

## **Compliance Program Code of Conduct**

### **Purpose**

Search for Change, Inc. (“Search for Change” or “Agency”) is committed to providing high quality services that comply with the Federal and New York State laws, rules, regulations, policies, and standards that are applicable to our work. The Code of Conduct is intended to provide guidance to all members of the Search for Change “Community” which includes Agency employees, management members, senior administrators, volunteers, interns, corporate officers, Chief Executive Officer, Board members, contractors, vendors, subcontractors, independent contractors, and agents<sup>1</sup> (collectively, “employees, contractors, and Board members”) on their personal, professional, ethical, and organizational responsibilities. The Code of Conduct is not intended to be an exhaustive list of expectations. Because the Code of Conduct cannot cover every expectation, you have a duty to determine how you should behave by consulting applicable laws, rules, regulations, policies, and standards following the Agency’s policies and procedures, and/or contacting the Agency’s Compliance Officer, Crystal Meyer, or any member of the Corporate Compliance Committee.

### **Agency Mission**

Search for Change is dedicated to improving the quality of life and increasing the self-sufficiency of individuals with emotional, social and economic barriers throughout Westchester, Putnam, and Fairfield counties. This is accomplished by providing the direct support and assistance needed to enable individuals to reach their full potential.

Search for Change is committed to assisting people with mental illnesses in their quest for dignity and independence. Clients direct every aspect of their rehabilitation, including planning for change, choosing goals, acquiring skills, and accomplishing objectives. Consideration is given to each individual’s strengths, talents, opinions, values, dreams, and ability to make choices. We recognize and use these qualities to assist individuals in overcoming and managing the symptoms of mental illness.

We teach the skills needed to choose, obtain and maintain desirable housing, meaningful employment, higher education and productive relationships with family and friends. Our programs and services are focused on individual choices, needs, interests and abilities. Dedicated staff are available twenty-four hours a day, three hundred sixty-five days a year to provide support and care to the individuals we serve and their families.

### **Policy**

Search for Change is committed to our mission and to the Agency’s continued success. In making decisions in our daily business practices, personal values and honesty are factors that play a significant role in guiding us. Everyone in the SfC Community has the responsibility to (1) evaluate how our actions affect the integrity

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<sup>1</sup> For purposes of this Policy and Search for Change’s Compliance Program, contractors, agents, subcontractors, and independent contractors (collectively, “contractors”) are required to comply with Search for Change’s Compliance Program and Code of Conduct to the extent that the contractor is affected by the Agency’s Compliance Risk Areas (as set out in Search for Change’s Compliance Risk Assessments Policy), and only within the scope of the contractor’s contracted authority and affected Compliance Risk Areas.

and values of SfC as a whole and (2) ensure that our conduct reflects our values of doing the right thing, telling the truth and treating each other and our clients with compassion and respect.

Search for Change is committed to the highest standards of business and professional ethics. To ensure that each Search for Change employee, contractor, and Board member upholds this commitment, we have developed a Corporate Compliance Program. The Corporate Compliance Program written components consist of the Search for Change Code of Conduct, and the Corporate Compliance Policy and Procedure Manual. Search for Change developed this mandatory Code of Conduct and the Compliance Program to provide guidance on behavior that is consistent with the applicable federal and state regulations, laws, rules, policies, and standards that govern our operations and provision of services including, but not limited to, the regulations, policies, and standards promulgated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General (OIG) and Office for Civil Rights (OCR), and the New York State Office of the Medicaid Inspector General (OMIG), and applicable requirements under the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) and the Federal and New York State False Claims Act. Additional information about the fraud, waste, and abuse laws that apply to SfC can be found in the Agency's Fraud Prevention Policy.

Search for Change's Director of Human Resources will provide you with a copy of the current Code of Conduct upon hire and annually thereafter; you will be required to sign a statement acknowledging that you received the Code of Conduct and understand it each year. In addition to your initial orientation when hired, you will be trained on the Code of Conduct and Corporate Compliance Program no less frequently than annually. The Code of Conduct is also readily accessible on the agency server and website.

