



## Code of Ethical and Legal Behavior Standards of Compliance

Abilities First, Inc.'s Code of Ethical and Legal Behavior encompass all that we do. The Code of Ethical and Legal Behavior is an integral part of all activities of the organization, and supports Abilities First, Inc.'s mission to provide quality care to individuals with disabilities, and continuously improve the services provided to our program participants. We are committed to preventing the occurrence of unethical or unlawful behavior, stopping such behavior as soon as possible after discovery, and to discipline employees who violate the Code, including employees who neglect to report a violation.

Abilities First, Inc., Inc., its staff, employees, consultants, board members, volunteers and affiliates are all committed to performing their responsibilities according to ethical and legal standards with honesty, integrity, fairness, good faith and respect for others and the law.

Decisions will be made in the best interest of Abilities First, Inc., and those served by the organization. Consideration should be given to whether an action is right, fair and legal and whether that action could withstand the scrutiny of outsiders, including:

- ❑ Program participants and their families
- ❑ Employees
- ❑ Service providers and physicians
- ❑ Affiliates
- ❑ Vendors
- ❑ Payers
- ❑ Community agencies
- ❑ Regulatory agencies and
- ❑ The community

Maintaining high ethical and legal standards is not easy and sometimes requires difficult choices. Commitment to these standards should never be compromised for personal, financial, professional or other business objectives. All employees must comply with this Code, immediately report any alleged violations of wrongdoing, and assist management and compliance personnel in investigating allegations of wrongdoing.

*All individuals are responsible for complying with the Code of Ethical and Legal Behavior as part of their job. In addition, the following standards assist in understanding expectations, as well as providing examples of unacceptable behavior. Each program/department may add specific examples pertaining to their department as an appendix to this code.*



## Our Vision

To lead the way in providing comprehensive services  
To promote the abilities and enhance the lives of people with disabilities.

## Our Mission

To serve people with disabilities and their families by  
developing and providing innovative services, advocacy and support  
in a culture of dignity and respect.

## Our Values

- 1. Deliver Quality Service:** Everyone is responsible for ensuring that all participants receive quality services, provided by staff/consultants with appropriate experience and expertise, and for understanding and adhering to the participant rights. Employees/consultants are expected to use sound judgment in the performance of their duties and to conform to the standards of their respective professions.  
***Examples of Prohibited conduct (but not limited to):*** Provision of service by staff/consultants who are unqualified according to their job description; such as failure to renew license or credentials; providing differential care based on the participant's race, religion, payer source, etc., rather than their needs.
- 2. Respect and protect the confidentiality of participant and Agency information:** Everyone is responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all records, including participant-specific information.  
***Examples of Prohibited conduct (but not limited to):*** Looking up a participant's/patient's record where there is no job-specific need to know; inappropriate release of participant information; use of confidential Agency information for personal gain.
- 3. Comply with applicable laws, regulations, codes, and Agency policies and procedures:** Each employee is made aware of specific issues relating to their program, and is responsible for adhering to state and federal laws, professional licensure/ registrations, business rules, Agency codes of conduct and policies and procedures. Policies and procedures were developed to ensure equity, fairness, safety, and protection for all employees, consultants, and volunteers, as well as to ensure the proper function of the organization.  
***Examples of Prohibited conduct (but not limited to):*** Falsifying time sheets; falsifying mileage sheets; reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs; consistently reporting late to work.
- 4. Maintain accurate documentation, billing, coding, and reporting procedures and practices, both operational and financial:** Accuracy of data/records, as well as data retention, are important and necessary for the care of the people we serve and regulatory compliance. Abilities First, Inc. will only bill and accept revenues for which it is entitled.  
***Examples of Prohibited conduct (but not limited to):*** Filing claims to more than one payer (double billing), except in cases where there are legitimate, multiple funding sources, i.e., a primary and

secondary insurance; falsified records used as a basis for billing; inaccurate coding; postdating orders/records; using white out on client or billing documentation.

5. **Conflict of interest:** Conflict of interest occurs in situations where a person has the potential to direct or influence a decision to his/her own gain. Employees, consultants and board members should report any potential conflict of interest concerning themselves or their family members to management.  
***Examples of Prohibited conduct (but not limited to):*** Accepting gifts of a value greater than \$50 individual gift or \$100 cumulative in a year, or any gift that could influence your work-related decisions, including providing preferential treatment (all gifts should be reported); participating in an outside activity that could improperly influence your actions, such as consulting with a competitor, without first disclosing that relationship to management; providing gifts to referral sources.
  
6. **Represent Abilities First, Inc. in a fair and honest manner in all interactions, and in a manner that promotes the public's trust.**  
***Examples of Prohibited conduct (but not limited to):*** Providing payment, gifts, discounts, rebates, free space, or any other item of value in exchange for referrals of individuals whose services are funded by Medicaid/Medicare; misrepresenting Agency services or ability to provide services; truth in advertising.
  
