

# Code of Ethics

**Disclaimer:** This Code of Ethics Template (“Template”), developed by the Agency for Persons with Disabilities to assist any Qualified Organization (“QO”) with its formation and future operation, is a model that may be adopted by the QO to comply with section 393.0663, Florida Statutes and Chapter 65G-14, Florida Administrative Code. The QO understands that it adopts this Template voluntarily and may instead opt to develop its own Code of Ethics to comply with the aforementioned statute and rules. By voluntarily adopting this Template, the QO has read and understood all the provisions contained herein and will utilize this Template in accordance with its provisions.

Support Coordination is a professional case management service provided to each client receiving services from the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (“APD”) by \_\_\_\_\_ referred to hereafter as “the QO”). This includes but is not limited to clients who are enrolled on the Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services Waiver, also known as the Developmental Disabilities Individual Budgeting Waiver or “iBudget” Waiver.

The QO will ensure all associated Support Coordinators conduct business in a professional and ethical manner. All Support Coordinator actions must promote client choice and address the client’s individual support needs and goals.

The QO’s Code of Ethics is the foundation of standards for the provision of support coordination services and sets forth guidelines and expectations of ethical and professional conduct to guide Support Coordinators.

Each Support Coordinator must review the Code of Ethics and conduct business in accordance with these ethical and professional standards. Support Coordinators are encouraged to discuss any questions or concerns with their supervisor to ensure compliance with these standards.

## Ethical Principles (Core Values)

Clients rely heavily on the knowledge, coordination, and support of their Support Coordinator in meeting their individual goals and needs. All Support Coordinators must be considerate of clients’ cultural and ethnic diversity, as well as their unique skills, strengths, goals, and service needs.

The QO Core Values include:

- a. Honesty
- b. Reliability
- c. Respect
- d. Responsiveness
- e. Efficiency
- f. Optimism
- g. Compassion
- h. Competence
- i. Professional Conduct with all parties

## Ethical Standards

- (1) All Support Coordinators must avoid actual and potential conflicts of interest that could inhibit their professional or impartial judgement. Support Coordinators must not engage in any of the following actions:
  - a) Being the legal representative of a client served by the QO
  - b) Applying to be the legal representative of a client served by the QO
  - c) Being affiliated with an organization, agency, or person who is a legal representative of a client served by the QO
  - d) Being the legal representative or representative payee for any benefit(s) received by a client served by the QO
  - e) Assuming control of a client's finances
  - f) Assuming possession of a client's checkbook, cash, investments, assets, or other valuable property
  - g) Providing support coordination services to a client who is a family member
  - h) Unduly influencing paid services on behalf of a client from a service provider who is a family member of the Support Coordinator or any employee of the QO
  - i) Providing any Waiver services other than support coordination and CDC+ consultant services
  - j) Being a subsidiary of or being directly or indirectly controlled by persons or organizations providing Waiver services within the state of Florida, other than support coordination and related administrative activities to clients who receive services from APD
  - k) Requesting or receiving financial compensation from family members of clients
  - l) Providing assistance to a client in the completion of the Support Coordinator client satisfaction survey
  - m) Receiving payment or other benefits from another service provider for any reason
  - n) Engaging in any behavior that could be perceived as a conflict of interest
- (2) Support Coordinators must not take advantage of or exploit others within the scope of providing Support Coordination services to further their personal, professional, or business interests.
- (3) Support Coordinators must not use their position or title to coerce, endorse, or give the appearance of influence for any service, product, or enterprise that would allow for any personal or private gain.
- (4) Support Coordinators must protect each client's rights, including the freedom of choice, which means being free from undue influence in selecting the type and person/agency providing an approved, medically necessary service. Support Coordinators must offer clients the choice of service providers when enrolled, qualified providers are available. Support Coordinators must not limit or manipulate client's choice to particular service providers.
- (5) Support Coordinators are expected to support clients or, if applicable, clients' legal representatives in their right to choose and participate in transitional planning to a new Support Coordinator and/or other service providers to ensure there is no disruption in services.
- (6) Support Coordinators will monitor service delivery to ensure that each client is supported to achieve personal goals.
- (7) Support Coordinators will promote the autonomy of each client. Support Coordinators shall assist the clients they support in avoiding unnecessary risk and educating them in identifying and reporting abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- (8) All Support Coordinators shall be vigilant in identifying and reporting any known or suspected abuse, neglect, exploitation, and sexual misconduct. Support Coordinators are mandated reporters of

abuse, neglect, exploitation, and sexual misconduct as stated in sections 415.1034 and 393.135, Florida Statutes (F.S.).

