

UANA - CODE OF ETHICS and CONDUCT

Foreword

The mission of a non-profit social association is rooted in a set of core values. These core values, embraced by Members are the foundation of non-profit social association's unique purpose and perspective:

- Duty/Selfless Service
- Dignity and Mutual Respect
- Honor/ Excellence (Importance of Human Relationships)
- Integrity/Reliability.
- Member Focus, Inclusiveness, and Member Involvement
- Collaboration

Core values, and the principles that flow from them, must be balanced within the context and complexity of the community.

For this document, the UANA member means all the members that include the UANA executive committee members (EXCOM) and Board of Directors (BoD) as well.

Purpose of the UANA Code of Ethics

Ethics are at the core of any form of volunteer work. We have an obligation to articulate a set of basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. The *UANA Code of Ethics* sets forth these values, principles, and standards to guide Members' conduct. The *Code* is relevant to all Members

The *UANA Code of Ethics*¹ serves six purposes:

1. The *Code* identifies core values on which the mission is based.
2. The *Code* summarizes broad ethical principles that reflect the core values and establishes a set of specific ethical standards that should be used to guide the volunteer work practice.
3. The *Code* is designed to help Members identify relevant considerations when obligations conflict or ethical uncertainties arise.
4. The *Code* provides ethical standards to which the Members are held accountable.
5. The *Code* familiarizes new Members to the mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards.
6. The *Code* articulates standards that the Board itself can use to assess whether UANA officials or Members have engaged in unethical conduct. UANA will have formal procedures to adjudicate ethics complaints filed against its members that is described in a separate section. In subscribing to this *Code*, Members are required to cooperate in its implementation, participate in UANA adjudication proceedings, and abide by any UANA disciplinary rulings or sanctions based on it.

The *Code* offers a set of values, principles, and standards to guide decision making and conduct when ethical issues arise. It does not provide a set of rules that prescribe how Members should act in all situations. Further, the *UANA Code of Ethics* does not specify which values, principles, and standards are most important and ought to outweigh others in instances

when they conflict. Reasonable differences of opinion can and do exist among Members with respect to the ways in which values, ethical principles, and ethical standards should be ranked when they conflict. Ethical decision making in a given situation must apply the informed judgment of the individual Member.

Ethical decision making is a process. There are many instances in volunteering where simple answers are not available to resolve complex ethical issues. Members should take into consideration all the values, principles, and standards in this *Code* that are relevant to any situation in which ethical judgment is warranted.

A code of ethics cannot guarantee ethical behavior. Moreover, a code of ethics cannot resolve all ethical issues or disputes or capture the richness and complexity involved in striving to make responsible choices within a moral community. Rather, a code of ethics sets forth values, ethical principles, and ethical standards to which Members should aspire and by which their actions can be judged. Members' ethical behavior should result from their personal commitment to engage in ethical behavior. The *UANA Code of Ethics* reflects the commitment of all Members to uphold the values and to act ethically. Principles and standards must be applied by individuals of good character who discern moral questions and, in good faith, seek to make reliable ethical judgments. It also means following our own moral compass to do what is right, even when the rules are not clear. It means seeking advice when there is any doubt about what is right to do.

Ethical Principles

The following broad ethical principles are based on member's core values of duty/selfless service, dignity and mutual respect, honor/excellence (importance of human relationships), integrity/reliability, member focus/inclusiveness/member involvement, and collaboration. These principles set forth ideals to which all Members should aspire.

Value: Duty/Selfless Service

Ethical Principle: *Members' primary goal is to help develop the community in a selfless way that makes it stronger.*

Members draw on their knowledge, values, and skills to help create an environment which is conducive to creating a cohesive and inclusive community. Members continually strive to contribute in developing the community by selflessly volunteering their resources and applying their knowledge and skills to the allocated tasks.

Value: Dignity and Mutual Respect

Ethical Principle: *Members respect the inherent dignity and respect one another.*

Members treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and diversity in thought. Members promote socially responsible self-determination.

Value: Honor/Excellence (importance of human relationships)

Ethical Principle: *Members strive to emphasize human relationships*

Members should be very mindful of importance of human relationships while engaging in selfless volunteer work. The primary building block of these relationships is earning the trust. While a civil, respectful, and passionate discussion on policy matters is essential in any democratic non-profit association, members should avoid intentional use of incendiary language, displaying an overly aggressive behavior that can be perceived as intentionally provocative, and intentionally disrespectful behavior that have potential to alienate other members.

Value: Integrity/Reliability

Ethical Principle: *Members behave in a trustworthy manner.*

Members are continually aware of the mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and contribute for the development of the community in a manner consistent with them. Members treat other members with honesty, fairness, and respect promoting diversity, and trust. Members should promote an environment with a consistent trustworthy behavior that is conducive to the team work.

Value: *Member Focus, Member Involvement/Participation and Inclusiveness*

Ethical Principle: *UANA is an association driven by the needs of its members and members value diversity in its membership*

Members always come first and ahead of any self-interest. Members should facilitate informed participation by other members in furthering the vision and mission of UANA and contribute to shaping the policies and guidelines of UANA. Members promote diversity and are truly inclusive as demonstrated by their tangible and measurable action.

Value: *Collaboration*

Ethical Principle – *Members foster and encourage collaboration within association and with other associations*

Members who are members of any formed team (whether cultural or social) should participate in and contribute to decisions that affect the objectives of that team. For group efforts, individual member or UANA official should not try to take the sole credit, a practice that could alienate other members. Members, especially UANA office bearer, should mentor, whenever possible, and encourage efforts of other members towards community well being. Members for whom a team decision raises concerns should attempt to resolve the disagreement through appropriate channels. If the disagreement cannot be resolved, Members should pursue other avenues to address their concerns consistent with community well-being. Members should foster collaboration with other associations that contribute to community well-being.

