol, prescription drugs, and/or use of illegal drugs, BTCS does recognize that addiction to drugs and/or alcohol can be treated. If an employee recognizes a personal addiction or abuse problem and seeks assistance from management in advance of detection, the organization will assist the employee in seeking treatment. The confidential nature of the counseling and rehabilitation for drug and/or alcohol abuse received by an employee will be preserved.

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2. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a confidential resource designed to assist employees and their eligible dependents in managing challenges and problems such as substance abuse. Employees and/or eligible dependents can reach an EAP representative by calling (800) 343-3822 or <https://www.awpnow.com/main/>.
- J. Workplace Safety: BTCS is committed to providing a safe and secure working environment in which to work. BTCS recognizes that every person has the right to an environment that is free from violence, threats of violence, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior. Each employee and contractor will comply with this procedure, contributing to a respectful environment, treating all threats seriously and reporting incidents immediately.
 1. Workplace is defined as any location in which employees are engaged in BTCS business activities. This includes, but is not limited to, agency buildings, employee parking lots, employer-organized social events, field locations, business-related travel and in the communities and homes of the individuals served by BTCS.
 2. Workplace violence includes acts of physical violence, the threat of physical violence, abuse (verbal or physical), intimidation or other threatening behavior that occurs in the workplace.
 3. All employees and contractors are responsible for reporting workplace violence and can do so without fear of reprisal. Employees should contact the CCO to report workplace verbal abuse, intimidation, harassment and/or any act of violence or threat of violence. All incidents of workplace violence, regardless of the magnitude or whom it may involve, will be treated seriously, and managed appropriately.
 4. BTCS prohibits the possession, carrying or use of prohibited weapons, including firearms and illegal knives and associated contraband inside BTCS buildings. Violation of this procedure is grounds for immediate termination. Texas Concealed Handgun License law does not supersede this policy.
- K. Rights and Responsibilities of Employees When Transporting Individuals in Service
 1. As noted in BTCS Transportation Procedure, firearms or any other weapons are never to be carried in a vehicle owned or operated by BTCS.
 2. For any non-BTCS owned vehicles approved for transporting individuals in services, employees who are licensed handgun carriers must secure the handgun out of sight and locked in the glove box or other locked container.
- L. Appropriate Workplace Dress
 1. It is the expectation of BTCS that all employees will be dressed in a manner suitable to the job they are performing, and consistent with the standards of the community where they provide services. It is each Center Director and their subordinate supervisors' responsibility to determine if their staff is appropriately attired. BTCS employees will present a professional image in their community while performing work duties on behalf of BTCS. This may vary from work location to work location. Professional staff and staff working in offices are to adhere to standard office dress. A supervisor may send any employee home to change if the supervisor deems the employee's dress not suitable.
 2. Staff are prohibited from wearing the following clothing or articles of clothing:
 - a. Soiled, worn, ragged or clothing with holes
 - b. Tank tops, halter tops, strapless tops
 - c. Bare midriff tops

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- d. Clothing that shows undergarments (sheer)
 - e. Gym or workout attire, spandex tops or pants, bicycle shorts
 - f. Over-sized clothing or revealing clothing
 - g. Shorts of any length
 - h. Unsafe shoes, flip-flops
 - i. Shirts with alcohol or illegal drug-related logos/slogans
 - j. Shirts with logos/slogans that demean race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, or sexual orientation.
3. All employees should practice commonsense rules of neatness, good taste, and comfort. Provocative clothing is prohibited. BTCS reserves the right to determine appropriate dress at all times and in all circumstances and may send employees home to change clothes should it be determined their dress is not appropriate. Employees will not be compensated for this time away from work.

M. Equal Employment Opportunity

1. BTCS is committed to recruiting, hiring, and maintaining a diverse workforce. Equal employment opportunity applies to all areas of employment, including recruitment, selection, hiring, training, transfer, promotion, termination, compensation, and benefits.
2. As an equal opportunity employer, BTCS does not discriminate in its employment decisions based on race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, military status, disability, or on any other basis that would be in violation of any applicable federal, state, or local law. Furthermore, BTCS will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless doing so would result in an undue hardship, safety, and/or health risk.

VII. Compliance

- A. All employees and contractors of the organization must comply with all components of the Business Code of Conduct. The following are guidelines for compliance with the Business Code of Conduct:
1. All employees and contractors of the organization are committed to complying with all federal and state laws and regulations, with an emphasis on preventing fraud and abuse.
 2. All employees are responsible for ensuring hours reported on timesheets are true, accurate and complete; whereby submission of time for each payroll period represents the employee's verification of the accuracy and completeness of time entered.
 3. All contractors of the organization are responsible for ensuring the hours billed accurately reflect time in delivering the contracted services.
 4. BTCS will conduct audits and other risk evaluations to monitor compliance and assist in the reduction of identified problem areas.
 5. BTCS will maintain processes to:
 - a. Detect Medicaid/Medicare or other third-party payer compliance offenses
 - b. Initiate corrective and preventive action
 - c. Report to appropriate oversight authorities, both professional and regulatory, when appropriate

