



HARBOR REGIONAL CENTER Whistleblower Policy

Harbor Developmental Disabilities Foundation doing business as Harbor Regional Center ("Harbor") requires members of the Board, officers, directors, employees, contractors, and service providers to uphold high standards of business and personal ethics in their roles. This policy is in place to ensure that Harbor's Board members, officers, employees, contractors, service providers, clients, families, and other key individuals can report concerns or evidence of illegal, unethical, improper, or other inappropriate activities without fear of retaliation.

1. Reporting Responsibility

If a Harbor Board member, officer, director, or employee, or a board member, officer, director, or employee of a service provider has knowledge of illegal, improper, dishonest, or fraudulent activity, they are responsible for reporting such violations or suspected violations per this Whistleblower Policy.

- a.** An "improper regional center activity" is defined as an activity by a regional center, or an employee, officer, or board member of a regional center, in the conduct of regional center business, that is a violation of a state or federal law or regulation; violation of contract provisions; fraud or fiscal malfeasance; misuse of government property; or constitutes gross misconduct, incompetency, or inefficiency.
- b.** An "improper vendor/contractor activity" means an activity by a vendor/contractor, or an employee, officer, or board member of a vendor/contractor, in the provision of State funded services, that is a violation of a state or federal law or regulation; violation of contract provisions; fraud or fiscal malfeasance; misuse of government property; or constitutes gross misconduct, incompetency, or inefficiency.

2. No Retaliation

Harbor Regional Center shall not retaliate against any person who reports a violation or suspected violation.

3. Reporting Violations

Harbor has an open door policy and encourages board members, officers, directors, and employees share questions, concern, suggestions or complaints with someone who can address them appropriately. Typically, an employee's supervisor is best suited to handle concerns. However, if an employee feels is not comfortable speaking with their supervisor or is not satisfied with their supervisor's response, they are encouraged to reach out to the Director of Human Resources or any management member they feel comfortable approaching. Directors, supervisors,



and managers are required to report suspected violations to Harbor's Compliance Officer, who is responsible for investigating reported violations.

Individuals may also choose to report directly to the Compliance Officer, the Harbor Board President, or the State Department of Developmental Services.

a) Reporting Contacts at Harbor Regional Center:

- i) **Executive Director:** Patrick Ruppe
Harbor Regional Center, 21231 Hawthorne Boulevard, Torrance, CA 90503
(310) 543-0630 – patrick.ruppe@harborrc.org
- ii) **Compliance Officer:** Judy Wada
Harbor Regional Center, 21231 Hawthorne Boulevard, Torrance, CA 90503
(310) 543-0625 – judy.wada@harborrc.org
- iii) **Director of Human Resources:** Tammy Carter
Harbor Regional Center, 21231 Hawthorne Boulevard, Torrance, CA 90503
(310) 543-0602 – tammy.carter@harborrc.org

b) Reporting to the Board President:

- i) By letter to HRC Board President, c/o Jennifer Lauro, Board Assistant, 21231 Hawthorne Boulevard, Torrance, CA 90503
- ii) By email: boardpresident@harborrc.org

c) Reporting to the Department of Developmental Services:

- i) **Community Operations Division**
(916) 654-1958 or fax (916) 654-1987
1600 9th Street, Room 320, MS3-9, Sacramento, CA 95814
- ii) **Community Services and Supports Division (for Early Start Program Services)**
(916) 654-2716 or fax (916) 654-3020
1600 9th Street, Room 430, MS 3-24, Sacramento, CA 95814

4. Compliance Officer

The Compliance Officer, along with those designated above, is responsible for investigating and resolving reported complaints, including retaliation reports and alleged code violations. The Compliance Officer shall consult the Executive Director and/or the Executive-Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees when necessary. The Compliance Officer has direct access to the Board's Executive-Finance Committee and must report to it on compliance activity at least once per year. Harbor's Compliance Officer is the Chief Financial Officer.

5. Accounting and Auditing Matters



The Board's Executive-Finance Committee will handle all reported concerns or complaints regarding accounting practices, internal controls, or auditing. The Compliance Officer shall immediately notify the Executive Director and the Executive-Finance Committee of any such complaint and work closely with the Committee until the matter is resolved.

6. Acting in Good Faith

Anyone filing a complaint should act in good faith and have reasonable grounds to believe the information disclosed indicates a violation. Reports made maliciously, or knowingly false, will be treated as a serious offense subject to disciplinary measures.

7. Confidentiality

Violations or suspected violations can be reported confidentially or anonymously. Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of the whistleblower. However, identity may be disclosed as necessary to conduct a thorough investigation, comply with the legal obligations, ensure client health or safety, or uphold legal rights.

8. Handling of Reported Violations

The Compliance Officer or designated report recipient will notify the sender and acknowledge receipt of the reported violation or suspected violation within five business days. All reports will be investigated promptly and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted.

9. Notification Process

Harbor Regional Center Board Members, employees, contractors, service providers, clients and families will be notified annually of this Whistleblower Policy, as well as the State Department of Developmental Services Whistleblower Complaint Process, through Harbor's Website and other channels.

Board Members and employees will be required to acknowledge this Policy in writing annually and such acknowledgement shall be maintained in Harbor's Board and personnel files.

*Approved by the Harbor Developmental Disabilities Foundation
Board of Trustees on November 19, 2024*