TREE OF LIFE INCORPORATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES 2025

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SECTION 1

ASPIRE TO EXCELLENCE

Assessing the Environment

To be relevant and responsive in rapidly changing environments, we realize that we must be vigilant of the context in which we conduct our business affairs. To this end, organizational leadership conducts ongoing environmental assessments to obtain information to establish a foundation for development and implementation of organizational strategies.

Assessments are conducted within the context of our organization's purposes, locations, and spheres of influence, and relate to our mission and how to fit it into the social, economic, competitive, legal, and regulatory environments in which we operate. The collection and analysis of information regarding these factors provides the basis for the creative thought ("visionary thinking") necessary to guide organizational planning and action toward a future of service and business excellence!

A. Leadership

Tree of Life Incorporated has recruited a small leadership team (the Board of Directors) that embraces the values of accountability and responsibility to our organization's mission and is accessible to persons served and personnel. Our organizational chart clearly identifies our leadership structure by identifying who reports to whom.
We are a small agency established in 2014 with a board of directors that clearly identifies the relationship and documented responsibilities to carry out the mission. Clarity is provided regarding functions and roles performed by each position through the position descriptions(agreements) and bylaws. Each position held are demonstrated by knowledge and experience of these identified relationships while conducting the affairs and day-to-day business of our organization.

Tree of Life's leadership team (the Board) consists of a Chief Executive Officer, Financial Chief Officer, and Executive Secretary. Our CEO is responsible for the services recertification of CARF accreditation. In the development and provision of high-quality programs and services, our leadership team has working knowledge of, and participates in the implementation of all applicable standards for service delivery.

We believe that a clearly identified leadership structure and well-defined roles are essential to the success of service delivery. The following are examples:
• Board Member Orientation
• Board Meeting/Training Minutes
• Organizational Chart
• Position Descriptions Agreements
• Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation

(1.A.2.a.1) Person-Centered Philosophy promotes self-sufficiency in the delivery of service strategies implemented by Tree of Life by empowering individuals served to secure, obtain, and maintain employment.
By completing an individual service plan for each person served, barriers are identified, along with the right community resources to overcome those barriers. With this person-

centered philosophy, client needs are meet and goals are achieved. Persons served do not receive services as determined by traditional models. Clients work alongside the job coach to determine what ways the services should be provided to best meet their needs.

(1.A.2.a.2) Tree of Life has a Managing Director that meets with the employment specialists when referrals are received. The ES then meets with the clients and the Community Employer Partner for that "person centered" individual. During this meeting, decisions are discussed and implemented by putting together an employment plan for the following:
• What type of services she or he requires, and who will provide them.
• Determining the job tasks modifications, work hours, and natural supports.
• Each person-centered individual works alongside the job coach to help achieve employment goals.

(1.A.2.b.) The Managing Director guides the service delivery by acting as the direct contact for the Funding Source, Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, provided by Tree of Life. There are three employment specialists who works hands on with the person served and the MG. This is identified in the organizational chart.
Our organization believes in self-sufficiency by supporting the following:
• The ability to connect the persons served (with an E.S.) to develop their desired career path and strategies to achieve desired outcomes.
• The arranging of resources and personnel (both formal and informal) that will assist the individual in securing optimal employment and a life rich in community affiliations.
• The acceptance of a valued role in a person's community through employment, organizational affiliations, spiritual development, and general caring of others in the community, as well as the accountability for spending public dollars in ways that are life-enhancing for the person served.

(1.A.2.c.) Tree of Life focuses on a person-centered philosophy that promotes values in how services are communicated to the main contract partner Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency by following the guidelines and regulations set forth by the State of Georgia. These guidelines are communicated during person served orientation, services delivered, initial service plans, monthly reports, case notes, pre/post surveys, and social media. Tree of Life also has a website that communicates the partnership of GVRA and the person-centered services offered.

(1.A.3. a-o.)
Tree of Life identifies the leadership team and they provides guidance in establishing the Mission: "To connect individuals with disabilities to vocational services; and to help economically disadvantaged individuals by connecting them to the proper tools and resources."

