

Washington State Office of Public Defense Parents Representation Program

Social Worker Practice Standards



“Change is possible when parents get the support they need”

July 1, 2008
1st Version

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Washington State Office of Public Defense (OPD) is “to implement the constitutional guarantee of counsel and to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of the indigent appellate services funded by the state.”

The mission of Parents Representation Program Social Worker is to strengthen and empower families by providing high-quality, strength based, compassionate, accessible, non-biased, culturally relevant, and comprehensive social work services to parents in dependency and termination proceedings, thus allowing them to participate fully and meaningfully in their case planning.

Description

Parents Representation Program Social Workers are a resource for the Washington State Office of Public Defense Parents Representation Program and their primary purpose is be available to Parents Representation Program Attorneys to assist parents involved in dependency and termination proceedings in Washington State.

Core Beliefs of Parents Representation Program Social Workers

We believe families generally enter the child welfare system with real and complicated temporary deficits, in conjunction with social barriers which impact their temporary abilities to care for their children. We also believe every parent, despite their baseline parenting skills when entering the child welfare system, has the capacity to make positive and meaningful changes in their parenting abilities that will allow them to successfully reunify with their children.

We believe, endorse, support and work towards the Washington State Legislative declaration that “the family unit is the fundamental resource of American life which should be nurtured.” We believe the best familial situation is always for children to be raised safely with their own families.

We believe a families’ chance of succeeding improves exponentially when provided effective legal representation, timely services, effective services, positive supports and sincere opportunities to learn and grow.

We believe positive outcomes for families can be achieved when the child welfare system views children in context of their family.

We believe children, when given an option, prefer to be cared for by family.

We believe every child’s basic right is for the system they encounter to make active and consistent efforts to have their parent(s) returned to them in a safe environment.

We believe parents in dependency and termination proceedings deserve a trusted, accessible and non-coercive social worker who can help guide them through the complex and multi-faceted social structure of the child welfare system.

We believe Parents Representation Program Social Workers have unique leverage in developing trusted, accessible and non-coercive relationships with parents.

We believe parents in poverty tend to be disempowered and marginalized by society from well before entering the child welfare system. By working towards empowering parents in poverty in dependency and termination proceedings, we open up opportunities for parents to make better choices.

We strive to provide parents with motivation, support, system education, and hope while attempting everything within our professional capacity to remove unnecessary barriers, thus improving families' real chances of succeeding in the all too often complex and impersonal child welfare system.

Core Values of Parents Representation Program Social Workers

- All parents have strengths;
- Whenever safely possible, the constitution establishes that parents be designated to raise their children;
- All families need and deserve support and encouragement. How much and what kind varies throughout a families' lifespan;
- All parents have different, but important skills;
- Parents who fully understand their options can make better choices;
- All parents have hopes, dreams, and wishes for their children;
- All families are resourceful, but not all families have equal access to resources;
- Diversity is an important and valuable reality in our society;
- All families should be assisted in ways that help them maintain their dignity and hope;
- Timely and effective services work for families;
- All families should be partners in their relationship with service providers;
- Services are provided so families can reach their goals, and are not themselves a measure of success;
- In some situations, it may take time for parents to understand their underlying problems; therefore patience rather than judgment is a key component in successfully engaging parents to empower themselves; and
- Through the act of parent advocacy, parents will feel supported and understood.

Adoption of General Social Worker Profession Mission and Core Values

In addition to the mission beliefs and values specific to Parents Representation Program Social Workers, Parents Representation Program Social Workers acknowledges, embraces and strives to be consistent with the following general National Association of Social Workers (NASW) mission and core values identified in the NASW Code of Ethics preamble:

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being, and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.

Social workers promote social justice and social change with and on behalf of clients. "Clients" is used inclusively to refer to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty and other forms of social injustice. These activities may be in the form of direct practice, community organizing, supervision, consultation, administration, advocacy, social and political action, policy development, and implementation, education, and research and evaluation. Social workers seek to enhance the capacity of people to address their own needs. Social workers also seek to promote the responsiveness of organizations, communities, and other social institutions, to individual's needs and social problems.

The mission of the social work profession is rooted in a set of core values. These core values, embraced by social workers throughout the profession's history, are the foundation of social work's unique purpose and perspective:

- *Service*
- *Social justice*
- *Dignity and worth of the person*
- *Importance of human relationships*
- *Integrity*
- *Competence*

This constellation of core values reflects what is unique to the social work profession. Core values, and the principles that flow from them, must be balanced within the context and complexity of the human experience.

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1.0 Introduction

For simplicity, throughout this document, “Social Workers” refers to a Parents Representation Program Social Workers. Also for simplicity, throughout this document, “Attorneys” primarily refers to a Parents Representation Program Attorneys, but in limited situations may include attorneys not contracted to the Parents Representation Program.

1.1 The Parents Representation Program

The Parents Representation Program began as a pilot program in two Washington State juvenile courts in 2000. The Parents Representation Program now operates in 25 of the 39 counties in Washington State. The pilot implemented enhanced representation for parents through program standards, reduced attorney caseloads, social worker services and independent expert funding.

The Parents Representation Program implements improved parents’ representation in dependency and termination cases. The program features reasonable caseloads for attorneys, adherence to program standards, and state oversight of performance. In addition, the Washington State Office of Public Defense’s Parents Representation Program addresses the following child welfare adjudication areas:

- Engagement of parents;
- Increased parental participation in services;
- Fulfillment of visitation;
- Increase in reunifications;
- Decrease in re-entry into care;
- Enhancement of the quality of legal proceedings;
- Provision of support to drug courts;
- Reduction of continuances; and
- Promotion of timely permanency.

The Washington State Office of Public Defense works with the courts, dependency attorneys, the Children’s Administration, agency attorneys, and Guardian ad Litem/CASA in each county to ensure successful implementation of the program.

1.2 Purpose of Practice Standards

This document establishes minimum practice standards for professional Parents Representation Program Social Workers contracted with the Washington State Office of Public Defense. These practice standards are also intended to serve as a resource

for Parents Representation Program Social Workers and Attorneys, courts, and others interested in this field of practice.

1.3 Applicability

- (a) The Parents Representation Program Social Worker Practice Standards apply to all Social Workers contracted directly with the Washington State Office of Public Defense for the Parents Representation Program.
- (b) If any of the statements made in these practice standards conflict with applicable federal, state or local law statutes, the Rules of Professional Conduct for attorneys in Washington State, and/or professional regulations that pertain to a member's practice, statutory and professional obligations should take precedence over statements made in this document. All such conflicts shall be reported to the Washington State Office of Public Defense.

1.4 Adoption and Implementation of Parents Representation Program Social Worker Practice Standards

- (a) The Washington State Office of Public Defense Parents Representation Program Social Worker Practice Standards were adopted with input from contracted Social Workers between March 28, 2008 and June 18, 2008.
- (b) The Parents Representation Social Work Program Practice Standards are effective July 1, 2008.
- (c) Generally, the Parents Representation Program Social Worker Practice Standards will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis. However, The Washington State Office of Public Defense reserves the right to update the Parents Representation Program Social Worker Practice Standards as needed. Social Workers and Attorneys are encouraged to provide input on these practice standards.

2.0 General Qualifications and Continuing Education

2.1 Academic and Prior Professional Experience

- (a) Social Workers have a masters or bachelors degree in social work, sociology, psychology, human services or related field, and/or are licensed as social workers in the State of Washington.
- (b) Social Workers have a minimum of two years paid social services experience prior to contracting with the Washington State Office of Public Defense.

2.2 New Parents Representation Program Social Worker Orientation

- (a) Newly contracted Social Workers participate in program and practice introductory training with the Washington State Office of Public Defense Social Services Manager within two weeks of the effective contract date.

- (b) Newly contracted Social Workers attend the next available general Parents Representation Program orientation training.
- (c) Newly contracted Social Workers participate in two monthly in-person or telephone case reviews for the first three months of the contract.

2.3 Continuing Education

- (a) Social Workers participate in a minimum of 48 hours of continuing education per contract year.
- (b) Mandatory continuing education includes all identified Washington State Office of Public Defense' Continuing Learning Education (CLE) trainings, Parents Representation Program Social Worker Conferences and one local Reasonable Efforts Symposium. Reasonable exceptions to mandatory continuing education are permitted by the Washington State Office of Public Defense Social Services Manager on a case by case basis. Social Workers shall request such exceptions in writing with e-mail as the preferred communication method.
- (c) Any other training offered by Washington State Office of Public Defense, Washington State Children's Administration, National Association of Social Workers, or the Court Improvement Training Academy count towards the 48 hours of continuing education.
- (d) All other trainings must be approved by the Washington State Office of Public Defense Social Services Manager to count towards their 48 hours of continuing education. E-mail is the preferred approval communication method.
- (e) Social Workers are responsible for documenting their continuing education and providing records to the Washington State Office of Public Defense as requested.

2.4 Current Child Welfare Literature

- (a) Social Workers are encouraged to stay current with macro and micro level child welfare related scientific method and theory literature.

3.0 Professional Responsibilities

3.1 Case Manager

- (a) Social Workers know and understand they are primarily working in the capacity of a case manager providing parent support, investigative, and advocacy services.
- (b) Social Workers know and understand they are not acting in a therapist role. Social Workers make this information clear to the client and other professionals.

3.2 Contract Position Title

- (a) All Social Workers contracted directly with the Washington State Office of Public Defense Parents Representation Program shall formally be referred to as a contracted “Parents Representation Program Social Worker.”
- (b) Social Workers do not represent themselves as employees of the Washington State Office of Public Defense.

