



## **Whistleblower and Non-Retaliation Policy**

**Policy:** CHOICE (the “Agency”) requires its directors, managers, officers, employees, former employees, board members, volunteers, as well as all persons who provide the Agency with contracted services (each, a “Protected Person” and shall be referred to from hereon as “employees, contractors, and agents of CHOICE) to observe the highest standards of business and personal ethics in the performance of their duties on the Agency’s behalf.

As employees and representatives of the Organization, employees, contractors, and agents of CHOICE are expected to participate in the Compliance Program and to practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling their responsibilities and are expected to comply with all standards and provisions established in the CHOICE Corporate Compliance Plan, all CHOICE policies, and all applicable laws and regulations.

A whistleblower, as defined by this policy is an employee, contractor, and/or agent of CHOICE who reports an activity considered to be illegal or dishonest. CHOICE is committed to ensuring a corporate environment that promotes high ethical standards and compliance with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations which includes protecting individuals, who in good faith, participate in the compliance program with a policy of non-retaliation and non-intimidation.

### **Procedure:**

#### **1. Participation in the Compliance Program:**

a. “Good Faith Participation” in the CHOICE compliance Program includes, but is not limited to:

- Reporting instances of Fraud, Waste, and Abuse.
- Reporting a suspected violation of any law, rule, or regulation.
- Reporting any activity that poses a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety.
- Cooperation with a new or ongoing investigation.
- Assisting with self-evaluations, audits, and the implementation of remedial actions,
- Reporting to any government entity as provided in sections 740 and 741 of the NYS Labor Law

#### **2. Reporting Responsibility**

a. It is the responsibility of all directors, senior management, supervisors, employees, and volunteers to report violations or suspected violations of the Code of Conduct, CHOICE policies, or applicable laws in accordance with this policy.

b. The Compliance Program is partially dependent on the good faith participation of employees, contractors, and agents of CHOICE and has created a safe environment that encourages said participation and protects good faith participation regarding compliance concerns.

#### **3. Non-Retaliation**

a. No employee, contractor, or agent of CHOICE, who in good faith reports a compliance violation shall suffer any intimidation, harassment, retaliation, or adverse employment consequence. Participation in the Compliance Program can include areas regarding reporting issues, participating in investigations, self-evaluations, internal/external audits, remedial actions, as well as reporting to appropriate officials as provided in Section 740 and 741 of the NYS Labor Law.

b. An employee who retaliates against an employee, contractor, or agent of CHOICE who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment. This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage employees and others to raise serious concerns within CHOICE prior to seeking outside/external resolution.

#### 4. Reporting Violations

a. All employees, contractors, and agents of CHOICE retain the right to report any compliance violations/suspicions to the appropriate officials/government entity. All employees, contractors, and agents of CHOICE are encouraged to share their questions, concerns, suggestions, or complaints with the Compliance Officer.

b. If an employee, contractor, or agent of CHOICE is not comfortable speaking with the Compliance Officer they are encouraged to report to either the Director of Human Resources, and/or the Internal Anonymous Compliance Hotline. Access to external Compliance Hotlines is also provided.

**Contact information:**

Compliance Officer: Scott Fessenden

Address: 200 East Post Road, White Plains NY, 10601

Phone: 914-727-2135

Anonymous CHOICE Hotline: 914-576-0173 X 300

**External Contact:**

CCC Hotline: 1-877-874-8416

OMIG Hotline: 1-877-873-7283

c. If an employee, contractor, or other agent believes the Compliance Officer is not responding within a reasonable amount of time, the employee, contractor, or other agent should contact the Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, and/or Director of HR. If a whistleblower feels that CHOICE of NY is not addressing their concerns, the individual retains the right to report his or her suspicions to the appropriate officials as provided in Section 740 and 741 of the NYS Labor Law.

#### 5. Acting in Good Faith

a. Any good faith report, concern, or complaint is fully protected by this policy, even if the report, question, or concern is, after investigation, not substantiated. Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation of ethical standards, CHOICE's policies, or law.

b. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and have been made maliciously or with knowledge that they were false will be treated as a serious disciplinary offense. Any suspected violations of this policy are required to be reported via any of the contact methods established in section 3 of this policy.

## 6. Investigation

a. All reports will be promptly investigated, as established in the investigation policy and procedure, and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation. The complainant, if not anonymous, will be informed that follow-up has or is occurring within two weeks after the Compliance Officer has received the complaint or report.

b. All allegations of retaliation/intimidation against an individual reporting to the Compliance Programs will be promptly investigated and any corrective action necessary will be promptly instituted.

## 7. Confidentiality

a. Violations or suspected violations may be submitted on a confidential basis by the complainant or may be submitted anonymously. Reports of violations or suspected violations will maintain confidentiality and anonymity consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

b. All violations of this policy will be reported to the Executive Director and Governing Body.