The Compliance Committee reviews the Code of Conduct annually and makes revisions as needed. All employees will be required to attest to the current Code of Conduct annually via a signed statement of acknowledgment. All signed acknowledgment statements are retained in the employee personnel files by the Director of HR.

## **Procedures**

- The Corporate Compliance Committee and Corporate Compliance Officer are responsible for developing the Code of Conduct, reviewing it annually, and making updates as needed based on changes in guidance, regulations, or publications.
- The Board of Directors must approve the Code of Conduct and any updates or modifications.
- The Code of Conduct and other Compliance Policies and Procedures include guidance on high-risk areas identified by Search for Change as well as billing, governance, credentialing, financial relationships, quality of care, and confidentiality. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with these policies and procedures.
- The Code of Conduct, along with applicable policies or other compliance aids, will be distributed by HR to all employees upon hire who must sign an acknowledgement that they have a) received the documents; b) read and understand the documents; and, c) agree to abide by the provisions of the Code. The Code of Conduct will be sent annually thereafter, and all employees must attest to it annually.

- The Code of Conduct will be distributed to all employees, Board members, and contractors, including independent contractors, and, as appropriate, vendors and subcontractors, at the time their relationship with SfC is established and annually thereafter.
- The Compliance Committee, Compliance Officer, and Director of HR are responsible for ensuring that all employees and agents receive training on the code of conduct during orientation or within 30 days of hire with SfC and annually thereafter.
- The Compliance Officer is responsible for investigating any violations of the Code of Conduct.
- The Code of Conduct contains information on how employees, Board members, and contractors must report suspected violations of the Agency’s Compliance Standards—including its Compliance Program, policies, procedures, and Code of Conduct, applicable Federal and State laws, rules, regulations, policies, and standards, and other improper or unethical behavior—an affirmation of the Agency’s commitment to confidentiality and both non-retaliation and non-intimidation for reporters, and potential disciplinary actions that may be taken against those who violate the Code of Conduct and SfC’s other Compliance Standards.

### **Compliance Officer**

The Compliance Officer, Crystal Meyer, can be reached at 914-428-5600 extension 4857 or [CMeyer@searchforchange.com](mailto:CMeyer@searchforchange.com). You can call the Anonymous Compliance Hotline at 914-428-5600 extension 9239 if you wish to anonymously report a concern regarding any compliance issue.

Written concerns may also be made, anonymously, and mailed to: Search for Change, Inc., 400 Columbus Avenue, Suite 201E, Valhalla, NY 10595 to the attention of the Corporate Compliance Department and labeled “confidential.”

Reports can also be made to any member of SfC’s Compliance Committee or Board of Directors, to a supervisor, or to SfC’s Chief Executive Officer.

The Compliance Officer will follow up and investigate all reports of Medicaid fraud, compliance related matters, concerns, and/or issues as described in the Compliance Program Policies and Procedures Manual.

### **Responsibilities of Leadership**

It is the Search for Change Compliance Committee’s responsibility to:

- ensure that all SfC employees, Board members, and contractors are trained on the contents of the Code of Conduct, the role of the Compliance Officer, and on compliance policies and procedures relevant to each employee’s duties, among other compliance-related topics as outlined in the Agency’s Compliance Training and Education Policy;
- ensure that no SfC employee, contractor, or Board member is subject to retaliation or intimidation for reporting potential violations of any aspect of the Corporate Compliance Program;
- in consultation with the Compliance Officer and Human Resources, discipline those who commit violations of any aspect of the Corporate Compliance Program, up to and including termination;