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- d. Address consequences for employees and contractors of the organization for failure to comply with standards, policies, and procedures
- B. Internal and External Audits:
1. BTCS employees and contractors will be forthright in dealing with billing inquiries. Requests for information will be answered with complete, factual, and accurate information. Employees and contractors will cooperate with and be courteous to all persons conducting audits and provide them with the information to which they are entitled when requested and/or during an audit.
 2. BTCS employees and contractors will not interfere with reviews, inspections, investigations, hearings or related activities. This includes taking action to discourage or prevent someone else from cooperating with the activity. During an audit, employees and contractors must never omit significant information, conceal, destroy or alter any documents, lie or make misleading statements. Employees and contractors will not attempt to cause another colleague to fail to provide accurate information or obstruct, mislead or delay the communication of information or records relating to possible violation of the law.
 3. BTCS will provide all staff with the information and education they need to comply fully with all applicable laws and regulations.
- C. Accounting and Reporting:
1. It is the policy of BTCS to keep complete and accurate records of all transactions and all services provided, to include reporting true, accurate and complete hours worked on the employee timesheet. Each employee and contractor of the organization will ensure the integrity of BTCS by accurately and truthfully recording all corporate information, accounting, and operational data through strict adherence to established accounting and business procedures and clinical records policy.
 2. The procedure for keeping clinical records is maintained on the BTCS Intranet (BTNet).
- D. Internal Investigations:
1. Any suspected violations will be investigated by the appropriate personnel. All investigations are overseen by the CCO.
 2. Investigations will be treated confidentially to the extent consistent with BTCS' interests and legal obligations.
 3. Results of investigations into suspected violations will be documented and submitted to the CEO for review.
 4. If the results of an investigation indicate that corrective action is required, the agency will decide the appropriate steps to take, including discipline, dismissal and/or possible legal proceedings. If appropriate, the investigation may be turned over to applicable outside authorities, and outside investigators may assist in the inquiry.
 5. BTCS ensures that necessary investigations are conducted at its service sites in order to respond to complaints, and to ensure compliance with state laws, agency policies and procedures. Listed below are the types of investigations that may be conducted:
 - a. Unusual Incident Investigations. The CEO will authorize the appropriate director or manager to conduct investigations of unusual incidents such as a criminal act committed by a client or staff member, an automobile accident, or other unusual incident involving staff persons, clients, or visitors.

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- b. Special Investigations. The CEO must authorize special investigations. The CEO will delegate authority to the CHRO and/or the Chief Quality Officer (CQO) to conduct the special investigations. If the investigation calls for expertise outside the scope of Human Resources and Quality Management, the CEO may also engage persons meeting the need in the investigation process. During the course of the investigation, the CHRO and CQO may designate additional persons, considering skills and experience, to assist with the special investigations. The CEO will be notified of the need for designees before addition to the investigation. If after beginning the investigation, the investigator determines that the scope of the investigation should be expanded, verbal approval for the change in scope must first be obtained from the CEO.
 - c. Client Rights Investigations. The Client Rights Officer (CRO) investigates complaints of violations of Client Rights and may request assistance from directors or their designees throughout the process. Complaints may be made by anyone, including clients, client's relatives, staff members, etc. No written authorization is required in order to conduct client rights Investigations, but when a staff member is the alleged perpetrator, the investigator should notify the staff member's supervisor that an employee under their supervision would be investigated. If the immediate supervisor is not available, the investigator will notify the next highest supervisor in the chain of command.
6. Standards of conduct to be followed during BTCS investigations:
- a. The investigator will notify the staff member's supervisor or appropriate manager, that the staff member is a witness or a subject in an investigation, and that the staff member may be interviewed. The investigator and the supervisor will arrange a time and place for the interview. Although the supervisor may be asked to participate in the investigation, the supervisor will not hinder the investigation in any way.
 - b. The investigator will identify themselves to all witnesses and other persons to be interviewed.
 - c. The investigator will explain the purpose of the investigation and the need for the interview.
 - d. The investigator will conduct the investigation in a courteous and professional manner.
 - e. If the individual being interviewed refuses to cooperate, the investigator will terminate the interview. If the individual is a staff member, the investigator will notify the staff member's supervisor that the individual has refused to answer questions or refuses to cooperate.
 - f. The investigator will safeguard written statements, copies of documents, and other forms of evidence.
 - g. Pertinent information obtained during an interview will be treated as confidential and will be revealed only on a need-to-know basis.
 - h. Investigations will be conducted as expeditiously as possible. If the investigation will take much longer than initially anticipated, the CEO will be notified of the reason for the delay.
 - i. Investigations will be conducted as efficiently as possible. Follow-up interviews may be conducted by telephone if possible. Telephone interviews may be utilized whenever face-to-face interviews are not necessary.