3.3 Availability

- (a) Full-time (160 hours per month) contracted Social Workers are predominately available during normal business hours and communicate typical work hours on telephone voice mail.
- (b) Part time (less than 160 hours per month) contracted Social Workers make their available hours primarily during the normal business hours and communicate typical work hours on telephone voice mail.
- (c) Social Workers have one telephone line primarily dedicated to their professional position. The telephone voice mail clearly identifies the Social Worker’s name, position and typical work hours.
- (d) Social Workers have one e-mail account set up exclusively for their professional position. The e-mail account is private and not accessible by others. All professional e-mail correspondence includes client privacy language.
- (e) Full-time (160 hours per month) contracted Social Workers notify the Washington State Office of Public Defense Social Services Manager, in writing and prior to leave dates, when they are expected to not be available to work more than one business day. When the leave is unanticipated, the notification is made as soon as possible, but not to exceed three business days. The preferred method of notification is by e-mail.
- (f) Part-time (less than 160 hours per month) contracted Social Workers notify the Washington State Office of Public Defense Social Services Manager, in writing and prior to leave dates, when they are expected to not be available to work more than three business days in a row. When the leave is unanticipated, the notification is made as soon as possible, but not to exceed three business days. The preferred method of notification is by e-mail.

3.4 Professional Liability Insurance

- (a) Social Workers carry and maintain professional liability insurance.
- (b) Social Workers provide proof of professional liability insurance upon request of the Washington State Office of Public Defense.

3.5 Previous Professional Relationships

- (a) Social Workers must not provide social work services on behalf of a parent they were previously assigned to work with during their employment with the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, or an agency contracted with the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services to provide child welfare related services.
- (b) Social Workers must not disclose any confidential information gained by their previous employment position with the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, or an agency contracting with the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services to provide child welfare related services.

3.6 Client Record Keeping and Retention

- (a) Client record keeping is kept to a minimum in the interest of providing as many direct client service hours as possible. In consultation with the referring Attorney, Social Workers determine what client record keeping is appropriate for each specific case.
- (b) Client records not intended to be shared professionally are clearly identified as “Attorney Work Product.” Social Workers know and understand all client records could be subject to discovery requests.
- (c) Social Workers secure and maintain all client specific documents and/or information regarding assigned parents in locked cabinets or secure locations.
- (d) Any and all client records produced or obtained by Social Workers are disclosed to a client upon request. When Social Workers provide records to clients, they also provide a copy of the records to the referring Attorneys, as well as keep a copy of the records provided.
- (e) All client records are retained for a minimum of two years after case closing. In lieu of retaining records, Social Workers may request the referring Attorney retain the records in the client file.

3.7 Mandated Reporting

- (a) Social Workers are considered mandated reporters under RCW 26.44.030 (1) (a). Social Workers are subject to the laws supporting mandated reporting, and must make a report of any allegations of abuse and/or neglect to local law enforcement and/or Children's Administration.
- (b) If Social Workers make mandated reports regarding current clients, Social Workers shall communicate the mandated reporting information to the client and the Attorney at the earliest point possible. If a Social Worker makes a mandated report on a client, the Social Worker initiates discussions with the client and the

Attorney regarding further Social Worker case assignment. All decisions made by the client and/or Attorney regarding further case assignments are final.

See Appendix A: RCW 26.44.030 (1) (a) Mandated Reporting

4.0 Professional Duties and Roles

Social Workers may provide many roles in support of parents. Please note this list includes most, but not all possible duties/roles.

4.1 Parents Representation Program Social Workers as Parent Supports

- Communicates, engages and motivates parents to participate in their case plan;
- Provides information/ orientation on the dependency process;
- Assists parents in locating and obtaining court ordered services;
- Collaborates with Children's Administration Social Workers in enrolling parents in approved services;
- Attends court hearings as parent support;
- Provides on-going in-person visits to assess progress; and
- Assists parents in locating and obtaining concrete services (clothing, furniture, household goods, etc.).

4.2 Parents Representation Program Social Workers as Investigators

- Observes visits;
- Conducts relative searches;
- Assists attorneys in locating relevant child welfare research;
- Assists attorneys in researching Children's Administration Policies and Procedures;
- Reviews case files/discovery for attorneys;
- Conducts relative home-studies;
- Interviews third parties;
- Assists attorneys in locating expert services;
- Assists attorneys in preparing alternative reunification plans; and
- Assists attorneys in contacting service providers.

4.3 Parents Representation Program Social Workers as Parent Advocates

- Assists parents in asserting their rights in dependency and termination process;
- Advocates for services, visits, etc;
- Communicates with service providers regarding parents' progress;
- Communicates with Children's Administration Social Workers regarding parents' progress;
- Communicates with CASA/GAL's regarding parents' progress; and
- Attends staffings.

4.4 Parents Representation Program Social Workers as Witnesses

- Act as Fact Witnesses;

- Prepares declarations for court; and
- Provides home visits or other face to face contacts as part of court ordered safety plans.

4.5 Parents Representation Program Social Workers as Community Child Welfare Participants

- Participates in community child welfare and court improvement meetings;
- Provides Parents Representation Program Social Worker information to community groups; and
- Attends child welfare related conferences.

5.0 Professional Relationships with Parents Representation Program Attorneys

5.1 Agent of the Parents Representation Program Attorney

- (a) Social Workers know and understand their role as agents of the referring Attorney and they are professionally responsible to such attorney. For purposes of interpretation of the Rules of Professional Conduct for attorneys in the State of Washington, Social Workers are considered a “non-lawyer assistants.”

See Appendix B: “Rules of Professional Conduct RPC Rule 5.3 Responsibilities Regarding Nonlawyer Assistants”

- (c) Social Workers know and understand privileged communication and it extends, with the exception of mandated reporting circumstances, to their communications with clients on behalf of the Attorneys.

See Appendix C: RCW5.60.060 (2) (a) Privileged Communication

- (d) The referring Attorneys maintain sole discretion of setting Social Workers roles and duties provided to clients.

5.2 Attorney Support Model

- (a) Social Workers may be assigned to work with specific Attorneys or may be part of a panel referral system. In consultation with local Attorneys, the Washington State Office of Public Defense reserves the authority to determine what model works best for a particular county and may make changes to a model or specific attorney assignment at any time.

5.3 Referrals

- (a) Social Workers only accept referrals from Attorneys. If a referral for social worker services is requested by a third party, the third party is referred to the respective Attorney for his or her referral consideration.

- (b) Social Workers are encouraged to request Attorneys to utilize the “Parents Representation Program Social Worker Referral” form. Lack of written referral from the Attorney does not in and of itself void Social Workers from accepting and responding to referral requests by Attorneys.
- (c) Social Workers are encouraged to request Attorneys to provide a copy of a current Individual Service and Safety Plan (ISSP) and court orders. These documents provide Social Workers with an initial understanding of the court’s expectation of clients. Lack of Individual Service and Safety Plan and/or court orders provided from Attorneys do not, in and of itself, void Social Workers from accepting referrals requests by Attorneys.

5.4 Client Conflict of Interest

- (a) Social Workers accept referrals from Attorneys on a “first come, first serve” basis. Any and all Parents Representation Program Attorneys representing parent(s) in a particular case are notified by e-mail from the Social Worker regarding the Social Worker’s case assignment with a specific party in a particular case.
- (b) Social Workers and Attorneys are encouraged to discuss third party communication prior to the initial contact between Social Workers and clients. Attorneys have final discretion regarding all third party communication decisions.
- (c) Social Workers clearly inform and discuss with clients the Social Worker’s role in working with them. Social Workers clearly inform parents of attorney-client communication regarding third party communication.
- (d) Social Workers clearly communicate, to everyone involved in the case, they are serving only the client of the Attorney who made the referral.

5.5 Maintaining an Independent Professional Assessment

- (a) Social Workers maintain an independent and objective professional assessment of a case. At the request of the Attorney, Social Workers provide social work insight and assessment in the progress and barriers of parents. Social Workers understand the professional role of Attorneys in that any Social Worker provided insight or assessment is at the discretion of Attorneys to utilize for legal purposes.

5.6 Monthly Service Updates

- (a) Social Workers provide “Monthly Service Updates” to referring Attorneys on each case. “Monthly Service Updates” may be in written or verbal form. The preferred update method is through e-mail. The “Monthly Service Updates” include at a minimum:
 - Dates of face to face and/or telephone contact(s) with clients;
 - Approximate number of direct service hours provided to the parent;
 - Brief description of clients’ progress;
 - Any assessed barriers to clients’ progress; and
 - All other client relevant information.

5.7 Collateral Case Information Provided to Parents Representation Program Attorneys

- (a) Social Workers share any and all case specific information provided by Children's Administration Social Workers, services providers, CASA/GALs, other professionals and/or other collateral information sources with the referring Attorney.
- (b) Unless requested differently by the Attorney, all Social Worker case specific written communication provided to the Children's Administration Social Workers, services providers, GAL/CASA, other professionals and/or other collateral should include a copy (cc) to the referring Attorneys.

5.8 Parents Representation Program Attorney/Parents Representation Program Social Worker Conflict

- (a) Social Workers attempt to resolve any professional conflicts with Attorneys. If conflict is not resolved, the Attorneys and/or Social Workers may pursue alternative conflict resolution through the Washington State Office of Public Defense.

6.0 Professional Relationships with Clients

6.1 Voluntary Service

- (a) Social Workers clearly inform clients, at first contact, that Social Worker services are voluntary and at any time in the proceeding, clients may choose to discontinue services.

