

DRCA Best Practices Guidelines

Standards of Excellence

Disaster Recovery Coalition of America (DRCA) is not required by law (or an accrediting body) to adopt standards of conduct or best practices. DRCA does, however, aspire to practices that will help our nonprofit operate transparently, prudently, and ethically (as well as in accordance with applicable laws). At some point, DRCA may seek voluntary accreditation from various purchasing and procurement government officials or best practices organization as a way of demonstrating our commitment to excellence. Perhaps there will be those no interested in a "seal of approval" but find most will find it helpful to know that trusted experts have identified benchmarks to guide our nonprofit practices. Government officials and the public may also look to accountability practices as guideposts for identifying well-run and effective disaster recovery businesses. Some state officials may have an expectation is that those with whom they meet and are private sector partners know how to act appropriately - and legally. That means DRCA members should adhere to standards often referred to as guiding principles, principles and practices, and/or standards for excellence. These standards are a compilation of ethical and accountable practices that nonprofits can use for its memberships growth and sustainability. National associations such as DRCA are a recognized source for educational and awareness programs, and in some states for FEMA certification programs about "best practices."

DRCA encourages our members to aspire to practices reflecting accountability and transparency, prudent fiduciary oversight, legal, ethical, and responsible business transactions, and effective governance and operations which is reinforced through sound practices at level. Voluntary adoption of such practices is a demonstration that our members deserve the public's trust, is serious about advancing our mission, and is striving towards excellence. Excellence is a journey; being aware of the expectations for excellence is the first step.

DRCA suggests several standards that each member should consider as they represent and are a part of DRCA activities, meetings with federal, state and local representatives and the public in general. The below is a brief outline of some of the standards we encourage DRCA members to consider:

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Corporate governance includes fiduciary responsibilities with leaders who are personally committed to the mission of their organizations and understand their roles as a fiduciary in performing effective governance and management practices. Chief executives have a duty to be "ambassadors" of their organizations supporting the functions and tactics needed to deploy the mission. "Tone at the top" is an important ingredient for an ethical culture within organizations and reputational harm to a corporation and DRCA can be substantial when an instance of senior executive governance misconduct occurs.

ETHICS

- 1) Organizations should ensure that they have an explicit and clear set of ethical principles and, as appropriate, operational or program standards that have been discussed by their board and staff and that are transparently clear to all stakeholders.
- (2) In rendering its programs or services, organizations should act with the utmost professionalism and treat persons served with respect.
- (3) There should be an effective procedure for problem solving or reporting grievances, including but not limited to, legal or ethical misconduct by the organization's employees. The procedure should include actions for addressing and resolving complaints effectively.
- (4) There should be policies in place that protect the confidentiality and privacy of personal information.

In some instances, organizations may have a position that is responsible and empowered to be a chief ethics and compliance officer (CECO), who has day-to-day authority for directing the compliance and ethical conduct of the organization. Ethical gaps can sometimes be caused between what top executives say is important and what they actually model through their behavior; between "tone at the top" as a vague expression of values and the embodiment of those values through an effective, management-driven compliance and ethics programs; and between a legalistic,

check-the-box approach to compliance in the C-suite and a deeper commitment to ethical culture as a basic element embedded in the operating fabric of the corporation.

DRCA members must have a “no excuses” ethical standard and zero tolerance for ethical breaches.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

DRCA members should periodically conduct an internal review of their organization’s compliance with known existing legal, regulatory, and financial reporting requirements, and should stay current on changes in the government landscape as a private sector partner to many government agencies. There should be at least one designated person who is responsible for ensuring that the organization is complying with both the letter and the spirit of federal and state laws that require disclosure of information to the public. Organizations must provide employees, board members, and others a confidential means to report suspected impropriety or misuse of resources. Organizations should have in place a policy prohibiting retaliation against persons reporting improprieties.

A conflict of interest policy should identify the types of conduct or transactions that raise conflict of interest concerns, should set forth procedures for disclosure of actual or potential conflicts, and should provide for review of individual transactions by the uninvolved persons. A conflict of interest statement should provide the person lodging the conflict of interest allegation a method to disclose any known interests that the individual, or a member of the individual’s immediate family, or any related business or other entity that has transactions with the organization.

MANAGEMENT

Organizations should have written personnel policies and procedures that govern the work, actions, and safety of all employees. The policies should cover the basic elements of the employee-employer relationship (e.g., working conditions, telecommuting, disaster response, handling the press, etc). These personnel and administrative policies should be periodically reviewed and at a minimum, these policies should address issues such as information technology, crisis and disaster planning, communications, and social media.

PUBLIC AWARENESS, ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY

Organizations should represent the interests of the people and the industry they serve through public education and public policy advocacy, as well as by encouraging team members and stakeholders to participate in the public affairs of communities. When appropriate to advance the organization’s mission, it is important to engage in promoting public participation in community affairs and elections. Any educational or advocacy information provided to the media and policy-makers, or distributed broadly, must be factually accurate and provide sufficient contextual information to be understood.

Organizations must communicate in an effective manner to educate, inform, and engage the public as representatives of DRCA and the disaster recovery industry. A member’s mission, program activities, and other non-trade secret information should be easily accessible, accurate, and timely updated on websites and other social media. There should be meaningful opportunity for the public to communicate with a representative of a DRCA member.