

Aging Services of Minnesota  
Code of Ethics  
**WORKBOOK**



*Shared Commitment,  
Continuing Promise*



**Aging Services  
of Minnesota**

LEADING CHANGE ■ CHANGING LIVES

## **Aging Services of Minnesota Code of Ethics**

**PREAMBLE:** *This Code of Ethics guides our decisions and leads us to create a culture of mutual respect, understanding and trust with the people we serve and those who support them.*

### **WE PLEDGE INTEGRITY AND COMMIT TO ...**

- fairness, honesty, and confidentiality.
- open communication and encouragement of self-expression in order to continually improve our services.
- nurture choice through disclosure of vital information to enable the people we serve to make informed decisions about the level of care – and corresponding level of risk – they desire.

### **WE PROMOTE THE HIGHEST QUALITY SERVICES AND ENVIRONMENTS AND COMMIT TO ...**

- develop a well-trained, competent staff and prudently manage (*name of organization*)'s resources to provide quality services and environments to comply with applicable laws and regulations.
- provide innovative and supportive services in a well-maintained setting that reflects the values of our community.
- help the people we serve to obtain services to maximize their desired level of independence, autonomy and dignity. We will identify internal as well as community resources to assist them with life's transitions.

### **WE FOSTER COMMUNITY AND COMMIT TO ...**

- acknowledge and respect each person we serve as a reflection of his or her own culture, life experiences, habits and decisions.
- partner with the people we serve and those who support them — their family and community, and members of our organization.
- demonstrate good citizenship and create opportunities for mutually beneficial activities with the greater community.

## Introduction:

As a provider of older adult services, you are part of a growing and ever-changing field that is judged by consumers, more than ever before on how you conduct your business. A Code of Ethics is a public statement of an organization's guiding principles and the standards of conduct based on those principles. Every provider has such principles and standards, but sometimes they are not clearly stated and understood by everyone in – and outside – the organization. Aging Services of Minnesota's Code of Ethics is a clear statement reflecting the values of our members.

The Code of Ethics adoption process provides an opportunity for staff, volunteers, board members/owner(s) and other stakeholders in your organization to think about and discuss your ethical standards and beliefs and how they are put into everyday practice. It requires thought and ongoing self-examination. Like all things that are worthwhile, it isn't meant to be easy. But it helps develop and maintain a culture of respect, caring and quality in your organization. These are powerful statements you make to your consumers that your relationship with them is one of mutual trust and respect and that at the cornerstone of your decision-making and services is ethical behavior.

Providers who, like you, are striving to achieve the highest quality of care and service for their consumers developed

this Code of Ethics. Consumers, legislators, and other regulators and advocates were asked for their reaction to help us refine it. This workbook will help you understand how Aging Services of Minnesota's Code of Ethics relates to your organization's underlying values as well as how they are reflected in what you do each day. By reflecting on each area, you will no doubt see how your organization has already integrated many of the values into your organizational culture as well as areas where you may want to improve.

This Code of Ethics represents an ideal to strive for. When your organization adopts this Code of Ethics, it should become your guide to helping consumers understand what practices and behaviors they can expect from your organization.



Steps to following in using this workbook:

1. First, take some time to think about what the concepts of integrity, quality and community mean to you personally. How does it relate to your personal values? Write down your thoughts and be prepared to share them with others in your organization.
2. Then read each statement in the Code of Ethics. Think about what they mean to you. Identify ways that people could recognize how you demonstrate this ethic in your organization. Be specific. Instead of saying “We train staff to treat people with respect.” You might say instead “\_\_\_\_\_.”
3. Once you have listed ways your organization demonstrates your commitment to the ethics in the Code, you are ready for the next step. The Board of Directors of your organization or your Owner(s) must adopt the Code of Ethics. A written resolution, signed by the Chairperson of the Board, Owner(s) or authorized person and the CEO or manager of the organization, should be forwarded to:

Aging Services of Minnesota  
2550 University Avenue South, Suite 350 South  
St. Paul, MN 55114-1900

In return you will receive a copy of the Code of Ethics for display.

**Step 1.** Integrity, Quality and Community are the three broad sections of the code. Before reviewing how your organization demonstrates this code, take some time to think about what they mean to you personally.

The dictionary defines **Integrity** as “the quality or state of being of sound moral principle; upright; honest; sincere.”

- In your day-to-day personal and professional life, what does acting with integrity mean to you?
- Who is a person in your life who you feel acts with integrity? How does their behavior reflect their integrity?

**Quality** can be defined as “a measure of excellence.”

- In your role at work, how do you know if the quality of your service is superior or excellent? How do *you* strive to reach a high level of quality?

- Do you think everyone in your organization shares the same definition of what constitutes high quality services? How does the definition vary from person to person?

**Community** can refer to “a group of people or organizations that share a common interest or identity.”

- What does community mean to you? What community or communities do you belong to?
- Is there a feeling of community where you work? Who is part of this community?

Now move to **Step 2**.

**Step 2.** This step can be best completed in group discussion. Be sure to plan enough time in one or more sessions to review and respond to the code and the questions.

