

TITLE:

ETHICS COMMITTEE

POLICY #

HHS Internal POLICY and PROCEDURE

<i>Policy #</i>	ETHICS COMMITTEE	
	<i>Categories</i> Administration / Non-Clinical	<i>This Policy Applies To:</i> Fort Bend County Health & Human Services
		<i>Document Owner</i> Carrie Rai

Reference: Public Health Code of Ethics. (2019). American Public Health Association.

https://www.apha.org/-/media/files/pdf/membergroups/ethics/code_of_ethics.ashx

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide ethics guidance for Fort Bend County Health & Human Services (FBCHHS) staff in the performance of their duties and responsibility to the public, colleagues, management and other stakeholders.

This policy is to ensure that all services are conducted in accordance with applicable sections of state and federal laws, as well as to overlay additional agency policy and procedures so that appropriate agency management review is part of the process.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to all FBCHHS workforce.

III. DEFINITIONS

IV. POLICY

It is the policy of FBCHHS that FBCHHS adheres to the Public Health Code of Ethics to guide practice and establishes an Ethics Committee to provide a process for the consideration of ethical issues.

V. PROCEDURES

1. FBCHHS encourages all staff to effectively utilize the Public Health Code of Ethics https://www.apha.org/-/media/files/pdf/membergroups/ethics/code_of_ethics.ashx in their decision making process.
2. There may, at times, be situations that arise that will be best resolved through further deliberation and consideration by an Ethics Committee.
3. Staff and/or community stakeholders may request further review of ethical concerns by

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notifying the FBCHHS Director or designee in writing.

4. The Director will determine the appropriate action:
 - a. Ethical issues covered under the FBCHHS Code of Conduct Policy will be referred per that policy.
 - b. Ethical issues to be resolved by agency leadership will be referred for decision by:
 - i. FBCHHS Director or designee
 - ii. An ad hoc Ethics Committee
 1. Committee membership will be determined by the Director but must:
 - a. Be a minimum of five members
 - b. Include staff from two or more Divisions
 - c. Include at least one frontline staff member
5. Decisions will be made based on the following factors:
 - a. Staff/stakeholder interests and perspectives
 - b. Information available at the time of the review
 - c. Best evidence available
 - d. Public Health Code of Ethics
 - e. Department values

VI. PERSONS AFFECTED

All Fort Bend County Health and Human Services personnel.

VII. RESPONSIBILITIES

ALL Staff: Follow this Policy and Procedure.

VIII. EXCEPTIONS

No exceptions to this policy may be made without the prior written approval of the FBCHHS Director.

IX. ASSOCIATED LAWS & REGULATIONS

X. REVIEW PROCESS

This policy will be reviewed by the Executive Team annually.

XI. ISSUANCE AND REVISION HISTORY

<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Section</u>
	NEW POLICY	

Approved:



Director & LHA, Health & Human Services

Date: 11/20/2023