A primary role of Tree of Life leadership Team is to be responsive to the environment in which our organization functions and to identify the responsibility to conduct planning activities that ensure our organization positions itself strategically to respond to future opportunities, as well as challenges.
In fulfilling these purposes, it is the responsibility of the board of directors to annually:
• Communicate organization's person-centered philosophy to stakeholders in an understandable manner

- Complete and review the performance analysis report
- Conduct strategic planning for balancing expectations of the persons served and main stakeholder GVRA.
- Approve an annual operating budget prior to the start of the fiscal/calendar year
- Review and update risk management assessment and ongoing performance improvement.
- Review person served surveys and performance analysis report.
- Complete and post CARF responsibilities and reports on agency website to develop and implement corporate responsibilities.
- With being a state vendor, Tree of Life review the annual renewal contract and stay compliant by updating requirements set forth in the contract. Also, by Ensuring that insurance coverage is in place to adequately protect the needs, risks, and assets of Tree of Life.
- Review and update the organization's policies as needed.
- Review Corporate responsibilities.
- Completing health and safety assessments as needed.
- Discuss succession planning
- Review strategic plan.
- Review technology plan to assess the management and operation of our organization to support information management and performance improvement

(1.A.4.a-c.)
Tree of Life Identifies how leadership is accessible to persons served, personnel, and GVRA (the main stakeholder) in the development services.
Through performance of these requisite duties our leadership demonstrates their commitment to:
- Regularly reviewing the mission
- Promoting valuable programs and services
- Meeting stakeholder expectations
- Financial solvency
- Compliance with insurance and risk management requirements
- Continuous performance improvement
- Compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements

(1.A.5.) Cultural Competency and Diversity
Tree of Life has created and implemented a cultural competency and diversity plan that addresses individuals served, staff and other stakeholders which is reviewed annually for relevance; and updated as needed. The developing of this plan helps to create understanding of the major values and beliefs of the people served. This plan also helps to establish a foundation of providing respectful and individualized quality services to the persons served.

Education and training are provided to all staff and board members to assist in developing awareness and sensitivity specific to the diversity of our service delivery areas. Diversity in terms of culture, age, gender, sexual orientation, spiritual beliefs, socioeconomic status, language, and others factors are addressed. Training focuses on the cultural and diversity especially their views of disabilities and its causes, and the influence of culture on the choice of service outcomes and methods. Attendance at cultural diversity training is documented and included in personnel files and/or training records.

(1.A.6.) Corporate Responsibility
Tree of Life has developed written codes of ethical conduct that identify and document the required ethical practices and values of our organization in the following areas: business, marketing, contractual relationships, conflicts of interest, use of social media, service delivery, personal fundraising, personal property, setting boundaries, witnessing of legal documents, professional responsibility, human resources, organizational fundraising, and prohibition. Also developed are written procedures that identify and document violations of ethical code of ethics, education of code of ethics, advocacy of code of ethics, and corporate citizenship.

(1.A.7) Tree of Life does not receive federal funding, standard 1A7 does not apply.

(1.A.8) Tree of Life provides resources and education for staff to stay current in the field of individual job placement by connecting to online learning materials and opportunities through GVRA and other collaborative community online resources. Staff also attend annual conferences through GVRA to demonstrate program strategies and interventions.

(1.A.9) Tree of Life does not engage in fundraising. This standard does not apply.

SECTION B

Tree of Life opt out of Governance.

SECTION C

STRATEGIC PLANNING with Tree of Life focuses on taking advantage of strengths and opportunities and addressing weaknesses and threats. This plan will also identify the strategies and measures to achieve success.

1.C.1 Tree of Life ongoing strategic planning process has established a foundation for success by taking advantages of identified strengths and opportunities and proactively addressing weaknesses and threats. The following are taken into consideration when setting our organizational strategy:

