



The Arc[®]
Imperial Valley

OPERATIONAL CODE OF ETHICS

Revision 7/15

The Arc Imperial Valley's Operational Code of Ethics applies to all activities related to the Agency and is the framework for its business practices, marketing of services, contracts, services delivery, professional responsibility, exchange of gratuities, money or gifts, prohibition of waste, fraud, abuse or other wrong doing, conflict of interest, global citizenship, media relations, advocacy, human resources and other situations.

This document describes the ethical responsibilities that are the standards for all individuals that are associated with ARC Imperial Valley but are not receiving services.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- We maintain a safe and healthy work environment.
- We treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- We value high quality work that promotes pride in the Agency and its mission.
- We are fair and professional with all of our coworkers, customers, vendors, and associates.
- We believe in developing proper relationships with all of our customers, vendors, coworkers, and associates.
- We conduct business with entities that are compatible with our code of ethics.
- We represent the Agency, its mission, and its practices honestly.
- We follow all applicable laws and regulations in all of our endeavors.
- We respect the environment in all of our endeavors.
- We are mindful of the Agency's material and financial resources and we use them judiciously.

- We are a good neighbor and valued member of our community.
- We strive to be the best nonprofit social service Agency in the region.
- We adhere to the standards and best practices by accrediting entities such as CARF and others including SourceAmerica, DDS, SDRC and DOR.

BUSINESS PRACTICES

- Employees shall comport themselves with integrity and with respect towards our coworkers, customers, vendors, associates, and program participants.
- Employees will present a professional demeanor with everyone they may come in contact with as part of their employment.
- Employees must communicate any relationship that they may have that may demonstrate a conflict of interest both directly and indirectly.
- Employees shall adhere to policies and practices that allow accessibility for all individuals with disabilities and for individuals of different cultures and ethnicities.
- Employees shall not represent themselves as representatives of the Agency or sign any instrument establishing business relationships without the expressed permission of the CEO.
- Employees shall not waste or abuse any Agency resources or partake in fraud or fiscal mismanagement or misrepresentation.
- Employees should not witness documents or respond to a subpoena, or other legal documents without the expressed permission of the CEO or his/her representative if he/she is absent.

MARKETING

- Employees shall comport themselves with integrity and with respect towards our coworkers, customers, vendors, associates, and program participants.
- Employees should consider the Agency’s mission statement and values in any marketing effort.
- Employees shall not take personal advantage of relationships for personal gains and shall not exploit others for personal benefit in the marketing of the Agency.
- Employees shall not represent the Agency or use Agency media elements without the expressed permission of the CEO.
- Employees shall not misrepresent the Agency’s mission, goals, or day to day operation.
- Employees may not act as spokespersons for the Agency without the permission of the CEO.
- Employees shall use language that is professional and appropriate to the target audience.

CONTRACTS

- Government contracts will be operated in compliance with existing laws and regulations.
- ARC employees working at government contracts will report improper activity, waste or fraud to the proper authorities by “whistleblowing.”
- Subcontractors may be used to perform a specific task at an hourly or per job rate. The use of subcontracts cannot directly or indirectly benefit any agent of the Arc Imperial Valley. Subcontractors are not ARC employees but are subject to the same ethical conduct of ARC employees. Subcontracts must have proper credentials, permits, and insurances when required. Contractual agreements must be approved by the CEO.

SERVICE DELIVERY

- Employees shall treat each program participant or customer with respect with any barriers to accessibility properly addressed.
- Employees shall offer the least restrictive environment with proper opportunities for program participants to exercise their independence and self-determination along with using person centered planning.
- Employees shall not have conflict of interest relationships with persons who use Arc services to the point that it violates the Arc Imperial Valley's operational code of conduct.
- Employees shall not have dating, romantic, intimate, or sexual relationships with program participants.
- Employees and agents of the Arc Imperial Valley are mandated reporters and will report instances of suspected abuse to local law enforcement or Adult Protective Services, local ombudsman, or any pertinent party or agency.
- Employees shall provide services without discrimination based culture, socio-economic status, disability status, marital status, economic, ethnic, religious, racial, sexual preference, gender, and political diversity of Arc consumers.
- Employees shall not accept gifts or gratuities of any kind or offer gifts if it will unfairly influence coworker relationships, ARC employee and program participant relationships, or any other business relationship.
- Employees shall not request money or gifts for personal benefit from program participants, contractors, businesses, parents and related family members, individuals, or organizations associated with the Arc Imperial Valley.
- Employees shall not engage in fundraising activities without the approval of the CEO (e.g. selling chocolates or cookies) and may not sell items to program participants for personal benefit.

- Arc employees shall respect the personal property of Arc program participants, customers, and associates. *The Arc Imperial Valley will not be responsible for any personal property that is lost, damaged, or destroyed.*
- Arc employees shall use people first language and address any accessibility issue that may arrive while delivering services.
- Arc employees are to stay current with best practices and ensure all competencies and certifications are current.
- Arc employees shall assist program participants on reaching their individual habilitation goals.
- Arc employees shall communicate with program participants the strengths and limitations of our services and goal reaching tasks in a manner in which they can understand.
- Arc employees shall follow up with persons who no longer choose to use Arc services and suggest alternative services with other providers.
- Arc employees will ensure confidentiality, both oral and written and not discuss individual cases with uninvolved or unauthorized third parties.
- Arc employees shall judiciously use Arc material resources and not have unauthorized use of the Agency's facility, equipment, supplies, vehicles, media as well as property that belongs to individuals receiving ARC services.
- Arc employees will provide access to records and information with sufficient time to assist in the decision making process to promote informed choices regarding services and the composition of the service delivery team.