- (9) Under no circumstances shall a Support Coordinator engage in romantic activities, sexual activities, inappropriate sexual communications, or sexual contact with a client, regardless of consent.
- (10) All interaction will encourage fairness, integrity, and civility, including providing honest and accurate information verbally and in writing, being available for clients, timely responding to communications from clients and APD staff, and cooperating and collaborating with others involved in client care.
- (11) Support Coordinators will counsel clients and, if applicable, the client's legal representative regarding covered services and that covered services will only be approved by APD if they are individualized, specific, consistent with the client's needs, and not in excess of the client's needs.
- (12) Support Coordinators must explore all services available through local, state, and federal government and non-government programs or services, including the Medicaid State Plan; school-based services; private insurance; natural supports; and community supports, prior to requesting Waiver funds on behalf of the client. Documentation of each Support Coordinator's efforts must be included in the client's case notes and may be evidenced by denial letters, coverage policies, and other documentation.
- (13) Support Coordinators must only pursue Waiver services for clients that the Support Coordinator believes address the capacities, needs, and resources of their clients and are not available through other resources or funding sources. When requesting new or additional services or upon request by APD, the Support Coordinator must complete and submit to APD the Verification of Available Services Form incorporated by reference in Rule 65G-4.0213, Florida Administrative Code.
- (14) Standards of confidentiality always apply with individuals interested in receiving services from the QO. The QO will safeguard Protected Health Information ("PHI") in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act ("HIPAA"). PHI must not be disclosed without consent from the client or, if applicable, legal representative except for professional health care purposes or as otherwise authorized by law. All Support Coordinators must take appropriate steps to protect PHI and confidentiality in all communications (electronic, paper, and verbal), record retention, file maintenance, etc. Support Coordinators will report HIPAA compliance issues to their supervisor immediately upon identification. The supervisor and Support Coordinator will work with the QO leadership to mitigate and protect the impacted clients and develop a plan to prevent future occurrences.
- (15) All Support Coordinators must maintain an eligible status within the Clearinghouse, in accordance with sections 435.04, 435.12, and 393.0655, F.S. If a Support Coordinator is arrested for any charge, he or she must notify their supervisor immediately. Support Coordinators who are arrested with a disqualifying offense will be reviewed for continued employment.
- (16) Support Coordinators must not misrepresent their affiliation with APD. Support Coordinators are not employed by or authorized to represent APD.
- (17) All documentation must always be truthful and accurate. Falsification of documentation is considered fraudulent and will not be tolerated under any circumstance.
- (18) Support Coordinators must comply with Chapter 393, F.S.; Rules 65G-4.0213 through 4.0218, F.A.C.; and the iBudget Handbook, incorporated by reference in Rule 59G-13.070, F.A.C. to ensure that clients are provided services that timely and appropriately meet their needs. This includes:
  - a) Ensuring Significant Additional Needs requests are complete and accurate when submitted

- b) Assisting clients and, if applicable, legal representatives obtain services through the Medicaid state plan
- c) Participating in meetings required by APD
- d) Participating in meetings coordinating services on behalf of the client
- e) Assisting clients and, if applicable, their legal representative with the process for addressing client complaints and grievances regarding possible service delivery issues
- f) Coordinating in the preparation and planning for natural disasters, including ensuring each client has a personal disaster plan and monitoring the status of each client, including providing information on available resources during and after a natural disaster
- g) Updating service authorizations in iConnect to reflect the current, approved level of service(s) and providing the updated service authorizations to providers