In a group, listen to all ideas before deciding what most characterizes the way your organization displays your commitment to this code. Frame your examples in terms your consumers understand. Identify your commitment by describing actions consumers would be most likely to encounter.

**Aging Services of Minnesota  
CODE OF ETHICS**

**PREAMBLE**

*This Code of Ethics guides our decisions and leads us to create a culture of acceptance, understanding and trust for the people we serve and for those who support them.*

**We pledge integrity and commit to ...  
fairness, honesty, and confidentiality.**

What common actions could the people you serve easily observe that would demonstrate your organization's commitment to this ethic?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2.

---

---

---

---

3.

---

---

---

---

Having trouble thinking of **specific examples?** Look at the next page of this workbook to see how other organizations demonstrate their commitment to this ethic.



**NOTE: Every organization may differ in how it demonstrates this ethic. These are a few actions an organization might take to demonstrate the ethic.**

**Examples for page 7:**

- Staff and volunteers discuss individual clients only in private settings with the client and other authorized people.
- Computers and fax machines where client information is available are located in areas accessible only to authorized staff.
- Staff provide the public with accurate information about the setting and services. Marketing and other materials accurately describe the services delivered.
- The organization does not discriminate in employment or in accepting residents based on race, ethnic origin, religion, handicap (disability), or other criteria prohibited under federal or state law.

## We pledge integrity and commit to ... open communication and encouragement of self-expression in order to continually improve our services.

*What common actions could the people you serve easily observe that would demonstrate your organization's commitment to this ethic?*

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Having trouble thinking of **specific examples?**



**NOTE: Every organization may differ in how it demonstrates this ethic. These are a few actions an organization might take to demonstrate the ethic.**

**Examples for page 9:**

- Resident and family suggestions are discussed openly and constructively at regular forums with staff, residents and family members.
- Newsletters are informative, timely and distributed to all interested parties.
- The organization's quality improvement process encourages staff input to identify helpful changes in policies and procedures.
- Staff are available to assist residents and families who may want to meet as a group or council.
- Resident and family meetings occur regularly.
- Management staff periodically contacts residents and families for feedback on quality of service and customer satisfaction.

We pledge integrity and commit to ...  
nurture choice through disclosure of vital information that enables the people we serve to make informed decisions about the level of care – and corresponding level of risk – they desire.

*What common actions could the people you serve easily observe that would demonstrate your organization's commitment to this ethic?*

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Having trouble thinking of **specific examples?**



**NOTE: Every organization may differ in how it demonstrates this ethic. These are a few actions an organization might take to demonstrate the ethic.**

**Examples for page 11:**

- Complete and clear information is given to prospective consumers and their families early in their decision-making process through disclosure statements and other materials.
- Changes to contracts or service agreements are made and based on decisions reached through discussions with the person served and their family.
- Identified changes in the health status of the person served are discussed with the person and the person's family as the changes are observed, and care planning is done with the active involvement of the person and any family members the person wants to include.
- When staff observes or anticipates the person served has needs that can't be met by the provider, the staff will provide information about other service organizations that may be able to assist.

We promote the highest quality services and environments and commit to ...  
 develop a well-trained, competent staff and prudently manage (*name of organization*)'s resources to provide quality services and environments to comply with applicable laws and regulations.

*What common actions could the people you serve easily observe that would demonstrate your organization's commitment to this ethic?*

1.

---



---



---



---

2.

---



---



---



---

3.

---



---



---



---

Having trouble thinking of **specific examples**?



**NOTE: Every organization may differ in how it demonstrates this ethic. These are a few actions an organization might take to demonstrate the ethic.**

**Examples for page 13:**

- The organization makes improvements based on information from the satisfaction surveys of the people served and employees.
- The organization provides basic staff training and ongoing staff development, and regularly evaluates the ability of staff to provide quality services in a customer-friendly manner.
- The organization is kept up to date on trends and new practices by staff who attend conferences and participate actively in professional associations.
- The organization encourages volunteers from the community to supplement the organization's resources and ensures they are appropriately screened and have the training and support necessary to be effective.
- The organization's board is successful in fundraising and building a benevolence fund to develop new programs that are needed to assist the people it serves.
- The organization makes public its regulatory compliance efforts and any survey results.
- Any increases in fees are presented and explained well in advance to the people being served.
- The organization involves staff, residents and their families in its process to improve quality.

**We promote the highest quality services and environments and commit to ...  
provide innovative and supportive services in a well-maintained setting that reflects the values of our community.**

*What common actions could the people you serve easily observe that would demonstrate your organization's commitment to this ethic?*

1.

---

---

---

---

2.

---

---

---

---

3.

---

---

---

---

Having trouble thinking of **specific examples?**



**NOTE: Every organization may differ in how it demonstrates this ethic. These are a few actions an organization might take to demonstrate the ethic.**

**Examples for page 15:**

- The people served and those who support them are regularly informed about safety procedures and emergency contingency plans.
- The building is attractive and in good repair.
- Services are delivered in a manner that is sensitive to ethnic differences.
- The organization's services are up-to-date and of good quality.
- All staff share responsibility for maintaining a safe and clean environment and report problems to the appropriate staff.
- The maintenance staff plans and works with other staff to minimize disruptions to the people we serve.
- The building spaces and decor support a sense of community, providing comfort, safety, independence, wellness and the ability to thrive.
- The community's preferences and values are reflected in the design and decor of the building.
- The people served are encouraged to decorate their living spaces as they wish.

