



CHITTENDEN COUNTY RPC
Communities Planning Together

Core Values & Code of Conduct

January 3, 2024

We have...

- **Mission Statement**
Why do we exist?
- **Vision Statement**
What are we working towards?

We need...

- **Equity Statement**
Who do we need to look out for and why?
- **Core Values & Code of Conduct**
How must we behave along the way?
- **Equity Action Plan**
What does the work look like?

Timeline

2023

October

- Small group staff workshops
- EAC meeting & workshop

November

- VT Restorative Consortium Webinar
- Meeting with Burlington Community Justice Center
- Research

December - off

2024

January

- Draft to Executive Committee
- Draft to Staff
- Draft to EAC

February

- Final to Executive Committee (2/7)
- Final to Board (2/21)

March - May

- Training & Implementation

Why?

- Even when unspoken, culture is cultivated. Let's be intentional about the **culture** we cultivate.
- Expectations of those who represent CCRPC need to be clear (provides **structure** and allows for **accountability**).
- **Clarity** in the gray space between no conflict and harassment or discrimination.
- **Assurance** that poor conduct will be addressed.
- Provides a **back-bone** with which to make value-driven organizational decisions.

Resources

- CCRPC Staff Personnel Policy
- CCRPC Board Member Handbook
- CCRPC 2007 Strategic Plan
- Community Justice Center resources
- Workplace Restorative Practices
- Examples from other organizations (NRPC, EmergeVT, Essex-Westford School District, Howard Center, United Health, etc.)
- Staff & EAC input

ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

INTEGRITY

ACCOUNTABILITY

INCLUSION

RESPECT



INTEGRITY

As stewards of public resources, we recognize and hold our responsibility to serve our communities with humility. We adhere to our moral and ethical principles, behave honestly and fairly, and earn trust through our actions.



ACCOUNTABILITY

We own and make visible— to ourselves, to one another, and to our communities— our individual and institutional work and impact. We welcome and are responsive to reflection and feedback with a continued commitment to improving.



INCLUSION

We collaborate and share power with one another and those impacted by our work, inviting, welcoming and elevating differences in knowledge and experience. Relationships are at the center of what we do, and we create the time and space needed to nurture them.



RESPECT

We lead with an ethic of care and treat every individual with respect and dignity. We choose our words carefully, seek to understand other perspectives, and behave in ways that support and empower others. We acknowledge the humanity in one another and when we mess up, we tend to our impact, forgive, and keep showing up.

General Conduct - Integrity

- Uphold our Mission, Vision & Equity Statement
- Transparent about our influence
- Hold our expertise with humility
- Curious how we might change and improve to better serve
- Set explicit goals
- Prioritize quality over quantity
- Willing and accountable to questioning systems

General Conduct - Accountability

- Share relevant information through accessible & clear communication
- Create ample space for communication & feedback
- Responsive to reflection & feedback
- Practice self-awareness
- Acknowledge mistakes, apologize, and keep trying

General Conduct - Inclusion

- Attuned to the communities we serve
- Prioritize & nurture relationships
- Include those most impacted in our work
- Prioritize cultural humility
- Reckon with the past to build the future
- Collaborate
- Foster inclusive meeting environment

General Conduct - Respect

- Show up with care & compassion for each other first
- Choose words carefully
- Celebrate each other's successes
- Practice "connection before content"
- Trust and share credit
- Flexible to accommodate lives outside of work
- Present in meetings: listening, minimizing distractions
- Forgive and show grace

Staff Expectations

- **Hours of Work** – Employees can work between 7am-6pm, but must work between 9am-4pm. Lunch is not part of the working day.
- **Remote Work** - Encourage 20 hours/week in person?
- **Technology Use** - Personal phone use?
- **Dress Code** - Business casual. No restriction based on sex or gender expression.
- **Pets at Work**
- **Driving at Work**
- **Solicitations & Distributions**
- **Conflict of Interest**
- **Names & Pronouns** - An employee has the right to be addressed at CCRPC by the name and pronoun of their choosing.
- **Use of AI?**
- **Children at Work?**



Conflict of Interest

- Financial Interests
- Acceptance of Gifts of Other Benefits
- Personal Relationship & Hiring
- Outside Activities & Employment
- **Political Activity** - The Hatch Act

Political Activity NOT allowed by Employees

- Partisan **political activity within the CCRPC office** (no posters, buttons, hats, clothing, or other partisan campaign paraphernalia).
- Engage in **political activity (including on social media) while at work**, in the workplace, wearing official insignia, or using CCRPC equipment or vehicle.
- **Run for public office in partisan elections.**
- The use of official authority or influence to **interfere with or effect the results** of an election or nomination.
- **Directly or indirectly coerce** contributions from subordinates in support of a political party or candidate
- **Solicit political contributions** from others or invite subordinate employees to political events or suggest that they engage in political activity. You may solicit contributions to nonprofit organization so long as it is not associated with a partisan candidate of political party.
- Knowingly **encourage or discourage political activity** of people you work with.
- **Participate in unlawful conduct** related to political activity that makes the individual unfit for their position.