- monitor the effectiveness of the Corporate Compliance Program and to modify the Program as changes occur to laws, rules, regulations, policies, and standards and to ensure that employees, contractors, and Board members are retrained as those modifications are made;
- maintain a safe and harassment-free work environment;
- treat employees, contractors, and Board members courteously and with respect; and
- ensure that employees, contractors, and Board members have appropriate guidance and training to do their jobs well.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Directors to:

- attend training on the Code of Conduct, Compliance Policies and Procedures, and the Board of Directors' responsibility to ensure an effective Corporate Compliance Program;
- receive and review Compliance Committee reports and evaluate the effectiveness of the Compliance Program;
- review the Compliance Officer's annual report, quarterly reports, audit and investigation findings, and Compliance workplan.

It is your supervisor's responsibility to:

- set the tone and maintain a work environment that encourages ethical and responsible behavior;
- discuss the Corporate Compliance Program and encourage questions from you and your fellow employees, contractors, and Board members;
- conduct follow-up training, as directed by the Compliance Officer, Human Resources, and Compliance Committee, at individual units about the Corporate Compliance Program and proper documentation;
- establish an environment in which employees, contractors, and Board members feel comfortable addressing compliance issues without fear of reprisal; and
- evaluate an employee's adherence to the Corporate Compliance Program as part of the annual performance review.

**Your Individual Responsibilities**

It is your responsibility to:

- know and follow the laws, rules, regulations, policies, and standards that govern your job;
- attend the Agency mandatory Compliance Training annually, as well as any other Compliance Program-related training deemed necessary by your supervisor, Human Resources, Compliance Officer, and

Compliance Committee;

- refrain from committing Medicaid fraud, waste, or abuse either directly or indirectly;
- complete all billing documentation according to required standards and protocols,
- comply with the Corporate Compliance Program by:
  - Reporting actual or suspected compliance-related issues;
  - Refraining from participating in non-compliant behavior; and
  - Refraining from encouraging, directing, facilitating or permitting either actively or passively non-compliant behavior;
- report any actual or potential Medicaid fraud and any actual or potential violations of the Agency's Compliance Standards, including laws, rules, regulations, policies, and standards, the Agency's Code of Conduct, Compliance Program, policies, or procedures, and any other improper or unethical conduct;
- submit accurate, complete, and truthful records of your hours, including any written documentation required to support the services you provided;
- treat your fellow employees (as well as contractors and Board members) and each Search for Change client with respect and dignity;
- maintain the privacy and security of client information and information related to Search for Change's business operations. This responsibility extends past the end of your employment with Search for Change, Inc.;
- safeguard Search for Change computer records by maintaining the confidentiality of your password and restricting access to the computer system only to authorized persons;
- avoid putting yourself in a position in which your own personal interests and those of Search for Change are in conflict or which might interfere with the ethical performance of your job responsibilities;
- refrain from giving or accepting any form of gift or gratuity that might influence, or appear to influence, yours or another person's judgment in the performance of job duties;
- refrain from offering or receiving anything of value to induce another person to purchase an item or service from Search for Change, to refer a client to SfC, or to market SfC services;
- refrain from making misrepresentations, dishonest statements, or statements intended to mislead or misinform clients about the quality of services or those of a competitor;
- refrain from using any information you obtain on the job that is not readily available to the general public, for personal gain (you must also refrain from making unauthorized disclosures of information that might damage Search for Change or its employees and contractors);
- never discriminate against or harass anyone on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, sex, age, national

origin, sexual orientation or affectation, gender identity or expression, disability, or any other protected characteristic;

- refrain from using Search for Change property or services for personal gain or benefit – you may not remove or dispose of Search for Change’s materials, supplies or equipment without proper authority; and
- tell the truth and cooperate with any investigation of a potential compliance or other legal matter, whether investigated by SfC representatives or government authorities.

### **Responsibilities to our Clients and Program Participants**

Providing high quality services is a primary objective of Search for Change, Inc. Whether an individual has direct client care responsibilities or an indirect impact on client care, this commitment to serving the needs and best interests of our clients should guide all business decisions. In discharging these responsibilities, the safety and well-being of each client must be given the highest consideration.

