



225: Whistleblower Reporting and Response Procedures

Scope

This policy applies to all EVAWI representatives including Staff, Officers, Directors, Associates, Committee Members, Honorary Members, Subrecipients, Consultants, Contractors, Volunteers, Allies, and Constituents (collectively referred to as “Members”).

Purpose

Members are required to observe the highest standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. All Members have a responsibility to promote a work environment that is safe, inclusive, and respectful. As representatives of the EVAWI, Members must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling their responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

Reporting Responsibilities

Members are required to report violations, or suspected violations, in accordance with this policy, so that issues can be investigated in a timely and confidential manner, when warranted.

If a Member experiences or observes behaviors that might constitute a violation of any EVAWI policy, safety guidelines, relevant laws, or ethical standards governing Member conduct, those concerns should be reported to the individual’s immediate supervisor or to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO, or depending on the circumstances, a designee, shall be responsible for investigating and resolving all reported complaints and allegations concerning any Member, other than the CEO or a member of the Board of Directors.

Violations or suspected violations by the CEO, or a Board Member, shall be reported to the Executive Committee as soon as practically possible. The Executive committee is responsible for investigating and resolving all reported complaints and allegations against the CEO or a Board member.

Members are encouraged to talk to their immediate supervisor or the CEO, if there are any questions about any of EVAWI’s policies, safety guidelines, relevant laws, or ethical standards.

Acting in Good Faith

Any Member who reports behavior that could potentially constitute a violation of EVAWI policies must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the



information disclosed indicates a violation. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false, will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense, which may result in discipline up to and including termination or removal from the Board of Directors.

Retaliation

EVAWI policies are intended to encourage and enable Members to raise concerns within the organization, prior to seeking resolution outside the organization. No Member who in good faith asks questions or raises concerns about conduct, or reports a suspected violation, shall suffer harassment, retaliation or adverse consequence as a result.

Any Member who retaliates against anyone who has reported a violation (or suspected violation) in good faith, is subject to discipline up to and including termination or removal from the Board of Directors.

Confidentiality and Corrective Action

To the extent possible, confidentiality shall be protected throughout the process of investigating a reported violation. However, it must be clear that a supervisor must report any complaint of fraud, workplace violence, bullying, discrimination, or harassment to the CEO as soon as practically possible. Members must recognize that it may not be possible to keep an investigation completely confidential within the workplace, especially for a small organization such as EVAWI. Sometimes, an individual may want to simply notify a supervisor or the Board of Directors about an incident but ask that it be kept confidential and no corrective action taken. However, this is often not an option, because supervisors must immediately notify the CEO of certain reports, and a decision may be made by the CEO, or the Board of Directors, to investigate and take corrective action if warranted.

EVAWI will, however, strive to take Member's concerns and wishes into account throughout the process of investigating and responding to a report, to the extent possible. For example, a Member will be asked about their wishes regarding corrective action. However, a supervisor or the CEO, may, or may not be able to honor those wishes. The safety and well-being of individual Members, as well as the safety and well-being of all Members, must be protected by responding appropriately to any complaints of possible violations so that appropriate action can be taken to deter any future fraud, discrimination, harassment, retaliation, or other misconduct.

Reporting Procedures

While Members may report a suspected violation to their immediate supervisor, the CEO, or in some cases, the Executive Committee, supervisors have a duty to report to



the CEO, if the behavior potentially constitutes a policy violation – particularly the policies on Workplace Violence, Intimidation, and Bullying (No. 530) and Discrimination or Harassment (No. 215).

If a Member's grievance is against the CEO, or if for any reason a Member feels that a grievance cannot safely be made to the CEO, the Member shall notify any member of the Executive Committee – this includes the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Accounting and Financial Violations

The Financial Review Committee shall address all reported concerns regarding corporate accounting practices, and internal controls of the Organization. The Chair of the Financial Review Committee will advise the Board of Directors of any concerns and work with the Financial Review Committee members until the matter is resolved.

Handling Reported Violations

If a report is made to the CEO (either directly or through a Member's immediate supervisor), the Member will be notified within five business days, to acknowledge receipt of the reported or suspected violation.

If a report is made to the Executive Committee, or the Financial Review Committee (either directly or through the CEO) the respective Committee will acknowledge receipt of the report within five business days.

All reports will be promptly investigated, and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation. The person who is named in the complaint will not be involved in the process of conducting the investigation or determining any corrective action.

Generally, an investigation will be completed within 90 calendar days. However, there may be circumstances where the process will take longer. If so, the Member making the report will be notified and the reasons for the delay explained.

When the investigation is completed, the Member who made the report will be informed of the outcome of the investigation, to the extent possible. However, information about any disciplinary action that might be taken is considered a personnel matter and therefore, confidential.

An appeal may be made to the Executive Committee if a Member is unsatisfied with the response of the CEO to a grievance, regardless of who was involved.

Federal Grant Conditions and the Office of Civil Rights

Because EVAWI is a recipient of federal funding, any Member who believes that he or she has experienced discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability may file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. OCR has authority to investigate complaints alleging a violation of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) nondiscrimination grant condition.

A complaint must generally be filed within one year from the date of the alleged discrimination. To file a complaint, download and complete the [Complaint Verification Form \(CVF\)](#) and [Identity Release Statement \(IRS\)](#) which are available from the website for the [Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice](#). These two forms should then be submitted to:

Office for Civil Rights
Office for Justice Programs
U.S. Department of Justice
810 7th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20531

OCR also accepts third-party discrimination complaints on behalf of individuals who are either unable or reluctant to file a complaint on their own behalf. The absence of a signed IRS from the aggrieved person may severely limit OCR's ability to investigate a single incident of discrimination against an individual. However, the absence of a signed IRS will not prevent OCR from investigating an alleged discriminatory practice or policy.

Additional information about how to file a complaint with OCR is available on their website: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/about/ocr/complaint.htm>

Fraud, Waste or Abuse of Federal Funds

Any potential fraud, waste, conflict of interest, bribery, gratuity, or similar misconduct relating to funds under any federal grant award shall be reported to a supervisor, the CEO, or the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors, as soon as practically possible.

The CEO, (or the Executive Committee, if the complaint involves the CEO) shall refer any credible evidence that a principal, employee, agent, subrecipient, contractor, subcontractor, or other person has, in connection with funds under any grant award, submitted a claim that violates the False Claims Act; or committed a criminal or civil violation of laws pertaining to a conflict of interest, fraud, bribery, gratuity, or similar misconduct to the U.S. Department of Justice:



Office of the Inspector General
Investigations Division
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. Room 4706
Washington, DC 20530
oiq.hotline@usdoj.gov or (800) 869-4499