6.2 Communication with Clients

- (a) When referrals are accepted by Social Workers, initial contacts with clients are attempted as soon as possible, but no later than five business days. The referring Attorneys reserve the right to revise the contact timeframes on specific cases.
- (b) At initial contacts with clients, Social Workers provide their clients with direct Social Worker contact information and normal business hour availability.
- (c) Social Workers meet and communicate regularly with clients. Social Workers' communication with clients primarily focuses on clients' progress, performance and any real and/or perceived barriers of parents in court ordered services. Additional communication focuses on the support roles of Children's Administration, service providers and other parties in the case. Social Workers attempt to guide clients through real and/or perceived barriers of meeting their court ordered services and self-directed goals. Social Workers focus on the necessary resources in order to achieve court ordered services and clients' self-directed goals and help clients identify and problem solve any real and/or perceived barriers.

6.3 Informed Consent

- (a) Social Workers verbally and/or in writing inform clients, in clear and understandable language, about pertinent informed consent information.
- (b) Informed consent communicated to clients includes, at a minimum, full disclosure of the following information:
 - Roles as agent of Attorneys, including attorney/client privilege;
 - Purposes of Social Worker services;
 - Mandated Reporter status;
 - Voluntary professional relationships;
 - Timeframes covered by consent;
 - Services limited to amount of professional available time;
 - Client's right to ask questions;
 - Client's right to refuse or withdraw consents;
 - Client's complaint/grievance procedures; and
 - Services provided at no cost to clients.
- (c) Social Workers are responsible for ensuring informed consent requirements meet their respective and specific professional liability, licensing and/or registration requirements.

6.4 Transporting Clients

- (a) Social Workers are not required to transport clients as part of their contract obligations. If Social Workers choose to transport clients, Social Workers are expected to be as fair and equitable as possible regarding distribution of their transportation time.
- (b) Social Workers help clients search all other transportation possibilities before transportation is provided.
- (c) Social Workers shall not transport clients under the age 18 or client's children under the age of 18 without written approval from the legal custodian. In all dependency cases, Children's Administration is the legal custodian and any such transportation would require the assigned Children's Administration Social Worker's written approval.
- (d) Social Workers are responsible for ensuring all private automobile insurance is adequate.

6.5 Release of Information

- (a) Social Workers obtain all necessary signed consent forms from clients to obtain and release any necessary information.
- (b) Social Workers may design and utilize a personal release of information form or utilize the standard Parents Representation Program Release of Information form provided on the Washington State Office of Public Defense website.

6.6 Interpreter Services

- (a) In order to carry out their professional roles, Social Workers may need to obtain the services of interpreters. In situations where interpretations services are determined necessary, Social Workers obtain approval through referring Attorneys, and follow the Attorneys' designated method of invoicing for such services.

6.7 Client Complaint/Grievances

- (a) Upon request from clients, Social Workers provide clients with information on submitting formal complaints/grievances regarding actions by Social Workers. Clients are first encouraged to discuss and resolve their complaints/grievances with Social Workers. If complaints/grievances are not resolved between clients and Social Workers, clients are directed to discuss the concerns with their assigned Attorney. If complaints/grievances are not ameliorated between clients and the Attorneys, clients are directed to the Washington State Office of Public Defense for resolution.

6.8 Closing Cases/Terminating Services

- (a) Cases are closed if requested by the clients or referring Attorneys.
- (b) Cases are closed when Social Workers determine that their social work services are no longer necessary, and the referring Attorney concurs.
- (c) Cases are closed if no in-person or telephone contact has been made between the Social Worker and client during the last full calendar month. Diligent contact attempts should be made by Social Workers before a case is closed for lack of client availability. An exception to this case closing standard is made when cases are determined "hold status" cases. See 8.1 (d) for practice standard regarding "hold status" cases.
- (d) No case shall remain open for more than one full year without prior approval from the referring Attorneys *and* the Washington State Office of Public Defense Social Services Manager.
- (e) Social Workers notify the client verbally and/or in writing that their case is being closed.
- (f) At the time of the case closing, Social Workers notify referring Attorneys that cases are closing and provide them with brief verbal or written synopsis of case involvement and status at time of closing.

7.0 Professional Relationships with Child Welfare Professionals

7.1 Communication with Children's Administration Social Workers

- (a) Social Workers interact respectfully, professionally and make good faith attempts to work collaboratively with Children's Administration Social Workers in order to provide clients the best opportunity of addressing their parenting deficiencies.
- (b) Social Workers notify the assigned Children's Administration Social Worker verbally and/ or in writing of their case assignment within ten business days. The notification clearly identifies the Social Workers' specific client they are assigned to work with to eliminate any confusion.
- (c) Social Workers' communication with Children's Administration Social Workers primarily focus on clients' progress in the case plan, clients' ability to access services, visitation issues, clients' real and/or perceived barriers and other information pertinent to the family's current and future success for safety, permanency and well-being.
- (d) Unless otherwise specified by the referring Attorney, all case specific Social Worker e-mail communication with assigned Children's Administration Social Worker includes a copy (cc) to the referring Attorney.
- (e) In situations where Children's Administration Social Workers may not be interacting professionally and/or collaboratively with Social Workers, Social Workers notify referring Attorneys. Social Workers may also attempt to address with the Children's Administration Social Worker's supervisor. Consistent and on-going issues of lack of professional and/or collaborative work with a particular Children's Administration office shall be discussed with the Washington State Office of Public Defense Social Services Manager for possible resolution opportunities.

7.2 Communication with Client Service Providers

- (a) Social Workers interact respectfully, professionally and make good faith attempts to work collaboratively with client service providers in order to provide clients the best opportunity of addressing their parenting deficiencies.
- (b) Social Workers are encouraged to contact client service providers pertinent to a given case and communicate that a Parents Representation Program Social Worker has been assigned to work with a particular parent.
- (c) Social Workers' communication with client service providers primarily focus on clients' progress in their case plan, clients' ability to access services, the clients' real and/or perceived barriers and other information pertinent to the family's current and future success for safety, permanency and well-being.

- (d) Unless otherwise specified by Attorneys, all case specific Social Worker e-mail communication with client service providers includes a copy (cc) to the referring Attorney.

7.3 Communication with CASA/GALs

- (a) Social Workers interact respectfully, professionally and make good faith attempts to work collaboratively with the CASA/GALs in order to provide clients the best opportunity of addressing their parenting deficiencies.
- (b) Social Workers are encouraged to contact assigned CASA/GALs and communicate that a Parents Representation Program Social Worker has been assigned to work with a particular parent.
- (c) Social Workers' communication with the CASA/GALs primarily focuses on clients' progress in the case plan, clients' ability to access services, visitation issues, clients' real and/or perceived barriers and other information pertinent to the family's current and future success for safety, permanency and well-being.
- (d) Unless otherwise specified by Attorneys, all case specific Social Worker e-mail communication with CASA/GALs includes a Copy (cc) to the referring Attorney.

7.4 Communication with Other Professionals and/or Collaborative Supports

- (a) Social Workers may be requested by clients and/or Attorneys to communicate with other professionals and/or collaborative supports (i.e. client relatives, client friends, etc.). Social Workers interact respectfully, professionally and make good faith attempts to work collaboratively with all other professionals and collaborative supports in order to provide clients the best opportunity of addressing their parenting deficiencies.
- (b) Unless otherwise specified by Attorneys, all case specific Social Worker e-mail communication with other professionals and/or collaborative supports includes a copy (cc) to the referring Attorney.
- (c) Social Workers' communication with the other professionals and/or collaborative supports primarily focuses information pertinent to the family's current and future success for safety, permanency and well-being.

7.5 Clear Communication of Role as Agent of the Parents Representation Program Attorney

- (a) Upon initial contact with professionals and/or collaborative parties, Social Workers clearly disclose their association as agents of Parents Representation Program Attorneys.

7.6 Community Child Welfare Participation

- (a) Social Workers are encouraged to spend a limited percentage of their contract time participating in community child welfare projects. *Examples of community*

child welfare participation include providing active efforts in Reasonable Efforts Symposium projects, Dependency 101 projects, and parent to parent support groups. Social Workers report and discuss all community child welfare participation that requires more than three hours per month of contract time with the Washington State Office of Public Defense Social Services Manager.

7.7 Professional Dispute Resolution

- (a) Social Workers attempt to resolve any professional disputes with other professionals. Professional dispute resolution should occur at the lowest level of chain of command possible. Any disputes not solved at the Social Workers level are directed to the assigned Attorneys for resolution. Any disputes regarding Social Workers' practice not resolved with the Attorneys may be referred to the Washington State Office of Public Defense for consultation and attempted resolution.

8.0 Caseloads and Contract Hour Distribution

8.1 Caseload Standards

- (a) A "case" is defined as any referral assignment from Attorneys where Social Workers provide a total of three or more hours of direct client service. Social Workers know and understand cases are counted as parents in dependency and termination proceedings, and not children of parents.
- (b) Social Workers carry a minimum of 28 open cases for full time contracts. Of the 28 open cases, a minimum of 20 cases must be "active status" cases. Of the 28 open cases, a maximum of 8 cases may be considered "hold status" cases. Both "active status" and "hold status" cases are considered open cases. Part time contract caseloads are prorated to 28 full time cases.
- (c) "Active status" cases are defined as open cases that have had at least one in-person or telephone client contact in the last full calendar month.
- (d) "Hold status" cases are defined as open cases that have not had an in-person or telephone contact in the last full calendar month, but remain open for anticipated future services. The lack of contact may be due to no recent contact being necessary or unsuccessful contacts attempts made by the Social Worker.