a. The expectations of individuals with disabilities by helping to develop their employability skills; connect them with on the job training by placing them at worksites throughout the community; and to give them the knowledge that is important to maintain successful employment.
b. The expectations of Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency and the many community employers by practicing effective standards and policies to help meet their employment goals and to achieve successful job outcomes for their clients.
c. The competitive environment by developing strong and lasting partnerships with employers in the community. Our partnerships are vital to sustainability and keeping ahead of the competitors. We provide person centered services for the clients we serve.
d. The financial opportunities that comes into alignment with our mission (serving individuals with disabilities).
e. The financial threats by following code of ethics policy and implementing annual trainings for all staff.
f. The organizations' capabilities by preparing to recruit and interview qualified employment specialists to assist with the increase in client loads.
g. Social determinants relates to the change in the job market due to economics. Labor market is more competitive. Increase community partnerships.
h. Demographics of the service area are as follow: Total Population 76,967; Male Population 48.04% ; Female Population 51.96%; Median age 38; Private Companies 31.8%; Government workers 5.33%; Not for Profits Companies 2.53%. Tree of Life Incorporated plans to research and recruit more private companies to build partnerships and worksites for participants.
i. The importance of having a relationship with Georgia Vocational rehabilitation Agency. Contract services have been established since 2015. Moving forward, CARF Accreditation will assist the building AND strengthening of this partnership.
j. Regulatory environment and the way the worldwide 2020 pandemic have shifted Tree of Life and other Stakeholders operations, function, and existence. Tree of Life is continually staying up to date with the changes and precautions through the guidelines of the Center for Disease and Control Prevention (CDC).
k. Legislative Environment by keeping up to date with changes in rules, laws, and regulations under the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Contract.
l.   The use of technology to support:
1.   Efficient operations identify using secure measures to support technology.
2.   Effective service delivery identifies Docusign, Microsoft OneDrive and Zoom web video and conferences as the two platforms utilized by Tree of Life Incorporated to support technology.
3. Performance improvement identifies more trainings and education on technology usage in the workplace.
m. Tree of Life Incorporated will stay up to date with Docusign, Microsoft OneDrive and Zoom technology.

Tree of Life, Inc. Strategic Plan (2023–2026)

INTRODUCTION

This Strategic Plan represents the formalized roadmap for Tree of Life, Inc., developed in October 2023. The initiative to create this plan stemmed from ongoing changes in the vocational rehabilitation landscape, necessitating a proactive and structured approach. Collaborations with community stakeholders were essential in identifying areas for growth and recognizing external threats that could impact service delivery.

This plan is guided by our commitment to providing effective and efficient services to individuals with disabilities and those facing economic disadvantages. It is a living document that will evolve as we track our progress, adapt to changing needs, and align with industry best practices.

MISSION AND STRATEGIC GOALS

Mission Statement

To connect individuals with disabilities to vocational services and empower economically disadvantaged individuals by linking them with essential tools and resources.

Strategic Goals (2023–2026)

1. **Maintain CARF Accreditation** to ensure continuous quality improvement in service delivery.
2. **Expand Geographic Reach** by serving additional districts and school systems.
3. **Increase Client Engagement and Caseload Capacity** through targeted outreach and improved efficiency.
4. **Enhance Employer and Community Partnerships** to create more vocational opportunities.
5. **Implement Data-Driven Decision Making** with timely and accurate reporting.
6. **Invest in Staff Development and Infrastructure** to support organizational growth.

GOAL 1: MAINTAIN CARF ACCREDITATION

Tree of Life, Inc. is committed to maintaining accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). This ensures our programs meet rigorous quality standards and promotes a culture of continuous improvement.

Objectives:

- Align organizational practices with CARF standards.
- Conduct internal audits to identify areas for improvement.
- Provide ongoing staff training based on audit outcomes and industry trends.

Key Strategies:

- Monitor case outcomes and service delivery effectiveness through monthly reporting.
- Use application processes to assess leadership readiness and identify training needs.
- Improve data systems to enhance case management and reporting accuracy.

Performance Indicators:

- Annual internal compliance audits completed.
- 100% CARF compliance in all review areas.
- Staff training hours tracked and evaluated quarterly.

PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW & ACHIEVEMENTS

Work Ready Success Rates

- **Calendar Year 2023:** 100%
- **Calendar Year 2024 (YTD):** 100%

GVRA FY2023 Annual Audit Review

1. **Client Records:** All reviewed files were complete, individualized, and compliant.
2. **Staff Qualifications:** All personnel met education and background check requirements.
3. **Facilities:** Site visits confirmed compliance with GVRA standards.
4. **Financial Reporting:** 501(c)(3) status verified; tax and funding documentation in order.
5. **Counselor Interviews:** High satisfaction levels; timely reporting; quality rated as "Good."

Overall Finding: No deficiencies or recommendations for FY2023.

SERVICE METRICS BY FISCAL YEAR

FY2023 Highlights

- 55 individuals with disabilities enrolled.
- 55 received case management services.
- 8 received Individual Job Placement Training.
- 2 participated in Work Evaluation Training.
- 12 participated in Traditional Supported Employment.
- 3 received Customized Supported Employment.
- 28 students attended the Summer G.R.O.W. Program.

- Expanded Individual Job Placement services.
- Increased participation in supported employment and Pre-ETS Summer Camps.

