

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES™

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary National Headquarters Code of Ethics Policy

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary (VFW Auxiliary) is a not-for-profit war veteran's auxiliary organization dedicated to supporting the Veterans of Foreign Wars as well as active duty military and their families to ensure that America's veterans will not be forgotten and that those who need assistance will get it.

In order to maintain the trust and confidence of the members of the VFW Auxiliary, its affiliated organizations (including Auxiliaries and Departments), and the American public, the VFW Auxiliary requires its National Officers, National District Council Members, employees, as well as members put in leadership positions (i.e. directors, chairmen and other appointees) to conduct themselves in a professional manner and with the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

The VFW Auxiliary has customarily expected and received the utmost ethical conduct from its leaders, employees, and volunteers. This Code of Ethics and these Policy Statements are intended to foster an environment that promotes this high standard of ethical conduct in order to enable the organization to continue to carry out its mission and to ensure its continued success.

CODE OF ETHICS

Officers, Council Members, employees and other members in leadership positions in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary shall be governed by the following Code of Ethics and Policy Statements:

PERSONAL CONDUCT AND PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY

All officers, Council Members, employees and other persons in leadership positions shall:

1. Display personal integrity, avoid misrepresentation and always be honest with others;
2. Act in a professional manner at all times;
3. Promote an environment where honesty and open communication are valued;
4. Resolve differences of opinion in a professional and mature manner;
5. Respect the confidentiality of privileged information;
6. Refuse to engage in or tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment toward members, employees, volunteers or other officers;
7. Exhibit respect and fairness toward all people;
8. Speak highly of the organization and its members; and
9. Promote the VFW Auxiliary and support the activities of the organization.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Members and donors have placed their trust in the leadership of the organization to use funds to best fulfill the mission of the VFW Auxiliary. The officers, Council Members, employees and others in leadership positions shall:

1. Refrain from using VFW Auxiliary's resources for any purpose that does not benefit the organization;
2. Ensure that travel, entertainment and related expenses that are incurred on behalf of the VFW Auxiliary are for the benefit of the organization and not for personal gain or interests;
3. Make objective and informed decisions concerning the proper use of funds or assets of the organization; and
4. Regard the assets of the organization with the same consideration and same care as personal assets when making decisions.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY STATEMENT

To avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest which would tarnish the image of the organization, no one serving as an officer, Council Members, employee or in any leadership position shall take personal advantage of his or her leadership role by allowing a situation to exist that is, or may be perceived to be, a conflict of interest. All officers, Council Members, employees and others in leadership positions must:

1. Make all decisions based upon the best interests of the VFW Auxiliary;
2. Refrain from the use of VFW Auxiliary resources for personal gain;
3. Timely disclose any direct or indirect relationship with a person, or interest in a business or other entity, that may benefit from a decision in which they have a vote or over which they have an ability to influence;
4. Refrain from influencing the selection of vendors who are relatives, personal friends or persons who are affiliated with, employ or are employed by, a person with whom such officer, employee or other person in a leadership position has a personal or professional relationship;
5. Avoid any conduct that could directly or indirectly benefit the officer, employee or other person in a leadership position and refrain from using such positions, directly or indirectly, for private gain or to advance personal interest or that of any family member, personal friend or other person with whom a personal relationship exists;
6. Decline any extravagant gift, travel, entertainment, gratuity, favor or extraordinary discounts on merchandise in the performance of VFW Auxiliary duties from anyone, and, under no circumstances, should any of the aforementioned affect business decisions.*
7. Ensure that outside employment and other activities do not adversely affect the performance of VFW Auxiliary duties; and
8. Avoid any situation that may have an appearance of a conflict of interest.

*The definition of "extravagant" or "extraordinary" is anything that might be deemed excessive in the normal course of business. Entertainment and travel provided by vendors or associated organizations that directly relate to VFW Auxiliary business is acceptable.

Any staff member who questions the appropriateness of the gift, travel, entertainment, favors or discounts must disclose it to their superior. In the case of management staff, disclosure should be made to the National Secretary-Treasurer.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY STATEMENT – CONT'D

When a conflict of interest is disclosed, the National Secretary-Treasurer will determine whether a conflict exists. If the conflict concerns the National Secretary-Treasurer, then the National President will determine whether a conflict exists. The Audit Committee will subsequently review the determination.

When a conflict is determined to exist, resolution of the matter may include:

- a) approving or disapproving any transaction or situation in question
- b) requiring the individual to be recused from positions in which the conflict exists until there is no longer a conflict
- c) requiring the individual to discontinue, reduce or modify her/his participation in the Council of Administration or other committees where the conflict exists.

WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY STATEMENT

A whistleblower, as defined in this policy, is an officer, Council Member, employee or member/volunteer of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary (VFW Auxiliary) who reports an activity that he/she believes to be illegal or dishonest or in violation of the By Laws or policies of the National organization. The whistleblower is not responsible for investigating the matter, other than making himself/herself reasonably comfortable that the reported information is credible. Neither is the whistleblower responsible for determining fault or corrective measures, which is the responsibility of the appropriate officers and/or Council Members.

Examples of illegal or dishonest activities are violations of federal, state or local laws; requesting or accepting bribes, kickbacks or benefits from vendors, or other fraudulent financial reporting. Examples of violations of policies could be failure to accurately report on travel and reimbursement requests.

If an officer, Council Member, employee or member/volunteer has knowledge of such conduct, the officer, Council Member, employee or member/volunteer may report it to the National President or National Secretary-Treasurer. The officer, Council Member, employee or member/volunteer should base his/her allegations on credible information and use sound judgment to avoid baseless allegations. Intentionally making a false report of wrongdoing may subject the individual to discipline.

Whistleblower protections are provided in two important areas – confidentiality and against retaliation. Insofar as possible, the confidentiality of the whistleblower will be maintained. However, identity may be disclosed in order to conduct a thorough investigation, comply with law or provide individuals their legal rights. VFW Auxiliary will not retaliate against a whistleblower. Any whistleblower who believes he/she has been subjected to retaliation must contact the National President or National Secretary-Treasurer.

The right of a whistleblower for protection against retaliation does not include complete immunity for any personal wrongdoing in which the whistleblower participated.

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CODE OF ETHICS ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I acknowledge that I have received and read the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary Code of Ethics and Policy Statements. I understand that I am responsible for adhering to the principles and standards defined in this Code and these Policies, including, specifically, those provisions concerning Conflicts of Interest. I am not aware of any interests or relationships that could give rise to a Conflict of Interest or otherwise violate the Code of Ethics or Policy Statements. I will disclose any such interests or relationships as soon as I am aware of it. I confirm that I will conduct myself in accordance with the principles and standards of the Code and adhere to these Policy Statements.

Signature

Printed Name

Date