"Hold status" cases should be reserved for cases where it is necessary for the Social Worker to stay involved, despite the reason for no contact, *and* contact between the client and Social Worker is anticipated in the near future. All cases in "hold status" must be approved by the referring Attorneys for such status.

- (e) Social Workers are encouraged to not accept more than five cases over the 28 minimum caseload standard, but may do so at their professional discretion.

- (f) Social Workers build into their caseload capacities the ability to carry up to, but not more than two courtesy cases from Parents Representation Program Attorneys in Parents Representation Program counties outside of the Social Workers' catchment area.
- (g) It is reasonable to expect Attorneys may request direct client services for a parent that do not last a total of three or more hours in duration. For the purpose of caseload standards, these direct client services are not counted as cases, and it is not expected that a case will open in the Parents Representation Program Database. *An example would include a situation where an Attorney requests a Social Worker to attend a staffing with no request for further social work services.* Social Workers are expected to respond to such requests within their available schedule and contract hours. For purposes of invoicing, Social Workers report these hours on their monthly hard copy invoices as "non-case assigned direct service hours."

8.2 Caseload Distribution

- (a) Whereas Social Workers have capacities to receive referrals from a several Attorneys, Social Workers make every reasonable attempt to provide fair and equitable caseload and direct services hour distribution to all supported Attorneys' client referrals.
- (b) When caseloads are distributed unevenly between Attorneys, Social Workers accept new referrals from under case represented Attorneys and request over case represented Attorneys to prioritize their social worker case assignments.
- (c) When uneven caseload distribution cannot be solved between Social Workers and Attorneys, Social Workers shall contact the Washington State Office of Public Defense for resolution.

9.0 Contract Hour Distribution

9.1 Direct Client Service Hours

- (a) Direct client service hours are defined as any professional social work activity conducted for the purpose of a specific client.
- (b) Direct client service hours generally average 85% or more of the Social Workers contracted monthly hours.
- (c) Direct client service hours include Social Workers' transportation time to and from in-person, or attempted in-person contacts.

Direct client service hours as noted in 8.1 (g) are recorded on the Parents Representation Program Social Worker Invoice as "Non-Case Assigned Direct Service Hours."

See Appendix E: Washington State Office of Public Defense Parents Representation Program Social Worker Invoice

9.2 Administrative Service Hours

- (a) Administrative service hours are defined as all non-direct client service hours that can reasonably be attributed to work necessary to fulfill Social Workers' contract expectations. *Examples of administrative service hours include billing and invoicing time, continuing education requirements, Parents Representation Program evaluations and program development, general child welfare literature review and case reviews/conference calls with the Washington State Office of Public Defense Social Services Manager.*
- (b) Administrative service hours generally average 15% or less of the Social Workers' contracted monthly hours.
- (c) It is expected and understood by the Washington State Office of Public Defense that some months will require more Social Workers administrative service hours than others and that some months will require Social Workers to exceed 15% of contract hours on administrative service hours. *Example would be months that have considerably more mandatory continuing education expectations as summarized in 2.3 (b) or community child welfare participation commitments.*
- (d) Months that Social Workers report more than 15% administrative service hours shall be reported on the Parents Representation Program Social Worker Invoice with a detailed breakdown of all administrative service hours for the invoiced month.

See Appendix E: Washington State Office of Public Defense Parents Representation Program Social Worker Invoice

9.3 Contract Hour Expectations

- (a) Social Workers are not expected to provide more service hours per month than their contract stipulates.
- (b) Any difficulties in keeping social work services within contract hours are communicated to the Washington State Office of Public Defense Social Services Manager for resolution.
- (c) Any questions or clarifications necessary should be directed towards the Washington State Office of Public Defense Social Services Manager

10.0 Social Worker Practice Oversight

10.1 Monthly Social Worker Conference Calls with the Washington State Office of Public Defense

- (a) Social Workers participate in a minimum of 10 out of 12 monthly conference calls per contract year with the Washington State Office of Public Defense Social Services Manager.
- (b) Scheduled conference call dates will be announced a minimum of two weeks prior to the conference call date. Conference calls will generally take up to, but not longer than one hour in duration.
- (c) Social Workers document all conference call attendance and submit attendance at the request of the Washington State Office of Public Defense.

10.2 Quarterly Reviews with Washington State Office of Public Defense

- (a) Social Workers participate in quarterly, in-person case reviews with Washington State Office of Public Defense Social Services Manager or designee.
- (b) Social Workers choose a minimum of three open cases to review with the Washington State Office of Public Defense Social Services Manager or designee. Social Workers' case reviews will include, at a minimum:
 - General circumstances that lead to the dependency;
 - Client's current progress and barriers;
 - Social Workers efforts made to move towards achieving clients' goals;
 - Discussion of possible future efforts to move towards achieving clients' goals;
 - Any other relevant information or issues; and
 - General Case feedback from the Washington State Office of Public Defense Social Services Manager or designee.
- (c) Social Workers respect the confidentially rights of their clients at all time. Social Workers shall not disclose clients' names, or specific information that would clearly identify them.
- (d) Case reviews are approximately 90 minutes in duration and take place at mutually agreed location and time.

10.3 On-going Parents Representation Program Practice Consultation

- (a) Social Workers are encouraged to consult with the Washington State Office of Public Defense Social Services Manager, as needed, on complex social work and child welfare practice issues.
- (b) In the absence of Washington State Office of Public Defense Social Services Manager, Social Workers are encouraged to develop working relationships with and consult with fellow Parents Representation Program Social Workers.

11.0 Code of Ethics

11.1 Adopted Code of Ethics

- (a) The Washington State Office of Public Defense determines that the comprehensive National Association of Social Worker's Code of Ethics is the best available code of ethics standard for Parents Representation Program Social Workers. Social Workers have full knowledge and understanding and agree to adhere to the National Association of Social Worker Code of Ethics as they pertain to their practice.

- (b) Any and all alleged code of ethic violations by National Association of Social Worker members will be referred to the National Association of Social Workers for appropriate action. Any and all alleged code of ethic violations by non-National Association of Social Workers members, or non-Washington licensed Social Workers are addressed by the Washington State Office of Public Defense. National Association of Social Workers membership is determined at the time of the alleged code of ethics violation.

See Appendix D: National Association of Social Worker's Code of Ethics

12.0 Miscellaneous

12.1 Requests for Exceptions to Parents Representation Program Social Worker Practice Standards

- (a) All requests for exceptions to Parents Representation Program Social Worker Practice Standards are brought to the attention of the of the Washington State Office of Public Defense's Managing Social Worker at the earliest point possible. All requests shall be in writing with e-mail the preferred method of request.

- (b) The Washington State Office of Public Defense reserves the right to provide an exception to any practice standard to the extent it does not conflict with federal, state or local laws and statutes, Rules of Professional Conduct for attorneys in the State of Washington and/or professional regulations that pertain to Social Workers' general practice.

12.2 Parents Representation Program Quality Assurance

- (a) Social Workers participate in quality assurance or evaluation process as requested by the Washington State Office of Public Defense. For contract purposes, quality assurance participation is counted as administrative service hours.

12.3 Parents Representation Program Development

- (a) Social Workers participate in Parents Representation Program development as requested by the Washington State Office of Public Defense. For contract purposes, Parents Representation Program development is counted as administrative service hours.

12.4 Parents Representation Program Social Work Forms

- (a) Various Parents Representation Program Social Work standard forms are made available to Social Workers on the Washington State Office of Public Defense website. Social Workers are encouraged to utilize the standard social work forms, but may choose to develop and utilize their own forms.

12.5 Full Disclosure of Other Professional Activity

- (a) Social Workers shall fully disclose, in writing, to the Washington State Office of Public Defense, any and all professional employment/contracts unrelated to the their Washington State Office of Public Defense contract. If the unrelated employment/contract is expected to start during a Social Worker's contract period, the written disclosure shall occur before the new and unrelated employment/ contract begins.
- (b) The written disclosure shall include the name of the employment or contract agency, the nature of the role, typical weekly work schedule and, the total work hours expected during a week and month. If the professional activity is considered social services, Social Workers shall clearly identify what action will take place to avoid a conflict of interest with the Social Worker's Washington State Office of Public Defense contract.
- (c) The Washington State Office of Public Defense maintains sole discretion in determining if a contract conflict exists and, if so determined, what course of action shall occur to resolve the concerns. Within two weeks of submission of written disclosure, the Social Worker will be notified in writing of the conflict finding and any necessary resolutions.

12.6 Parents Representation Program Database

- (a) Social Workers accurately maintain and document individual case time records on case management software provided by the Washington State Office of Public Defense and submit monthly case reports generated by the software program when invoicing for monthly payments. Social Workers update the software provided by Washington State Office of Public Defense as needed.

12.7 Invoicing

- (a) Social Workers shall submit a hard copy of the Parents Representation Program Social Worker Invoice. Social Workers are required to submit monthly hours for direct service hours, non-case assigned direct service hours, and administrative service hours.

See Appendix E: Washington State Office of Public, Parents Representation Program Social Worker Invoice

- (b) Months that Social Workers report more than 15% administrative service hours shall be reported on the Parents Representation Program Invoice with a detailed breakdown of all administrative service hours for the invoiced month.
- (c) Direct clients service hours as noted in 8.1 (g) are recorded on the Parents Representation Program Invoice as “Non-Case Assigned Direct Service Hours.”
- (d) Invoicing shall be completed no later than 90 days after service is provided.