MEDIA RELATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

- Arc Employees and volunteers shall not post onto social media any material concerning the Arc and the individuals that receive its services without the expressed written permission of the CEO.
- Arc employees and volunteers shall not befriend program participants on social media.

- Arc employees and volunteers shall not communicate with the media without the expressed permission of the CEO.

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- Arc employees will comport themselves in a manner that is respectful to our program participants, coworkers, customers, passengers, visitors, and associated others.
- Arc employees shall not sexually, physically or verbally harass anyone, bullying anyone, gossip, nor physically abuse or neglect program participants, steal or borrow money from program participants or customers, or behave in a manner that is inconsistent with the best practices of social service agencies.
- Arc employees shall use language that allows them to be understood by their audience.
- Arc employees shall allow accessibility in all areas including architecture, environment, attitude, communications, finance, employment, and transportation.
- Arc employees shall not reveal in any manner confidential material to non-authorized individuals and ensure that such material is secured from unauthorized access.
- Arc employees shall create documentation that is accurate and precise.
- Arc employees shall only provide services and support to individuals that have, through the process of informed consent, chosen to receive vocational, habilitation, and rehabilitation services.
- Arc employees shall maintain competencies required to provide services to individuals with intellectual disabilities and at no time misrepresent their professional or academic background.
- Arc employees shall advocate for our program participants so that they can lead as independent lives as possible with equal access to the community in which they chose to live.

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Arc employees with special degrees and certifications will practice within the ethical guidelines and legal privileges awarded by the granting institution.
- Arc employees shall work within the framework that promotes relationships that are professional and within the standards of accrediting and vendoring organizations.
- Arc employees shall become familiar with the Arc Imperial Valley Personnel Policies and Employee Handbook to become familiar with human resource aspect of their employment.

PERSONAL BEHAVIOR

- Arc employees shall be aware that they represent the Arc Imperial Valley in both their professional and private lives.
- Arc employees shall comport themselves in a manner that is respectful to our program participants, coworkers, customers, passengers, visitors, and associated others.
- Arc employees shall not participate in any activity that is illegal and against the standards of conduct of the Arc Imperial Valley Employee Handbook or Operational Code of Ethics.
- Arc employees shall not waste Agency resources and work diligently throughout their entire work shift as stated in their job description.
- Arc employees shall use assigned uniform as required by their job site or dress in a manner that is appropriate for a professional social service agency.
- Arc employees shall not use social media while on the job and shall not post onto social media Arc material or information without the expressed written permission of their program director or CEO.
- Arc employees shall not waste or abuse Agency material or financial resources or those of Arc funding sources.

WASTE, FRAUD, ABUSE, or other Wrongdoing

- Arc employees, volunteers, and associates shall not participate in waste, fraud, abuse, or any other wrongdoing that may be illegal or unethical.
- Arc employees shall report to their supervisor or through their chain of command up to the Arc Imperial Valley Board of Directors any good faith reasonable suspicion of illegal or unethical behavior without fear of reprisal.
- An Arc employee or volunteer found in violation of the ethical standards of the Arc Imperial Valley or any illegal activity is subject to disciplinary actions up to and including termination plus possible civil and/or criminal charges.
 - The procedures to report waste, fraud and wrongdoing are located in section 14.4 (Whistleblower Policy) of the Arc Employee Handbook.
 - Unethical conduct at Federal Contracts can be reported to the US Office of Special Counsel at 1-800-572-2249
 - Unethical conduct with California Funded services can be reported to the California State Auditor at 916-445-0255
- Arc employees and volunteers, as mandated reporters, shall report incidents of suspected or real abuse of Arc program participants as required by law.
- Arc employees and volunteers shall immediately report suspected or real abuse by telephone to local law enforcement (911 – life threatening situation) or Adult Protective Services (760-337-7878 – physical abuse, financial abuse, abandonment, neglect, isolation, and abduction) or the Imperial County Long Term Care Ombudsman (760-339-6457).
- Arc employees and volunteers shall complete a written report (form SOC 341) within two working day to APS or local law enforcement.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- Arc employees and volunteers shall avoid conflicts of interest.

- Arc employees shall report and mitigate situations where real or potential conflicts of interest occurs.

ADVOCACY

- Arc employees and volunteers shall advocate for our program participants and associates so that they can lead as independent lives as possible with equal access to the community in which they chose to live.
- Arc employees and volunteers shall use people first language in their verbal and written communications both internally and externally.
- Arc employees and volunteers shall be well informed so as to answer generic questions concerning intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Arc employees and volunteers shall, when asked, participate in educational, community, and social events that promote equal access for individuals with disabilities.
- Arc employees and volunteers shall provide opportunities for program participants to develop personal advocacy skills.

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

- Arc employees shall respect the emerging socio-cultural values that are emerging from the diversity of individuals that use Arc services.
- Arc employees shall respect the environment and when possible use sustainable resources that limit impacts to the community and allow for reuse or recycle.

VIOLATIONS OF ETHICS CODE

- Any ARC employee found violating the ARC Code of Ethics is subject to disciplinary action as described in section 11.01 of the ARC Imperial Valley Personnel Policies Handbook.

- ARC Board members found violating ARC Code of Ethics is subject to the provisions set in section 2.10 of the Bylaws of the ARC Imperial Valley.