



POLICY# 02-25

Policy: Whistleblower	Page 1 of 1
Program: Wagner Peyser (WP), Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Welfare Transition (WT), Special Grants, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	
Section: Operations	
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Background

Individuals who blow the whistle on fraud and abuse within state government are protected by law. Sections 112.3187-- 112.31895 of the Florida Statutes (F.S.) constitute the law known as the "Whistleblower's Act." The legislative intent of the Whistle-blower's Act is to prevent agencies or independent contractors from taking retaliatory action against an employee who reports agency violations of law that create a substantial and specific danger to the public's health, safety, or welfare. It is also the intent of the legislature to prevent agencies or independent contractors from taking retaliatory action against an employee who discloses information alleging improper use of government office, gross waste of funds, or any other abuse or gross neglect of duty on the part of an agency, public officer, or employee.

Purpose

CareerSource Suncoast (CSS) requires CSS staff, board members, contractors, and volunteers to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. As staff and representatives of the CSS, we must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling our responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations. The purpose of this policy is to set forth guidance regarding Whistleblower procedures and processes in the workplace. This policy is intended to encourage staff (paid and volunteer), board members, partners, service providers, contractors, customers, and others to report suspected or actual occurrence(s) of illegal, unethical, or inappropriate events (behaviors or practices) without retribution.

This policy does not preclude or circumvent Workforce Programs' Grievance/Complaint and Hearing/Appeal Policy and Procedures and adherence to the Code of Conduct and Ethics.

Policy

CUSTOMERS:

It is the intent of CareerSource Suncoast (CSS) to adhere to all laws and regulations that apply to the organization, and the underlying purpose of this Policy is to support the organization's goal of legal compliance. The support of all customers is necessary to achieve compliance with various laws and regulations.

If any customer reasonably believes that some policy, practice, or activity of CSS is in violation of law, unethical or inappropriate, a complaint may be filed by that customer with the organization. Any such concern should be directed to the **Integrity Hotline at 941-479-6321** to leave a confidential voicemail message for the Board Chair.

All customers are protected from retaliation only if the customer brings the alleged unlawful activity, policy, or practice to the attention of the Board Chair and provides a reasonable opportunity to investigate and correct the alleged unlawful activity. The protection described below is only available to customers that comply with this requirement.

CareerSource Suncoast (CSS) will not retaliate against a customer:

- Who, in good faith, has made a protest or raised a complaint against some practice of CSS, or of another individual or entity with whom CSS has a business relationship, on the basis of a reasonable belief that the practice is in violation of law or a clear mandate of public policy.
- Who discloses or threatens to disclose to a supervisor or a public body any activity, policy, or practice of CSS that the customer reasonably believes is in violation of a law, or a rule, or regulation mandated pursuant to law or is in violation of a clear mandate or public policy concerning health, safety, welfare, or protection of the environment.

STAFF and NON-CUSTOMERS:

CSS staff, board members, partners, contractors, and volunteers are encouraged to report suspected fraudulent or dishonest conduct pursuant to the procedures set forth below:

Reporting:

CSS staff and volunteer complaints about possible fraudulent or dishonest use or misuse of resources or property can also be reported to his or her supervisor or, if suspected by a volunteer, to the staff member supporting the volunteer's work. If for any reason a person finds it difficult to report his or her concerns to a supervisor or staff member supporting the volunteer's work, the person may report the concern directly any CSS Chief Executive Officer. Alternately, to facilitate reporting of suspected violations where the reporter wishes to remain anonymous, a written statement may be submitted to one of the individuals by mailing to:

**CareerSource Suncoast
3660 N. Washington Blvd.
Sarasota, FL 34234**

CSS staff in addition to the board members and contractors can contact the Board Chair to leave a confidential voicemail message regarding the concern on the **Integrity Hotline at 941-479-6321**.

CSS and its contractors shall not discharge, demote or otherwise discriminate against CSS staff as a reprisal for disclosures by the CSS staff of information that the CSS staff reasonably believes is evidence of: (a) gross mismanagement of a contract or grant relating to funds; (b) a gross waste of funds; (c) a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety related to the implementation or use of funds; (d) an abuse of authority related to implementation or use of funds; (e) a violation of law, rule, or regulation related to a contract, including the competition for or negotiation of a contract or grant, awarded or issued relating to funds; or (f) unethical or inappropriate events (behaviors or practices).

Whistleblower Protection:

Whistleblower definition: CSS staff, board members, contractors, partners, customers or volunteers who informs any CSS supervisor, director, Chief Executive Officers, or Board of Directors Chair about an activity relating to CSS which that person believes to be fraudulent or dishonest.

Reference: Sections 112.3187 – 112.31895, Florida Statutes (F.S.), the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002.

CSS will protect whistleblowers as defined below:

- CSS will use its best efforts to protect whistleblowers against retaliation. Whistle-blowing complaints will be handled with sensitivity, discretion, and confidentiality to the extent allowed by the circumstances and the law. Generally, this means that whistleblower complaints will only be shared with those who have a need to know so that CSS can conduct an effective investigation, and in appropriate cases, with law enforcement personnel. Should disciplinary or legal action be taken against a person or persons as a result of a whistleblower complaint, such persons may also have right to know the identity of the whistleblower.
- Staff, contractors, and volunteers of CSS may not retaliate against a whistle-blower for informing management about an activity which that person believes to be fraudulent or dishonest with the intent or effect of adversely affecting the terms or conditions of the whistleblower's employment, including but not limited to, threats of physical harm, loss of job, punitive work assignments, or impact on salary or fees. Whistleblowers who believe that they have been retaliated against may file a written complaint any CSS Chief Executive Officer, or the Board Chair. Any complaint of retaliation will be promptly investigated and appropriate corrective measures taken if allegations of retaliation are substantiated. This protection from retaliation is not intended to prohibit supervisors from taking action, including disciplinary action, in the usual scope of their duties and based on valid performance-related factors.
- Whistleblowers must be cautious to avoid baseless allegations as described in the definitions section of this policy.

Attachments:

- None

Authority

- [Florida Statute 112.3187 Adverse action against and employee](#)
- [WIOA Public Law](#)

Supersession:

Supersedes and replaces Whistleblower Policy #13-01 R3 dated 10/2/2018.

Inquiries:

Any questions about this policy should be directed to CSS Chief Executive Officers and/or their designee.