Ethical Standards

Some of the standards that follow are enforceable guidelines for conduct, and some are aspirational. The extent to which each standard is enforceable is a matter of judgment to be exercised by those responsible for reviewing alleged violations of ethical standards.

Conflicts of Interest

Members should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest that interfere with the exercise of the volunteer work and impartial judgment. Members should inform UANA Board when a real or potential conflict of interest arises and take reasonable steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes the Organization' interests primary and protects association's interests to the greatest extent possible.

Confidentiality

Members should respect confidential information shared by other members in the course of transactions. Members should not further disseminate or forward confidential privileged information without an expressed written permission of the sender.

Disputes/Conflicts

Members should resolve all disputes in an amicable manner by following the guidelines for resolution of disputes and conflicts.

Unethical Conduct of other members

Members should take adequate measures to discourage, prevent, expose, and correct the unethical conduct of other members. Members should be knowledgeable about established policies and procedures for raising concerns about unethical behavior. Members should be familiar with bylaws, policies and procedures created by UANA.

Members who believe that another member has acted unethically should seek resolution by discussing their concerns first with the concerned member when feasible and when such discussion is likely to be productive. When necessary, Members who believe that a colleague has acted unethically should take action through appropriate formal channels (such as contacting the UANA Board or UANA's grievance committee).

Solicitations

Members should not engage in solicitation of any kind on behalf of UANA without a clear mandate from the UANA Board. Members should uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge, mission, and long term goals of UANA. Members should protect, enhance, and improve the image of UANA through appropriate forums.

Derogatory Language

Members should not use derogatory language or profanity in their written or verbal communications to other members. Members should use accurate and respectful language in all communications to other members.

Discrimination

Members should not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, or mental or physical disability.

Respect

Members should treat other members with respect and dignity. Members should avoid unwarranted negative criticism of other members in any form of communications whether written or oral. Unwarranted negative criticism may include demeaning comments that refer to other member's level of competence or to individuals' attributes such as race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, and mental or physical disability. Members should cooperate with other Members of the group towards an objective/mission/vision laid down by UANA board.

Effective Communication

Members should effectively communicate throughout the Association, with the members, and with other associations. Members should not spread rumors or make false statement about others, or make statement based on false assumptions. Members should strive to communicate in a very transparent manner thus that a trusting environment could be built to further the visions of the UANA. An open communication is fundamental to shared ownership, shared responsibility, shared accountability, and transparency.

Private Conduct

Members should not permit their private conduct to interfere with the larger objective/vision /mission of the association.

Dishonesty, Fraud, and Deception

Members should not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, or deception.

Misrepresentation

Members should make clear distinctions between statements made and actions engaged in as a private individual and as a representative of UANA. Members who speak on behalf UANA should accurately represent the official, authorized, and UANA board approved positions of the Association.

Acknowledging Credit

Members should honestly and generously acknowledge contributions made by others.

Resources:

1. <http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp>

Conflict Resolution

UANA Members are expected to behave responsibly, professionally, and in accordance with UANA bylaws at all times. Additionally, UANA officials must adhere to code of ethics and certain rules of conduct that will provide the best possible environment and protect the interests of the UANA and all UANA members. Recognizing that no list can include all possible instances of misconduct, list below includes some examples of conduct that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of membership. This list is merely a sampling and should by no means be construed as exhaustive:

- Abuse/misuse of UANA properties, information, programs, and official position for any personal gain
- Any intentional case of fraud/misrepresentation
- Engaging in electronic or phone communication that might be considered profane (as defined by FCC), offensive, derogatory, defamatory, harassing, biased, prejudiced, obscene, or otherwise vulgar; personal opinions masquerading as the official position of the UANA
- Verbal remarks or conduct that create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment such as any attempt to coerce, intimidate, bully, or physically threaten other members
- Assaulting another members
- Spreading rumors based on false assumptions; spreading lies and disinformation
- Retaliation against a member who in good faith lodges a complaint against the UANA officials, reports a concern or a policy violation
- Falsification of any UANA documents/records
- Inappropriate use of UANA communication systems including the UANA email group, UANA web page, and dissemination of unauthorized information on behalf of UANA
- Taking unfair advantage of any other member through misrepresentation of facts, wilful concealment of information, manipulation, subterfuge, or abuse of privileged information
- Making direct or indirect political contributions on behalf of the UANA without written authorization from the UANA board
- Any history of criminal offense

Non-compliance with the UANA code of ethics and conducts, and bylaws may result in disciplinary action based on seriousness of allegation and the member's prior record.

The most common forms of disciplinary action may include:

- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- Suspension
- Termination of membership

The UANA grievance committee will recommend appropriate disciplinary action after a full investigation and review of the facts. The UANA board will be responsible for approving and implementing corrective or disciplinary action.

The following process may be followed at the discretion of UANA grievance committee and BoD:

- (i) A written complaint from a member in good standing to the Board of Directors.
- (ii) The UANA grievance committee conducts a full investigation and reviews all the facts.
- (iii) The official in question is heard by the Board of Directors.
- (iv) The UANA grievance committee presents findings from their investigation to the UANA board and makes a recommendation to the UANA Board of Directors to either dismiss charges, and/or one or more than one of followings:
 - Verbal warning
 - Written warning
 - Suspension and/or membership on hold
 - Termination of membership
- (v) A 2/3rd majority vote of the remaining members of the Board of Directors is required to implement the recommendation of the grievance committee.

The Board of Directors by 2/3rd majority approval may fill an open position for the remainder of the unexpired term in the event of any termination.