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- j. An investigation may be terminated whenever the investigator has determined that the allegations are unfounded.
7. Reporting and documenting the investigation:
 - a. A written report will present the findings of the investigation. Supervisors will be notified of the conclusions so they can take appropriate action. A plan of action may be requested from the appropriate supervisor or director. This written report will be maintained by the CCO. Written notes of the witnesses' interviews may be included in the report.
 - b. A written report will be presented to the CEO upon conclusion of the investigation. The investigator's hand-written notes will not be made a part of the investigative report, but they will be made available to the CEO upon request.
 - c. Any action plan requested at the conclusion of the investigation, and subsequent monitoring notes, will be maintained with the written report in an investigation case file by the CCO.
 - d. Investigation case files will be secured and maintained on file for five years by the CCO.
 - e. If requested by the CEO, the investigator will keep the CEO informed concerning the progress of the investigation.
 - f. If the investigator becomes aware during the investigation of information concerning serious matters that should be reported to another department, the CEO will be informed.
 - g. If during the course of an investigation, the investigator's findings indicate that a crime may have been committed or a violation of corporate compliance has been confirmed, the CEO will be notified immediately by the investigator.

VIII. Reporting Misconduct

- A. It is the responsibility of each employee and contractor of BTCS to report violations of the Business Code of Conduct. This includes the suspicion or knowledge of any fraud or abuse (other than client abuse) or an allegation, or reason to suspect that a person associated with BTCS has been, is, or will be engaged in illegal, unethical, or unprofessional conduct. This report must be made to the CCO by way of email, at corporate.compliance@bbtrails.org or by calling the "Hotline" at (512) 244-8352.
 1. If the violation is related to a BTCS Chemical Dependency Treatment Facility (CDTF), the person must directly inform the CCO, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission's (HHSC) Chemical Dependency Treatment Facilities investigation division, and the BTCS CEO. If the allegation involves the CEO, report to the CCO, HHSC's Investigation Division and the Board Chairperson. Contact information for the Board Chairperson will be provided by the CCO.
 - a. For violations under the Human Resources domain which are not related to CDFTs, report to the CCO and CHRO.
 - b. Any concern about the CEO not related to CDFTs should be reported to the CCO, who will in turn notify the Board Chairperson and the respective HHSC investigations division.
 - c. A concern involving the actions or determinations of the CCO should be brought directly to the CEO.

BLUEBONNET TRAILS COMMUNITY SERVICES

Original effective date: 9/1/08
Revised: 10/16/12, 4/23/13; 2/20/15, 1/6/2016, 4/25/18,
4/20/2021, 8/26/2021, 6/4/2022, 10/2/2023, 2/26/2025
Approved:

Operating Procedure
Human Resources
Business Code of Conduct

- B. If the CEO receives an allegation or has reason to suspect a staff member is, or will be, engaged in illegal, unethical, or unprofessional conduct, the CEO will inform the respective HHSC investigations division.
- C. Instructions for contacting HHSC's investigations divisions:
 - 1. Autism Program: call the HHS Office of the Ombudsman at 877-787-8999; or submit a report online at hhs.texas.gov/ombudsman.
 - 2. Early Childhood Intervention Program: call the HHS Office of the Ombudsman at 877-787-8999, select a language, and select Option 3; or submit a report online at hhs.texas.gov/ombudsman.
 - 3. Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Services: send a letter to HHS Office of the Ombudsman, P.O. Box 13247 Austin, TX 78751; or make a toll-free phone call to 800-252-8154 during business hours; or send a fax to 888-780-8099; or submit a report online at hhs.texas.gov/ombudsman.
 - 4. Mental Health Services: send a letter to HHS Office of the Ombudsman, P.O. Box 13247, Austin, TX 78711; or make a toll-free phone call to 800-252-8154 during business hours; or send a fax to 888-780-8099; or submit a report online at hhs.texas.gov/ombudsman.
 - 5. Substance Use Services/Chemical Dependency Treatment Facilities: send a letter to Texas Health and Human Services Commission Regulatory Services Complaint and Incident Intake, Mail Code E-249, P.O. Box 149030, Austin, TX 78714-9030; or make a toll-free phone call to 800-458-9858, Option 1; or send an email to cii.sa@hhsc.state.tx.us.
- D. If any agency representative needs guidance on a legal or ethical question, has witnessed or has knowledge of an illegal or unethical activity, they should seek the counsel of the agency CCO. Failure to report could lead to disciplinary measures.
- E. Reporting violations will remain confidential unless otherwise obliged by professional code of conduct, state, or federal law. Employees and contractors of the organization may, however, be required to substantiate any allegations of wrongdoing. Employees and contractors of the organization cannot be punished or subjected to reprisal because they, in good faith, report a violation of this Business Code of Conduct. BTCS has a "zero tolerance policy" regarding retaliation and it will be adhered to in all such instances.

IX. Conclusion

- A. It is the responsibility of each employee and contractor of the organization to maintain the highest standards of business ethics. This includes taking positive action to prevent or correct any improper or inappropriate acts.
- B. BTCS Board of Trustees and Management are committed to providing avenues through which ethical issues may be raised, reviewed, and resolved openly and honestly.