

**Columbia County
Industrial Development Agency
Whistleblower Policy**

General

The Columbia County Industrial Development Agency Code of Ethics (hereinafter referred to as the Code) requires board members, other volunteers, and employees to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. Employees and representatives of the Columbia County Industrial Development Agency must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling their responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

The objectives of the Columbia County Industrial Development Agency Whistleblower Policy are to establish policies and procedures for:

- The submission of concerns regarding questionable accounting or auditing matters by employees, board members, officers, and other stakeholders of the Columbia County Industrial Development Agency, on a confidential and anonymous basis.
- The receipt, retention, and treatment of complaints received by the Columbia County Industrial Development Agency regarding accounting, internal controls, or auditing matters.
- The protection of board members, volunteers and employees reporting concerns from retaliatory actions.

Reporting Responsibility

Each board member, volunteer, and employee of the Columbia County Industrial Agency has an obligation to report in accordance with this Whistleblower Policy (a) fraud or suspected fraud, (b) questionable or improper accounting or auditing matters, and (c) violations and suspected violations of Columbia County Industrial Development Agency's Code (hereinafter collectively referred to as Concerns).

Authority of Audit Committee

All reported Concerns will be forwarded to the Audit Committee in accordance with the procedures set forth herein. The Audit Committee shall be responsible for investigating and making appropriate recommendations to the Board; with respect to all reported Concerns.

No Retaliation

This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable board members, volunteers and employees to raise Concerns within the Columbia County Industrial Development Agency for investigation and appropriate action. With this goal in mind, no board member, volunteer, or employee who, in good faith, reports concerns shall be subject to retaliation or, in case of an employee, adverse employment consequences. Moreover, a volunteer or employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a concern in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including dismissal from the volunteer position or termination of employment.

“Reporting Concerns”

Employees

Employees should first discuss their concern with their immediate supervisor. If, after speaking with his or her supervisor, the individual continues to have reasonable grounds to believe the concern is valid, the individual should report the concern to a designated board member. In addition, if the individual is uncomfortable speaking with his or her supervisor, or the supervisor is a subject of the concern, the individual should report his or her concern directly to a designated board member.

If the concern was reported verbally to a designated board member, the reporting individual, with assistance from a designated board member, shall reduce the concern to writing. A designated board member is required to promptly report the concern to the Chair of the Audit Committee, who has specific and exclusive responsibility to investigate all concerns. If a designated board member, for any reason, does not promptly forward the concern to the Audit Committee, the reporting individual should directly report the concern to the Chair of the Audit Committee. Concerns may be also be submitted anonymously. Such anonymous concerns should be in writing and sent directly to the Chair of the Audit Committee.

Board Members and Other Volunteers

Board members and other volunteers should submit concerns in writing directly to the Chair of the Audit Committee. Contact information for the Chair of the Audit Committee may be obtained from the Assistant Secretary.

Handling of Reported Violations

The Audit Committee shall address all reported concerns. The Chair of the Audit Committee shall immediately notify the Audit Committee, Board members, Assistant Secretary and Executive Director of any such report. The Chair of the Audit Committee will notify the sender and acknowledge receipt of the concern within five business days, if possible. It will not be possible to acknowledge receipt of anonymously submitted Concerns.

The Audit Committee will promptly investigate all reports and appropriate corrective action will be recommended to the Board members, if warranted by the investigation. In addition, action taken must include a conclusion and/or follow-up with the complainant for complete closure of the concern.

The Audit Committee has the authority to retain outside legal counsel, accountants, private investigators, or any other resource deemed necessary to conduct a full and complete investigation of the allegations.

Acting in Good Faith

Anyone reporting a concern must act in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates an improper accounting or auditing practice, or a violation of the Codes. The act of making allegations that prove to be unsubstantiated, and that prove to have been made maliciously, recklessly, or with the foreknowledge that the allegations are false, will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense and may result in discipline, up to and including dismissal from volunteer

position or termination of employment. Such conduct may also give rise to other actions, including civil lawsuits.

Confidentiality

Reports of concerns, and investigations pertaining thereto, shall be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

Disclosure of reports of concerns to individuals not involved in the investigation will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense and may result in discipline, up to and including termination of employment. Such conduct may also give rise to other actions, including civil lawsuits.