

JCEO Confidentiality Policy

The lives of individuals are private matters that are protected from public scrutiny. The following rules and regulations will be followed by all JCEO staff, reviewers, service providers, volunteers and Head Start parents.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Explain confidentiality process; why information is obtained and how it will be used.
2. To protect the sharing of information within the agency for the benefit of clients and employees.
3. To ensure that both public and private organizations providing program services to clients are responsible for maintaining confidentiality as defined by this policy.

PROCEDURE:

1. Information pertaining to employees and clients is compiled through an application process, direct communication and from community agencies.
2. All files containing employee/client information are kept in a locked file cabinet and a secured data base system (CAPTAIN).
3. Confidential employee/client information will only be shared with other employees within JCEO who have a business need to receive such information. Confidential information is used to determine services needed by the client.
4. Confidential information is released only with a signed Authorization for Release of Information form. An employee should never provide a caller/visitor with confidential information regarding employees or clients, including home addresses and personal telephone numbers.
5. Specific to Head Start/ Early Head Start, parents/legal guardians are permitted to view their own child's file upon request. Parents engaged in a custody issue of a Head Start/ Early Head Start child must provide legal documents showing their custody status or guardianship. Head Start/ Early Head Start requires that parents/guardians make an appointment at least one day in advance with a staff member to review their child's file. Any inaccurate information found during viewing of the files will be corrected.
6. Individuals requesting information from DSS or law enforcement agencies need to present proper identification prior to any information shared. If a court orders disclosure of information, information will only be provided upon receipt of a subpoena. All requests for information regarding current and former employees must be referred to the Director of Human Resources.

7. Staff members have the right and obligation to refuse to discuss personal information when the situation is not appropriate or there is no release of information from the client/agency. Staff will conduct themselves in a professional manner, disregarding gossip or hearsay, as it pertains to clients or employees.
8. A “no name policy” will be used whenever practical, and situations will be discussed without mentioning the names of persons involved. Only client initials will be used on any project or report accessible to public viewing
9. Clients, employees and volunteers have the right to submit in writing concerns regarding violation of confidentiality to the appropriate Director.
10. Employees are responsible for knowing about and conducting themselves according to the guidelines established in this policy. Employees will be informed of the confidentiality policy upon employment. In addition, staff members, where appropriate, will review and provide a copy of this policy to clients, volunteers and visitors in a courteous manner.
11. Continued disregard by staff for this policy constitutes grounds for disciplinary action including dismissal.
12. The obligation to maintain confidential agency information remains in effect after an employee separates from employment with JCEO.

Revised: May 2021