Political Activity **ALLOWED** by Employees

- Express opinions about political issues and partisan groups and candidates while not at work or using official authority.
- Share opinions on personal social media accounts outside of work hours.
- Run for public office in nonpartisan elections.
- Campaign for and hold office in political clubs and organizations.
- Actively campaign for candidates for public office in partisan and non-partisan elections.
- Contribute money to political organizations and candidates and attend political fundraising events.
- Participate in protests and rallies as long as it is on your own time and not wearing a CCRPC logo or insignia that makes it appear that you are participating on behalf of CCRPC.

Free Speech

As a general matter, if you are speaking (1) as a private citizen, (2) about a matter of public concern (political, social, or other concern to the community), and (3) your speech does not interfere with your job, your speech is protected.

However, your speech may not be protected if it crosses the line into a real threat, an incitement to imminent unlawful action, or became part of a pattern of discriminatory harassment (see Unacceptable Behavior below). It cannot disrupt your ability to perform your workplace duties, or disrupt an efficient workplace. This depends on factors such as time, manner, place, and the extent of disruption balanced with the speaker's interest in the speech of question.

Unacceptable Behavior

- **Discrimination**
- **Harassment**
- **Sexual Harassment**
- **Alcohol & Substance Use (Smoke Free Workplace)**

List generally unacceptable behavior in Appendix.

Implementation & Accountability

- **Onboarding & Orientation**
- **Regular Feedback** – how to build it in?
- **Annual Evaluations** – Update to include DEI materials & code of conduct
- **Staff Recognition Award** - Do we want to keep this?
- **Workshops & Training** – Have a requirement?
- **Public Meetings** – Share our values & ground rules? Open mechanism for feedback?

Conflict Resolution & Discipline

“Accountability could be a more restorative justice approach as opposed to an approach of canceling engaging... we have to give people the grace to make mistakes.” - Ibram Kendi

- Conflict is an inherent part of collaborative work. Our success depends on our ability to move through it and learn from it.
- We seek to be transformative, trauma-informed, prioritize dialogue, and foster learning & development
- Integrate restorative justice practices & principles while recognizing its limits

CONFLICT IN THE WORKPLACE

TWO DIFFERENT VIEWS

TRADITIONAL PROCESS

- Misconduct is a violation of policy.
- Violations create guilt.
- Justice requires the company to determine blame (guilt) and impose pain (punishment)

Central focus: *Offending employees gets what they deserve (i.e., punishment)*

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

- Misconduct is a violation of people and relationships.
- Violations create obligations.
- Justice (i.e., to put things right) involves all stakeholders in the conflict

Central focus: *The needs of all stakeholders in the conflict have a responsibility for repairing harm.*

What is Restorative Justice?

- A way of addressing harm and conflict that focuses on repairing relationships and restoring dignity (rather than punishing or blaming)
- Participation of the people affected by the harm, as well as the person who caused it, in a respectful and constructive dialogue.
- Works to ensure that offenders take responsibility for their actions, to understand the harm they have caused, to give them an opportunity to redeem themselves, and to discourage them from causing further harm.

Why? Often, when workplace conflicts occur that result in punishment of some kind, the conflict does not simply disappear. How can we heal the relationships?

Conflict Resolution Process



REPORT

Staff/Staff: Manager or ED

Staff/Manager: ED

Staff/ED: Manager or EC

Staff/Board Member: EC

Staff/Committee Member:

Board Member/ED: EC

Board Member/Staff: ED

Committee Member/Staff:

Manager or ED

Public/Staff:

INVESTIGATE & DISCUSS

1. Restorative Justice Process
2. Formal Resolution Process

ACT

1. Dialogue
2. Apology
3. Training & Education
4. Oral &/or Written Warning
5. Suspension
6. Request Resignation
7. Forced Removal

FOLLOW UP

Restorative Justice Process

1. Report or Handle Directly
2. Identify & Investigate the Harm
3. Invite Participants
4. Restorative Dialogue
 - Self-Facilitated
 - Mediated by Manager, Executive Director, Executive Committee
 - Third-Party mediated by Burlington or Essex Restorative Justice Center (*provide conflict assistance coaching, restorative dialogue, and mediation*)
5. Agree on Actions
6. Follow Up

Resources:

- Training for staff from Community Justice Center
- Intervention process protocol
- Restorative conversation meeting guidelines
- Restorative justice agreement form
- Map of Restorative Conversations

Formal Resolution Process

1. Report
2. Investigate
 - Meet with aggrieved & implicated employee
 - Determine process to be used
3. Act
4. Follow Up

Employee Grievance Procedure

If formal process fails, or complaint is against CCRPC as an organization, or against Executive Director:

1. Report to Chair of EC, acting as Grievance Committee
2. EC Investigates
3. EC hosts Hearings (may be held in Executive Session as provided by law)
4. Chair issues a written decision on behalf of Grievance Committee no later than 7 days after the hearing
 - If the vote is NOT unanimous, a minority opinion may be included in the decision.
5. Corrective Action (may be combination, or may bypass one or more steps)

Other Equity Updates

- **Equity Advisory Committee membership turnover**
 - **Meeting at the end of January to discuss Climate Action in partnership with Climate Action Office**
- **Equity Action Plan – draft *mostly* finished**
- **ECOS Public Engagement Plan**
- **Participation in EPIC Program**
- **Coaching with Creative Discourse Group & Siri Russel**