12.8 Supervising Social Work Practicum Students

- (a) Social Workers are encouraged to provide practicum supervision in support of a limited number of social work students as part of their contract hours. Before accepting any supervision responsibility, Social Workers first discuss the student practicum placement and the required supervision hours with the Washington State Office of Public Defense Social Services Manager. Students pursuing degrees with disciplines other than social work are accepted on a case by case basis with oversight and final approval by Washington State Office of Public Defense.

12.9 Disclaimers

- (a) If any of the Parents Representation Program Social Worker Practice Standards are unclear, or require further elaboration, Social Workers clarify with the Washington State Office of Public Defense before any practice occurs.
- (b) If any statements made in the Parents Representation Program Social Worker Practice Standards conflict with applicable federal, state or local law statutes, the Rules of Professional Conduct for attorneys in Washington State, and/or professional regulations that pertain to a member’s practice, statutory and professional obligations should take precedence over statements made in this document. All such conflicts are reported to the Washington State Office of Public Defense.

Appendix A:

RCW 26.44.030 (1) (a) Mandated Reporting

MANDATED REPORTERS

RCW 26.44.030(1)(a)

When any practitioner, county coroner or medical examiner, law enforcement officer, professional school personnel, registered or licensed nurse, social service counselor, psychologist, pharmacist, employee of the department of early learning, licensed or certified child care providers or their employees, employee of the department, juvenile probation officer, placement and liaison specialist, responsible living skills program staff, HOPE center staff, or state family and children's ombudsman or any volunteer in the ombudsman's office has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect, he or she shall report such incident, or cause a report to be made, to the proper law enforcement agency or to the department.

Appendix B:

RPC Rule 5.3 Responsibilities Regarding Nonlawyer Assistants

With respect to a nonlawyer employed or retained by or associated with a lawyer:

(a) a partner, and a lawyer who individually or together with other lawyers possesses comparable managerial authority in a law firm shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that the firm has in effect measures giving reasonable assurance that the persons conduct is compatible with the professional obligations of the lawyer;

(b) a lawyer having direct supervisory authority over the nonlawyer shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that the persons conduct is compatible with the professional obligations of the lawyer; and

(c) a lawyer shall be responsible for conduct of such a person that would be a violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct if engaged in by a lawyer if:

(1) the lawyer orders or, with the knowledge of the specific conduct, ratifies the conduct involved; or

(2) the lawyer is a partner or has comparable managerial authority in the law firm in which the person is employed, or has direct supervisory authority over the person, and knows of the conduct at a time when its consequences can be avoided or mitigated but fails to take reasonable remedial action.

Comment

[1] Lawyers generally employ assistants in their practice, including secretaries, investigators, law student interns, and paraprofessionals. Such assistants, whether employees or independent contractors, act for the lawyer in rendition of the lawyer's professional services. A lawyer must give such assistants appropriate instruction and supervision concerning the ethical aspects of their employment, particularly regarding the obligation not to disclose information relating to representation of the client, and should be responsible for their work product. The measures employed in supervising nonlawyers should take account of the fact that they do not have legal training and are not subject to professional discipline.

[2] Paragraph (a) requires lawyers with managerial authority within a law firm to make reasonable efforts to establish internal policies and procedures designed to provide reasonable assurance that nonlawyers in the firm will act in a way compatible with the Rules of Professional Conduct. See Comment [1] to Rule 5.1. Paragraph (b) applies to lawyers who have supervisory authority over the work of a nonlawyer. Paragraph (c) specifies the circumstances in which a lawyer is responsible for conduct of a nonlawyer that would be a violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct if engaged in by a lawyer.

[Amended effective September 1, 2006.]

Appendix C:

RCW 5.60.060 (2) (a) Privileged Communication

An attorney or counselor shall not, without the consent of his or her client, be examined as to any communication made by the client to him or her, or his or her advice given thereon in the course of professional employment.

Appendix D:

Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics

Approved by the 1996 NASW Delegate Assembly and revised by the 1999 NASW Delegate Assembly

Preamble

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.

Social workers promote social justice and social change with and on behalf of clients. "Clients" is used inclusively to refer to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice. These activities may be in the form of direct practice, community organizing, supervision, consultation, administration, advocacy, social and political action, policy development and implementation, education, and research and evaluation. Social workers seek to enhance the capacity of people to address their own needs. Social workers also seek to promote the responsiveness of organizations, communities, and other social institutions to individuals' needs and social problems.

The mission of the social work profession is rooted in a set of core values. These core values, embraced by social workers throughout the profession's history, are the foundation of social work's unique purpose and perspective:

- service
- social justice
- dignity and worth of the person
- importance of human relationships
- integrity
- competence.

This constellation of core values reflects what is unique to the social work profession. Core values, and the principles that flow from them, must be balanced within the context and complexity of the human experience.

Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics

Professional ethics are at the core of social work. The profession has an obligation to articulate its basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. The *NASW Code of Ethics* sets forth these values, principles, and standards to guide social workers' conduct. The *Code* is relevant to all social workers and social work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve.

The *NASW Code of Ethics* serves six purposes:

1. The *Code* identifies core values on which social work's mission is based.
2. The *Code* summarizes broad ethical principles that reflect the profession's core values and establishes a set of specific ethical standards that should be used to guide social work practice.
3. The *Code* is designed to help social workers identify relevant considerations when professional obligations conflict or ethical uncertainties arise.
4. The *Code* provides ethical standards to which the general public can hold the social work profession accountable.
5. The *Code* socializes practitioners new to the field to social work's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards.
6. The *Code* articulates standards that the social work profession itself can use to assess whether social workers have engaged in unethical conduct. NASW has formal procedures to adjudicate ethics complaints filed against its members.* In subscribing to this *Code*, social workers are required to cooperate in its implementation, participate in NASW adjudication proceedings, and abide by any NASW disciplinary rulings or sanctions based on it.

*For information on NASW adjudication procedures, see *NASW Procedures for the Adjudication of Grievances*.

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 social workers should act in all situations. Specific applications of the *Code* must take into account the context in which it is being considered and the possibility of conflicts among the *Code*'s values, principles, and standards. Ethical responsibilities flow from all human relationships, from the personal and familial to the social and professional.

Further, the *NASW 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 social workers with respect to the ways in which values, ethical principles, and ethical standards should be rank ordered when they conflict. Ethical decision making in a given situation must apply the informed judgment of the individual social worker and should also consider how the issues would be judged in a peer review process where the ethical standards of the profession would be applied.

Ethical decision making is a process. There are many instances in social work where simple answers are not available to resolve complex ethical issues. Social workers 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. Social workers' decisions and actions should be consistent with the spirit as well as the letter of this *Code*.

In addition to this *Code*, there are many other sources of information about ethical thinking that may be useful. Social workers should consider ethical theory and principles generally, social work theory and research, laws, regulations, agency policies, and other relevant codes of ethics, recognizing that among codes of ethics social workers should consider the *NASW Code of Ethics* as their primary source. Social workers also should be aware of the impact on ethical decision making of their clients' and their own personal values and cultural and religious beliefs and practices. They should be aware of any conflicts between personal and professional values and deal with them responsibly. For additional guidance social workers should consult the relevant literature on professional ethics and ethical decision making and seek appropriate consultation when faced with ethical dilemmas. This may involve consultation with an

agency-based or social work organization's ethics committee, a regulatory body, knowledgeable colleagues, supervisors, or legal counsel.

Instances may arise when social workers' ethical obligations conflict with agency policies or relevant laws or regulations. When such conflicts occur, social workers must make a responsible effort to resolve the conflict in a manner that is consistent with the values, principles, and standards expressed in this *Code*. If a reasonable resolution of the conflict does not appear possible, social workers should seek proper consultation before making a decision.

The *NASW Code of Ethics* is to be used by NASW and by individuals, agencies, organizations, and bodies (such as licensing and regulatory boards, professional liability insurance providers, courts of law, agency boards of directors, government agencies, and other professional groups) that choose to adopt it or use it as a frame of reference. Violation of standards in this *Code* does not automatically imply legal liability or violation of the law. Such determination can only be made in the context of legal and judicial proceedings. Alleged violations of the *Code* would be subject to a peer review process. Such processes are generally separate from legal or administrative procedures and insulated from legal review or proceedings to allow the profession to counsel and discipline its own members.

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 professionals aspire and by which their actions can be judged. Social workers' ethical behavior should result from their personal commitment to engage in ethical practice. The *NASW Code of Ethics* reflects the commitment of all social workers to uphold the profession's 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.

Ethical Principles

The following broad ethical principles are based on social work's core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. These principles set forth ideals to which all social workers should aspire.

Value: *Service*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems.*

Social workers elevate service to others above self-interest. Social workers draw on their knowledge, values, and skills to help people in need and to address social problems. Social workers are encouraged to volunteer some portion of their professional skills with no expectation of significant financial return (pro bono service).

Value: *Social Justice*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers challenge social injustice.*

Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers' social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to

promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.

Value: *Dignity and Worth of the Person*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.*

Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers promote clients' socially responsible self-determination. Social workers seek to enhance clients' capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs. Social workers are cognizant of their dual responsibility to clients and to the broader society. They seek to resolve conflicts between clients' interests and the broader society's interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with the values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of the profession.

Value: *Importance of Human Relationships*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.*

Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process. Social workers seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.

Value: *Integrity*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.*

Social workers are continually aware of the profession's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Social workers act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated.

Value: *Competence*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.*

Social workers continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice. Social workers should aspire to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.

Ethical Standards

The following ethical standards are relevant to the professional activities of all social workers. These standards concern (1) social workers' ethical responsibilities to clients, (2) social workers' ethical responsibilities to colleagues, (3) social workers' ethical responsibilities in practice settings, (4) social workers' ethical responsibilities as professionals, (5) social workers' ethical responsibilities to the social work profession, and (6) social workers' ethical responsibilities to the broader society.