7. **Safeguard Abilities First, Inc.'s assets and the property of those with whom we do business:**  
Agency resources are to be used for job related purposes and not for personal gain.  
***Examples of Prohibited conduct (but not limited to):*** Personal use of equipment/supplies without management approval; use of computer systems and software that is not consistent with license agreements; misuse of Abilities First, Inc. or a participant's property including theft, misappropriation, or embezzlement.
  
8. **Respect and deal honestly and fairly with all individuals:** Show proper respect and consideration for all staff, consultants, volunteers, participants, and business associates. Demonstrate honesty in your dealings with others; admit mistakes.  
***Examples of Prohibited conduct (but not limited to):*** Calling in sick when you are not sick; lying to a participant or coworker or supervisor; inaccurate reporting of incidents or injuries.
  
9. **Employment Environment:** Abilities First, Inc. is committed to creating a safe and professional workplace where employees and others are treated with respect and without regard to their race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, color, marital status, disability, or other protected characteristics. Business integrity, teamwork, trust and respect are the Agency's most important values. All Agency employees must exhibit and promote respect, integrity, trust and teamwork in the workplace and must comply with this policy prohibiting discrimination and harassment in all facets of the Agency's work. All employees are required to support the Agency's commitment to a safe and professional work environment and to demonstrate appropriate behavior in the workplace. (See Administrative Policy Manual Section 3:02, Affirmative Action, and 3:22, Sexual Harassment.)  
***Examples of Prohibited conduct (but not limited to):*** Joking about another employee's race, sex, age, religion, national origin, color, marital status, disability, or other protected characteristics; considering someone's race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, or other protected characteristic in making decisions about hiring, placement, assignment of duties, training, promotion, termination, compensation, benefits and other work terms; any form of unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual or sex-based

nature; providing differential care based on the participant's race, religion, payer source, etc. rather than their needs.

### **Seeking Guidance and Reporting Violations**

Employees and contractors must report any actual or suspected violations of this Code of Conduct, any applicable law or regulation, or any Agency policy and procedure to their immediate supervisor or the Director of Quality Assurance. There is an email address for reporting suspected violations, it is [compliance@abilitiesfirstny.org](mailto:compliance@abilitiesfirstny.org), and the Compliance Hotline is also available for confidential or anonymous reporting of such issues. The Compliance Hotline number is 845-485-5983.

When an actual or suspected violation of this Code of Conduct, any applicable law or regulation, or any Agency policy and procedure is reported to any Agency employee, it must be promptly referred to the Director of Quality Assurance. Steps will be taken to protect confidentiality and anonymity, when appropriate and warranted. Abilities First, Inc. will not tolerate any form of retaliation against a person who makes a good-faith report in accordance with this Code of Conduct.

All employees and contractors must cooperate fully and honestly in any investigation into a reported violation of this Code of Conduct, any applicable law or regulation, Agency policy, procedure or practice.

### **Corrective Action and/or Discipline**

Any employee or contractor who violates or knowingly fails to report any violation of this Code of Conduct, any applicable law or regulation, Agency policy, procedure or practice is subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Disciplinary action may range from a warning to suspension or discharge, depending upon the nature of the incident and the relevant surrounding circumstances.

### **Your Responsibilities as an Abilities First, Inc. Employee**

- ✓ Attend required training, and read and understand Abilities First, Inc.'s Corporate Compliance Plan, Corporate Compliance Policies and Procedures, and Code of Conduct.

- ✓ Follow the Agency's Code of Conduct and abide by all policies and procedures, guidelines, and Federal and State laws and regulations.
- ✓ Be alert to any situation that could violate the Agency's Code of Conduct, policies and procedures, guidelines, and/or federal and state laws and regulations.
- ✓ Promptly report any issues, concerns, violations or suspected violations to your supervisor or the Director of Quality Assurance.

*Employees and consultants who violate these guidelines are subject to disciplinary action including but not limited to termination. Employees and consultants shall promptly report all suspected violations of the Code of Ethical and Legal Behavior and Standards of Compliance, Agency policies, laws or regulations to the appropriate level of management. **Abilities First, Inc. will not permit any action of retaliation or reprisal to be taken against any employee/consultant who reports a violation of law, regulation, standard, procedure, or policy.** Any questions, comments, or concerns regarding this Code should be brought to any management team member or the Director of Quality Assurance, at 485-9803 x 353, the Hotline at 845-485-5983, or at [compliance@abilitiesfirstny.org](mailto:compliance@abilitiesfirstny.org)*

Rev 4/07: Reviewed 408; Reviewed 5/09; Revised 11/10; Revised 11/11, 11/14, 11/15, 11/16