We promote the highest quality services and environments and commit to ... help the people we serve to obtain services to maximize their desired level of independence, autonomy and dignity. We will identify internal as well as community resources to assist them with life's transitions.

*What common actions could the people you serve easily observe that would demonstrate your organization's commitment to this ethic?*

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Having trouble thinking of **specific examples?**



**NOTE: Every organization may differ in how it demonstrates this ethic. These are a few actions an organization might take to demonstrate the ethic.**

**Examples for page 17:**

- Staff works with the person being served to identify appropriate services and do care planning that maximizes the person's ability to maintain independence.
- The person served identifies and selects services in consultation with staff.
- The organization contracts third party financial resources and Medical Assistance to assist the people they serve.
- The board actively develops and maintains a benevolence fund to assist the people we serve.
- The organization is committed to a mission that responds to the needs of the community.
- Staff encourages and facilitates advance planning for life transitions by talking with the people that we serve and their families about health changes they see and by suggesting other services to explore.

**We foster community and commit to ...  
acknowledge and respect each person  
we serve as a reflection of his or her  
own culture, life experiences, habits  
and decisions.**

*What common  
actions could the people  
you serve easily observe  
that would demonstrate  
your organization's com-  
mitment to this ethic?*

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Having trouble thinking of **specific examples?**



**NOTE: Every organization may differ in how it demonstrates this ethic. These are a few actions an organization might take to demonstrate the ethic.**

**Examples for page 19:**

- The organization is committed to a mission statement and management policies promoting tolerance and respect of people's diversity.
- The experience and preferences of the people we serve are incorporated into planning and designing services and individualized service plans.
- Staff provide services in a manner that respects religious, cultural, racial and ethnic diversity.
- Local agencies, other organizations and places of worship are involved to help meet the diverse needs.
- Diverse community groups are invited to use the organization's spaces when possible.

**We foster community and commit to ... partner with the people we serve and those who support them – their family and community, and members of our organization.**

*What common actions could the people you serve easily observe that would demonstrate your organization's commitment to this ethic?*

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Having trouble thinking of **specific examples?**



**NOTE: Every organization may differ in how it demonstrates this ethic. These are a few actions an organization might take to demonstrate the ethic.**

**Examples for page 21:**

- Family conferences are structured to enable the people served and their families to openly discuss their needs and desires and to provide support when difficult decisions must be made.
- The organization encourages active family and resident groups to come together and work on issues for the good of the people being served.
- The organization encourages staff, managers, volunteers, boards and owners to carefully listen to the people served to ensure that we understand and do whatever we reasonably can to respond to their wishes.
- The staff seeks opportunities to appropriately involve family and friends of the people served in the organization's activities.

**We foster community and commit to ...  
demonstrate good citizenship and create  
opportunities for mutually beneficial  
activities with the greater community.**

*What common  
actions could the people  
you serve easily observe  
that would demonstrate  
your organization's com-  
mitment to this ethic?*

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Having trouble thinking of **specific examples?**



**NOTE: Every organization may differ in how it demonstrates this ethic. These are a few actions an organization might take to demonstrate the ethic.**

**Examples for page 23:**

- Staff participates in local civic groups and works with local officials on civic projects that support a vital and livable community.
- The board actively develops constructive partnerships with other organizations support effective programs for the community.
- Staff promotes and facilitates the resident's continuous involvement in the larger community.
- The organization has developed a program through which staff and those we serve volunteer their services for the community good.

**Step 3.** Once you have listed ways your organization demonstrates your commitment to the ethics in the Code, you are ready for the next step. The Board of Directors or Owner(s) of your organization must adopt the Code of Ethics. A written resolution, signed by the Chairperson of the Board, Owner(s) or other authorized person and the CEO or manager of the organization, should be forwarded to:

Aging Services of Minnesota  
2550 University Avenue South, Suite 350 South  
St. Paul, MN 55114

In return Aging Services will send you a Code of Ethics certificate with the name of your organization on it, suitable for hanging in a public area.



Aging Services of Minnesota (formerly Minnesota Health & Housing Alliance) is Minnesota's largest association of aging services organizations. Our 680+ members serve over 40,000 Minnesotans every day in settings across the continuum from their home to congregate housing to assisted living to care centers. Aging Services members are diverse but share a common focus on person-directed living, missions of service to their communities and choice in older adult services.

---

Aging Services staff is available to answer questions or  
provide assistance to your organization.

Contact us at:

**Aging Services of Minnesota**

**2550 University Avenue West, Suite 350 South**

**St. Paul, MN 55114-1900**

**651.645-.545 • 800.462.5368 • FAX: 651.645.0002**

**[www.agingervicesmn.org](http://www.agingervicesmn.org)**

---