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

1. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Clients

1.01 Commitment to Clients

Social workers' primary responsibility is to promote the well-being of clients. In general, clients' interests are primary. However, social workers' responsibility to the larger society or specific legal obligations may on limited occasions supersede the loyalty owed clients, and clients should be so advised. (Examples include when a social worker is required by law to report that a client has abused a child or has threatened to harm self or others.)

1.02 Self-Determination

Social workers respect and promote the right of clients to self-determination and assist clients in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals. Social workers may limit clients' right to self-determination when, in the social workers' professional judgment, clients' actions or potential actions pose a serious, foreseeable, and imminent risk to themselves or others.

1.03 Informed Consent

(a) Social workers should provide services to clients only in the context of a professional relationship based, when appropriate, on valid informed consent. Social workers should use clear and understandable language to inform clients of the purpose of the services, risks related to the services, limits to services because of the requirements of a third-party payer, relevant costs, reasonable alternatives, clients' right to refuse or withdraw consent, and the time frame covered by the consent. Social workers should provide clients with an opportunity to ask questions.

(b) In instances when clients are not literate or have difficulty understanding the primary language used in the practice setting, social workers should take steps to ensure clients' comprehension. This may include providing clients with a detailed verbal explanation or arranging for a qualified interpreter or translator whenever possible.

(c) In instances when clients lack the capacity to provide informed consent, social workers should protect clients' interests by seeking permission from an appropriate third party, informing clients consistent with the clients' level of understanding. In such instances social workers should seek to ensure that the third party acts in a manner consistent with clients' wishes and interests. Social workers should take reasonable steps to enhance such clients' ability to give informed consent.

(d) In instances when clients are receiving services involuntarily, social workers should provide information about the nature and extent of services and about the extent of clients' right to refuse service.

(e) Social workers who provide services via electronic media (such as computer, telephone, radio, and television) should inform recipients of the limitations and risks associated with such services.

(f) Social workers should obtain clients' informed consent before audiotaping or videotaping clients or permitting observation of services to clients by a third party.

1.04 Competence

- (a) Social workers should provide services and represent themselves as competent only within the boundaries of their education, training, license, certification, consultation received, supervised experience, or other relevant professional experience.
- (b) Social workers should provide services in substantive areas or use intervention techniques or approaches that are new to them only after engaging in appropriate study, training, consultation, and supervision from people who are competent in those interventions or techniques.
- (c) When generally recognized standards do not exist with respect to an emerging area of practice, social workers should exercise careful judgment and take responsible steps (including appropriate education, research, training, consultation, and supervision) to ensure the competence of their work and to protect clients from harm.

1.05 Cultural Competence and Social Diversity

- (a) Social workers should understand culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures.
- (b) Social workers should have a knowledge base of their clients' cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients' cultures and to differences among people and cultural groups.
- (c) Social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, and mental or physical disability.

1.06 Conflicts of Interest

- (a) Social workers should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest that interfere with the exercise of professional discretion and impartial judgment. Social workers should inform clients when a real or potential conflict of interest arises and take reasonable steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes the clients' interests primary and protects clients' interests to the greatest extent possible. In some cases, protecting clients' interests may require termination of the professional relationship with proper referral of the client.
- (b) Social workers should not take unfair advantage of any professional relationship or exploit others to further their personal, religious, political, or business interests.
- (c) Social workers should not engage in dual or multiple relationships with clients or former clients in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. In instances when dual or multiple relationships are unavoidable, social workers should take steps to protect clients and are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. (Dual or multiple relationships occur when social workers relate to clients in more than one relationship, whether professional, social, or business. Dual or multiple relationships can occur simultaneously or consecutively.)
- (d) When social workers provide services to two or more people who have a relationship with each other (for example, couples, family members), social workers should clarify with all parties which individuals

will be considered clients and the nature of social workers' professional obligations to the various individuals who are receiving services. Social workers who anticipate a conflict of interest among the individuals receiving services or who anticipate having to perform in potentially conflicting roles (for example, when a social worker is asked to testify in a child custody dispute or divorce proceedings involving clients) should clarify their role with the parties involved and take appropriate action to minimize any conflict of interest.

1.07 Privacy and Confidentiality

(a) Social workers should respect clients' right to privacy. Social workers should not solicit private information from clients unless it is essential to providing services or conducting social work evaluation or research. Once private information is shared, standards of confidentiality apply.

(b) Social workers may disclose confidential information when appropriate with valid consent from a client or a person legally authorized to consent on behalf of a client.

(c) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of professional service, except for compelling professional reasons. The general expectation that social workers will keep information confidential does not apply when disclosure is necessary to prevent serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm to a client or other identifiable person. In all instances, social workers should disclose the least amount of confidential information necessary to achieve the desired purpose; only information that is directly relevant to the purpose for which the disclosure is made should be revealed.

(d) Social workers should inform clients, to the extent possible, about the disclosure of confidential information and the potential consequences, when feasible before the disclosure is made. This applies whether social workers disclose confidential information on the basis of a legal requirement or client consent.

(e) Social workers should discuss with clients and other interested parties the nature of confidentiality and limitations of clients' right to confidentiality. Social workers should review with clients circumstances where confidential information may be requested and where disclosure of confidential information may be legally required. This discussion should occur as soon as possible in the social worker-client relationship and as needed throughout the course of the relationship.

(f) When social workers provide counseling services to families, couples, or groups, social workers should seek agreement among the parties involved concerning each individual's right to confidentiality and obligation to preserve the confidentiality of information shared by others. Social workers should inform participants in family, couples, or group counseling that social workers cannot guarantee that all participants will honor such agreements.

(g) Social workers should inform clients involved in family, couples, marital, or group counseling of the social worker's, employer's, and agency's policy concerning the social worker's disclosure of confidential information among the parties involved in the counseling.

(h) Social workers should not disclose confidential information to third-party payers unless clients have authorized such disclosure.

(i) Social workers should not discuss confidential information in any setting unless privacy can be ensured. Social workers should not discuss confidential information in public or semipublic areas such as hallways, waiting rooms, elevators, and restaurants.

(j) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients during legal proceedings to the extent permitted by law. When a court of law or other legally authorized body orders social workers to disclose confidential or privileged information without a client's consent and such disclosure could cause harm to the client, social workers should request that the court withdraw the order or limit the order as narrowly as possible or maintain the records under seal, unavailable for public inspection.

(k) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients when responding to requests from members of the media.

(l) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients' written and electronic records and other sensitive information. Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that clients' records are stored in a secure location and that clients' records are not available to others who are not authorized to have access.

(m) Social workers should take precautions to ensure and maintain the confidentiality of information transmitted to other parties through the use of computers, electronic mail, facsimile machines, telephones and telephone answering machines, and other electronic or computer technology. Disclosure of identifying information should be avoided whenever possible.

(n) Social workers should transfer or dispose of clients' records in a manner that protects clients' confidentiality and is consistent with state statutes governing records and social work licensure.

(o) Social workers should take reasonable precautions to protect client confidentiality in the event of the social worker's termination of practice, incapacitation, or death.

(p) Social workers should not disclose identifying information when discussing clients for teaching or training purposes unless the client has consented to disclosure of confidential information.

(q) Social workers should not disclose identifying information when discussing clients with consultants unless the client has consented to disclosure of confidential information or there is a compelling need for such disclosure.

(r) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of deceased clients consistent with the preceding standards.

1.08 Access to Records

(a) Social workers should provide clients with reasonable access to records concerning the clients. Social workers who are concerned that clients' access to their records could cause serious misunderstanding or harm to the client should provide assistance in interpreting the records and consultation with the client regarding the records. Social workers should limit clients' access to their records, or portions of their records, only in exceptional circumstances when there is compelling evidence that such access would cause serious harm to the client. Both clients' requests and the rationale for withholding some or all of the record should be documented in clients' files.

(b) When providing clients with access to their records, social workers should take steps to protect the confidentiality of other individuals identified or discussed in such records.

1.09 Sexual Relationships

(a) Social workers should under no circumstances engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with current clients, whether such contact is consensual or forced.

(b) Social workers should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with clients' relatives or other individuals with whom clients maintain a close personal relationship when there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. Sexual activity or sexual contact with clients' relatives or other individuals with whom clients maintain a personal relationship has the potential to be harmful to the client and may make it difficult for the social worker and client to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. Social workers--not their clients, their clients' relatives, or other individuals with whom the client maintains a personal relationship--assume the full burden for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

(c) Social workers should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with former clients because of the potential for harm to the client. If social workers engage in conduct contrary to this prohibition or claim that an exception to this prohibition is warranted because of extraordinary circumstances, it is social workers--not their clients--who assume the full burden of demonstrating that the former client has not been exploited, coerced, or manipulated, intentionally or unintentionally.

(d) Social workers should not provide clinical services to individuals with whom they have had a prior sexual relationship. Providing clinical services to a former sexual partner has the potential to be harmful to the individual and is likely to make it difficult for the social worker and individual to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

1.10 Physical Contact

Social workers should not engage in physical contact with clients when there is a possibility of psychological harm to the client as a result of the contact (such as cradling or caressing clients). Social workers who engage in appropriate physical contact with clients are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries that govern such physical contact.

1.11 Sexual Harassment

Social workers should not sexually harass clients. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, sexual solicitation, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

1.12 Derogatory Language

Social workers should not use derogatory language in their written or verbal communications to or about clients. Social workers should use accurate and respectful language in all communications to and about clients.