Every Search for Change client or participant who receives services shall be:

- treated as an individual, with respect given to their dignity, autonomy, and self-esteem, with the same high quality and cost-effective treatment provided regardless of payment source or level of reimbursement;
- treated without distinction in admission, transfer, or discharge activities based on race, sex, religion, age, sexual orientation, disability, national origin, creed, gender identity or expression, familial status, military status, color, human research subject, source of payment, or any other client characteristic protected by law;
- assured that Search for Change complies with all Federal and State laws, rules, regulations, policies, and standards regarding client rights, including the right to participate in their care, the right to freedom of choice in decisions regarding care and its provision and anticipated cost, the right to receive full and accurate information regarding the proposed treatment, the right to give informed consent to such treatment, the right to maintain confidentiality of their protected health information, and the right to complete an advance directive regarding their care;
- cared for in accordance with the client’s goals established with the staff. Employees will communicate with the fellow staff about the client’s response to rehabilitation and changes in the client’s status, altering the plan of treatment as appropriate with such changes;
- Cared for by properly licensed, credentialed and/or skilled professional and para-professional employees; and
- Informed of the reasons for any recommended service, and methods used to accomplish the service, and necessary follow-up required of family members or other caregivers.



## **Disciplinary Action**

All employees, contractors, and Board members will be subject to Search for Change’s Disciplinary Policy for failure to comply with the Agency’s Compliance Standards, including its Code of Conduct and/or Compliance Program and its associated Policies and Procedures, and federal and state laws, rules, regulations, policies, and standards. This may include issuance of a verbal or written warning that may be imposed depending upon the nature of the conduct, suspension, and/or termination.

Failure to comply with the Compliance Standards, including the Agency’s Code of Conduct, Compliance Program, and/or Policies and Procedures, as well as federal and state laws, rules, regulations, policies, and standards, may result in the termination of the relationship and/or contract with affected vendors and third-party contractors. For Board members, failure to comply may result in removal from the Board of Directors consistent with SfC’s Bylaws and applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

Department: Corporate Compliance

Date Adopted: 12/09

Reviewed/Revised: 12/10, 09/14, 06/16, 9/22, 03/23, 03/24, 03/25, 03/26



## **Compliance Program Code of Conduct Attestation Form**

I hereby acknowledge that I have received and affirmatively state that I have reviewed and understand Search for Change’s Compliance Code of Conduct. I agree to comply with the standards contained in the Code of Conduct, and Search for Change’s Compliance Program and all related policies and procedures, as well as all applicable federal and state laws, rules, regulations, policies, and standards, as is required as part of my continued employment or association with the organization.

I understand that should I have any questions about the Code of Conduct or how it is applied in practice, I may contact my supervisor, any member of the Compliance Committee, or the Compliance Officer, Crystal Meyer, at 914-428-5600 ext. 4857 or CMeyer@searchforchange.com directly for assistance.

I acknowledge the Code of Conduct is only a statement of principles for individual and business conduct and does not constitute a contract of employment. I understand I am required to promptly report any actual or potential violation of the Code of Conduct that I become aware of to my supervisor, the Compliance Hotline (914-428-5600 ext. 9239), to the Compliance Officer directly, to Search for Change’s Chief Executive Officer, or to any member of the Compliance Committee or Board of Directors. I understand that I am also required to promptly report any actual or potential violation of Search for Change’s Compliance Program, policies, or procedures, or any actual or potential violation of federal or state laws, rules, regulations, policies, or standards using the same reporting methods.

I understand that any violation of the Code of Conduct, Compliance Program, or any compliance policy or procedure, or any violation of federal or state laws, rules, regulations, policies, and standards, may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including discharge from employment, termination of vendor contract/business relationship, or removal from the Board of Directors.

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_