1.13 Payment for Services

(a) When setting fees, social workers should ensure that the fees are fair, reasonable, and commensurate with the services performed. Consideration should be given to clients' ability to pay.

(b) Social workers should avoid accepting goods or services from clients as payment for professional services. Bartering arrangements, particularly involving services, create the potential for conflicts of interest, exploitation, and inappropriate boundaries in social workers' relationships with clients. Social workers should explore and may participate in bartering only in very limited circumstances when it can be demonstrated that such arrangements are an accepted practice among professionals in the local community, considered to be essential for the provision of services, negotiated without coercion, and entered into at the client's initiative and with the client's informed consent. Social workers who accept goods or services from clients as payment for professional services assume the full burden of demonstrating that this arrangement will not be detrimental to the client or the professional relationship.

(c) Social workers should not solicit a private fee or other remuneration for providing services to clients who are entitled to such available services through the social workers' employer or agency.

1.14 Clients Who Lack Decision-Making Capacity

When social workers act on behalf of clients who lack the capacity to make informed decisions, social workers should take reasonable steps to safeguard the interests and rights of those clients.

1.15 Interruption of Services

Social workers should make reasonable efforts to ensure continuity of services in the event that services are interrupted by factors such as unavailability, relocation, illness, disability, or death.

1.16 Termination of Services

(a) Social workers should terminate services to clients and professional relationships with them when such services and relationships are no longer required or no longer serve the clients' needs or interests.

(b) Social workers should take reasonable steps to avoid abandoning clients who are still in need of services. Social workers should withdraw services precipitously only under unusual circumstances, giving careful consideration to all factors in the situation and taking care to minimize possible adverse effects. Social workers should assist in making appropriate arrangements for continuation of services when necessary.

(c) Social workers in fee-for-service settings may terminate services to clients who are not paying an overdue balance if the financial contractual arrangements have been made clear to the client, if the client does not pose an imminent danger to self or others, and if the clinical and other consequences of the current nonpayment have been addressed and discussed with the client.

(d) Social workers should not terminate services to pursue a social, financial, or sexual relationship with a client.

(e) Social workers who anticipate the termination or interruption of services to clients should notify clients promptly and seek the transfer, referral, or continuation of services in relation to the clients' needs and preferences.

(f) Social workers who are leaving an employment setting should inform clients of appropriate options for the continuation of services and of the benefits and risks of the options.

2. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues

2.01 Respect

(a) Social workers should treat colleagues with respect and should represent accurately and fairly the qualifications, views, and obligations of colleagues.

(b) Social workers should avoid unwarranted negative criticism of colleagues in communications with clients or with other professionals. Unwarranted negative criticism may include demeaning comments that refer to colleagues' 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.

(c) Social workers should cooperate with social work colleagues and with colleagues of other professions when such cooperation serves the well-being of clients.

2.02 Confidentiality

Social workers should respect confidential information shared by colleagues in the course of their professional relationships and transactions. Social workers should ensure that such colleagues understand social workers' obligation to respect confidentiality and any exceptions related to it.

2.03 Interdisciplinary Collaboration

(a) Social workers who are members of an interdisciplinary team should participate in and contribute to decisions that affect the well-being of clients by drawing on the perspectives, values, and experiences of the social work profession. Professional and ethical obligations of the interdisciplinary team as a whole and of its individual members should be clearly established.

(b) Social workers for whom a team decision raises ethical concerns should attempt to resolve the disagreement through appropriate channels. If the disagreement cannot be resolved, social workers should pursue other avenues to address their concerns consistent with client well-being.

2.04 Disputes Involving Colleagues

(a) Social workers should not take advantage of a dispute between a colleague and an employer to obtain a position or otherwise advance the social workers' own interests.

(b) Social workers should not exploit clients in disputes with colleagues or engage clients in any inappropriate discussion of conflicts between social workers and their colleagues.

2.05 Consultation

- (a) Social workers should seek the advice and counsel of colleagues whenever such consultation is in the best interests of clients.
- (b) Social workers should keep themselves informed about colleagues' areas of expertise and competencies. Social workers should seek consultation only from colleagues who have demonstrated knowledge, expertise, and competence related to the subject of the consultation.
- (c) When consulting with colleagues about clients, social workers should disclose the least amount of information necessary to achieve the purposes of the consultation.

2.06 Referral for Services

- (a) Social workers should refer clients to other professionals when the other professionals' specialized knowledge or expertise is needed to serve clients fully or when social workers believe that they are not being effective or making reasonable progress with clients and that additional service is required.
- (b) Social workers who refer clients to other professionals should take appropriate steps to facilitate an orderly transfer of responsibility. Social workers who refer clients to other professionals should disclose, with clients' consent, all pertinent information to the new service providers.
- (c) Social workers are prohibited from giving or receiving payment for a referral when no professional service is provided by the referring social worker.

2.07 Sexual Relationships

- (a) Social workers who function as supervisors or educators should not engage in sexual activities or contact with supervisees, students, trainees, or other colleagues over whom they exercise professional authority.
- (b) Social workers should avoid engaging in sexual relationships with colleagues when there is potential for a conflict of interest. Social workers who become involved in, or anticipate becoming involved in, a sexual relationship with a colleague have a duty to transfer professional responsibilities, when necessary, to avoid a conflict of interest.

2.08 Sexual Harassment

Social workers should not sexually harass supervisees, students, trainees, or colleagues. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, sexual solicitation, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

2.09 Impairment of Colleagues

- (a) Social workers who have direct knowledge of a social work colleague's impairment that is due to personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties and that interferes with practice effectiveness should consult with that colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action.

(b) Social workers who believe that a social work colleague's impairment interferes with practice effectiveness and that the colleague has not taken adequate steps to address the impairment should take action through appropriate channels established by employers, agencies, NASW, licensing and regulatory bodies, and other professional organizations.

2.10 Incompetence of Colleagues

(a) Social workers who have direct knowledge of a social work colleague's incompetence should consult with that colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action.

(b) Social workers who believe that a social work colleague is incompetent and has not taken adequate steps to address the incompetence should take action through appropriate channels established by employers, agencies, NASW, licensing and regulatory bodies, and other professional organizations.

2.11 Unethical Conduct of Colleagues

(a) Social workers should take adequate measures to discourage, prevent, expose, and correct the unethical conduct of colleagues.

(b) Social workers should be knowledgeable about established policies and procedures for handling concerns about colleagues' unethical behavior. Social workers should be familiar with national, state, and local procedures for handling ethics complaints. These include policies and procedures created by NASW, licensing and regulatory bodies, employers, agencies, and other professional organizations.

(c) Social workers who believe that a colleague has acted unethically should seek resolution by discussing their concerns with the colleague when feasible and when such discussion is likely to be productive.

(d) When necessary, social workers who believe that a colleague has acted unethically should take action through appropriate formal channels (such as contacting a state licensing board or regulatory body, an NASW committee on inquiry, or other professional ethics committees).

(e) Social workers should defend and assist colleagues who are unjustly charged with unethical conduct.

3. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities in Practice Settings

3.01 Supervision and Consultation

(a) Social workers who provide supervision or consultation should have the necessary knowledge and skill to supervise or consult appropriately and should do so only within their areas of knowledge and competence.

(b) Social workers who provide supervision or consultation are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

(c) Social workers should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with supervisees in which there is a risk of exploitation of or potential harm to the supervisee.

(d) Social workers who provide supervision should evaluate supervisees' performance in a manner that is fair and respectful.

3.02 Education and Training

- (a) Social workers who function as educators, field instructors for students, or trainers should provide instruction only within their areas of knowledge and competence and should provide instruction based on the most current information and knowledge available in the profession.
- (b) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should evaluate students' performance in a manner that is fair and respectful.
- (c) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should take reasonable steps to ensure that clients are routinely informed when services are being provided by students.
- (d) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with students in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the student. Social work educators and field instructors are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

3.03 Performance Evaluation

Social workers who have responsibility for evaluating the performance of others should fulfill such responsibility in a fair and considerate manner and on the basis of clearly stated criteria.

3.04 Client Records

- (a) Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that documentation in records is accurate and reflects the services provided.
- (b) Social workers should include sufficient and timely documentation in records to facilitate the delivery of services and to ensure continuity of services provided to clients in the future.
- (c) Social workers' documentation should protect clients' privacy to the extent that is possible and appropriate and should include only information that is directly relevant to the delivery of services.
- (d) Social workers should store records following the termination of services to ensure reasonable future access. Records should be maintained for the number of years required by state statutes or relevant contracts.

3.05 Billing

Social workers should establish and maintain billing practices that accurately reflect the nature and extent of services provided and that identify who provided the service in the practice setting.

3.06 Client Transfer

- (a) When an individual who is receiving services from another agency or colleague contacts a social worker for services, the social worker should carefully consider the client's needs before agreeing to provide services. To minimize possible confusion and conflict, social workers should discuss with potential clients the nature of the clients' current relationship with other service providers and the

implications, including possible benefits or risks, of entering into a relationship with a new service provider.

(b) If a new client has been served by another agency or colleague, social workers should discuss with the client whether consultation with the previous service provider is in the client's best interest.

3.07 Administration

(a) Social work administrators should advocate within and outside their agencies for adequate resources to meet clients' needs.

(b) Social workers should advocate for resource allocation procedures that are open and fair. When not all clients' needs can be met, an allocation procedure should be developed that is nondiscriminatory and based on appropriate and consistently applied principles.

(c) Social workers who are administrators should take reasonable steps to ensure that adequate agency or organizational resources are available to provide appropriate staff supervision.

(d) Social work administrators should take reasonable steps to ensure that the working environment for which they are responsible is consistent with and encourages compliance with the NASW Code of Ethics. Social work administrators should take reasonable steps to eliminate any conditions in their organizations that violate, interfere with, or discourage compliance with the Code.

3.08 Continuing Education and Staff Development

Social work administrators and supervisors should take reasonable steps to provide or arrange for continuing education and staff development for all staff for whom they are responsible. Continuing education and staff development should address current knowledge and emerging developments related to social work practice and ethics.

3.09 Commitments to Employers

(a) Social workers generally should adhere to commitments made to employers and employing organizations.

(b) Social workers should work to improve employing agencies' policies and procedures and the efficiency and effectiveness of their services.

(c) Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that employers are aware of social workers' ethical obligations as set forth in the NASW Code of Ethics and of the implications of those obligations for social work practice.

(d) Social workers should not allow an employing organization's policies, procedures, regulations, or administrative orders to interfere with their ethical practice of social work. Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that their employing organizations' practices are consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics.

(e) Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate discrimination in the employing organization's work assignments and in its employment policies and practices.

(f) Social workers should accept employment or arrange student field placements only in organizations that exercise fair personnel practices.

(g) Social workers should be diligent stewards of the resources of their employing organizations, wisely conserving funds where appropriate and never misappropriating funds or using them for unintended purposes.

3.10 Labor-Management Disputes

(a) Social workers may engage in organized action, including the formation of and participation in labor unions, to improve services to clients and working conditions.

(b) The actions of social workers who are involved in labor-management disputes, job actions, or labor strikes should be guided by the profession's values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. Reasonable differences of opinion exist among social workers concerning their primary obligation as professionals during an actual or threatened labor strike or job action. Social workers should carefully examine relevant issues and their possible impact on clients before deciding on a course of action.

4. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities as Professionals

4.01 Competence

(a) Social workers should accept responsibility or employment only on the basis of existing competence or the intention to acquire the necessary competence.

(b) Social workers should strive to become and remain proficient in professional practice and the performance of professional functions. Social workers should critically examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to social work. Social workers should routinely review the professional literature and participate in continuing education relevant to social work practice and social work ethics.

(c) Social workers should base practice on recognized knowledge, including empirically based knowledge, relevant to social work and social work ethics.

4.02 Discrimination

Social workers 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.

4.03 Private Conduct

Social workers should not permit their private conduct to interfere with their ability to fulfill their professional responsibilities.

4.04 Dishonesty, Fraud, and Deception

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

4.05 Impairment

- (a) Social workers should not allow their own personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties to interfere with their professional judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have a professional responsibility.
- (b) Social workers whose personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties interfere with their professional judgment and performance should immediately seek consultation and take appropriate remedial action by seeking professional help, making adjustments in workload, terminating practice, or taking any other steps necessary to protect clients and others.

4.06 Misrepresentation

- (a) Social workers should make clear distinctions between statements made and actions engaged in as a private individual and as a representative of the social work profession, a professional social work organization, or the social worker's employing agency.
- (b) Social workers who speak on behalf of professional social work organizations should accurately represent the official and authorized positions of the organizations.
- (c) Social workers should ensure that their representations to clients, agencies, and the public of professional qualifications, credentials, education, competence, affiliations, services provided, or results to be achieved are accurate. Social workers should claim only those relevant professional credentials they actually possess and take steps to correct any inaccuracies or misrepresentations of their credentials by others.

4.07 Solicitations

- (a) Social workers should not engage in uninvited solicitation of potential clients who, because of their circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence, manipulation, or coercion.
- (b) Social workers should not engage in solicitation of testimonial endorsements (including solicitation of consent to use a client's prior statement as a testimonial endorsement) from current clients or from other people who, because of their particular circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence.

4.08 Acknowledging Credit

- (a) Social workers should take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work they have actually performed and to which they have contributed.
- (b) Social workers should honestly acknowledge the work of and the contributions made by others.

5. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to the Social Work Profession

5.01 Integrity of the Profession

- (a) Social workers should work toward the maintenance and promotion of high standards of practice.

(b) Social workers should uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge, and mission of the profession. Social workers should protect, enhance, and improve the integrity of the profession through appropriate study and research, active discussion, and responsible criticism of the profession.

(c) Social workers should contribute time and professional expertise to activities that promote respect for the value, integrity, and competence of the social work profession. These activities may include teaching, research, consultation, service, legislative testimony, presentations in the community, and participation in their professional organizations.

(d) Social workers should contribute to the knowledge base of social work and share with colleagues their knowledge related to practice, research, and ethics. Social workers should seek to contribute to the profession's literature and to share their knowledge at professional meetings and conferences.

(e) Social workers should act to prevent the unauthorized and unqualified practice of social work.

5.02 Evaluation and Research

(a) Social workers should monitor and evaluate policies, the implementation of programs, and practice interventions.

(b) Social workers should promote and facilitate evaluation and research to contribute to the development of knowledge.

(c) Social workers should critically examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to social work and fully use evaluation and research evidence in their professional practice.

(d) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should carefully consider possible consequences and should follow guidelines developed for the protection of evaluation and research participants. Appropriate institutional review boards should be consulted.

(e) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should obtain voluntary and written informed consent from participants, when appropriate, without any implied or actual deprivation or penalty for refusal to participate; without undue inducement to participate; and with due regard for participants' well-being, privacy, and dignity. Informed consent should include information about the nature, extent, and duration of the participation requested and disclosure of the risks and benefits of participation in the research.

(f) When evaluation or research participants are incapable of giving informed consent, social workers should provide an appropriate explanation to the participants, obtain the participants' assent to the extent they are able, and obtain written consent from an appropriate proxy.

(g) Social workers should never design or conduct evaluation or research that does not use consent procedures, such as certain forms of naturalistic observation and archival research, unless rigorous and responsible review of the research has found it to be justified because of its prospective scientific, educational, or applied value and unless equally effective alternative procedures that do not involve waiver of consent are not feasible.

(h) Social workers should inform participants of their right to withdraw from evaluation and research at any time without penalty.

(i) Social workers should take appropriate steps to ensure that participants in evaluation and research have access to appropriate supportive services.

(j) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should protect participants from unwarranted physical or mental distress, harm, danger, or deprivation.

(k) Social workers engaged in the evaluation of services should discuss collected information only for professional purposes and only with people professionally concerned with this information.

(l) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should ensure the anonymity or confidentiality of participants and of the data obtained from them. Social workers should inform participants of any limits of confidentiality, the measures that will be taken to ensure confidentiality, and when any records containing research data will be destroyed.

(m) Social workers who report evaluation and research results should protect participants' confidentiality by omitting identifying information unless proper consent has been obtained authorizing disclosure.

(n) Social workers should report evaluation and research findings accurately. They should not fabricate or falsify results and should take steps to correct any errors later found in published data using standard publication methods.

(o) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest and dual relationships with participants, should inform participants when a real or potential conflict of interest arises, and should take steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes participants' interests primary.

(p) Social workers should educate themselves, their students, and their colleagues about responsible research practices.

6. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to the Broader Society

6.01 Social Welfare

Social workers should promote the general welfare of society, from local to global levels, and the development of people, their communities, and their environments. Social workers should advocate for living conditions conducive to the fulfillment of basic human needs and should promote social, economic, political, and cultural values and institutions that are compatible with the realization of social justice.

6.02 Public Participation

Social workers should facilitate informed participation by the public in shaping social policies and institutions.

6.03 Public Emergencies

Social workers should provide appropriate professional services in public emergencies to the greatest extent possible.

6.04 Social and Political Action

- (a) Social workers should engage in social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources, employment, services, and opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully. Social workers should be aware of the impact of the political arena on practice and should advocate for changes in policy and legislation to improve social conditions in order to meet basic human needs and promote social justice.

- (b) Social workers should act to expand choice and opportunity for all people, with special regard for vulnerable, disadvantaged, oppressed, and exploited people and groups.

- (c) Social workers should promote conditions that encourage respect for cultural and social diversity within the United States and globally. Social workers should promote policies and practices that demonstrate respect for difference, support the expansion of cultural knowledge and resources, advocate for programs and institutions that demonstrate cultural competence, and promote policies that safeguard the rights of and confirm equity and social justice for all people.

- (d) Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person, group, or class on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, or mental or physical disability.

Appendix E:

Washington State Office of Public Defense, Parents Representation Program Social Worker Invoice

WASHINGTON STATE OFFICE OF PUBLIC DEFENSE Parents' Representation Program – Social Worker Invoice	
INVOICE MONTH/YEAR: _____	COUNTY: _____
Social Worker or Firm Name: _____ Address: _____ Telephone #: _____ Contract Number: _____	FOR OPD USE ONLY Amount: _____ Coding: _____ Posted: _____
Monthly Invoice Amount: \$ _____ Travel Allowance: \$ _____ TOTAL: \$ _____	
HOURS: Direct Service Hours: _____ Non-Case Assigned Direct Service Hours: _____ Administrative Service Hours: _____ <small>*Detail if more than 15% of contract hours. Attach additional documentation as needed.</small> TOTAL: _____	
The documentation for all current dependency and termination cases outlining the work performed during the invoice period is attached to this invoice.	
I certify (or declare) under penalty of perjury under the laws of the state of Washington that the foregoing is true and correct:	
Date	Signature
	Place of Signing
Please submit to: Accounting, Parents Representation Program Washington State Office of Public Defense P.O. Box 40957 Olympia, WA, 98504-0957	
<small>REVISED 05/09</small>	