FY2024 Developments (YTD)

- Added Pre-Employment Services in Districts 2, 3, and 10.
- Decline noted in supported employment; counterbalanced by:
    - Increase in Job Placement Services.
    - Increase in Student Pre-Employment Services.
- Expanded service reach:
    - **District 10 (Clayton County):** 4 high schools
    - **District 2 (South Fulton):** 3 high schools
    - **District 5 (Troup County):** 4 schools
- 199 students enrolled in Pre-Employment Services.
- 29 individuals enrolled in Individual Job Placement.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS & CONCLUSION

The initiatives outlined in this Strategic Plan depend on sufficient staffing, sustainable funding, and continued community collaboration. The increased demand for services is driven by a variety of social and economic factors that must be addressed with foresight and resourcefulness.

Tree of Life, Inc. is committed to:

- Strengthening partnerships with local employers and agencies.
- Scaling up successful programs based on data and feedback.
- Adapting services to meet emerging community needs.

Next Steps:

- Conduct annual strategy reviews.
- Track key performance indicators aligned with CARF and GVRA standards.
- Invest in staff development and infrastructure improvements.

With community support and adequate resources, Tree of Life, Inc. is well-positioned to expand its impact, enhance vocational opportunities, and improve quality of life for underserved individuals in our region

By October 2025, goal is for services to shift.

1.C.2

Tree of Life utilizes a strategic planning process to produce effective and efficient manner for continuous organizational improvement. The information that is obtained from persons served, personnel, and our stakeholders are assessed and used as a foundation to reflect organizational outcomes. The organizational outcomes are projected points and timeframe, with respect to allocating resources necessary to support accomplishment the plan of the Work Ready Program. The outlined goals and priorities are identified and reviewed annually and updated as needed.

Tree of Life uses the information gained during the strategic planning to accomplish the following:
☐ Develop and push the mission purpose
☐ Conduct financial management and budget planning
☐ Enhance our communication with stakeholders and enhance our understanding of their needs
☐ Use information for continuous organizational improvement
☐ Develop our staffing patterns and employee resources
☐ Improve our marketing strategies and job development services
☐ Develop employee performance appraisal systems that are clearly linked to organizational outcomes
☐ Utilize information for employee recognition
☐ Information regarding outcomes achieved is used to assist in securing new funding
☐ Conduct organizational planning for both long range and short term
☐ Develop a broader understanding of consumer outcomes
☐ Develop a plan for service expansion and new service needs based on consumer characteristics, trends, local gaps in services and input from stakeholders

1.C.3
Tree of Life strategic plan is shared, as relevant to the needs of the specific group with persons served, staff, and other stakeholders through meetings and website postings.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OVERVIEW

Mission Alignment

Mission:
To connect individuals with disabilities to vocational services and empower economically disadvantaged individuals by linking them with essential tools and resources.

Key Stakeholders & Expectations

Stakeholder	Expectations
Clients (individuals with disabilities and low-income individuals)	Accessible, high-quality vocational support and advocacy
Employers/Partners	Skilled candidates, collaboration, and training support
Funders/Accrediting Bodies (e.g., CARF)	Transparency, outcomes, compliance, and quality improvement

Stakeholder	Expectations
Staff	Professional development, tools, and manageable caseloads
Community/Educators	Career readiness for participants, equitable access, engagement

SWOT Analysis

Internal Strengths

- CARF Accreditation demonstrating commitment to quality
- Mission-driven, experienced staff
- Existing partnerships with employers and schools
- Strong community reputation and impact
- Robust client-service model tailored for marginalized populations

Internal Weaknesses

- Limited geographic coverage
- Staff burnout or high caseload pressure
- Inconsistent use of data systems for decision-making
- Infrastructure constraints (e.g., technology, space)
- Limited brand awareness in new areas

External Opportunities

- Increased federal/state funding for workforce development
- Rising awareness of disability inclusion and DEI initiatives
- Opportunities to expand into underserved regions
- Technological tools for case management and remote service delivery
- School systems seeking partners for student transition services

External Threats

- Competition from other service providers
- Economic downturns reducing employer job openings
- Changes in U.S. Administration policy affecting eligibility or programs
- Transportation or accessibility barriers for clients
- Shifting priorities in school and workforce systems

Strategic Action Plan (2023–2026)

Strategic Goal 1: Maintain CARF Accreditation

Actions:

- Conduct annual internal audits and quality assurance reviews
- Implement continuous training on CARF standards
- Track and respond to client feedback systematically

Strengths Used: Accreditation foundation, quality service delivery
Weaknesses Addressed: Staff workload, process consistency

Strategic Goal 2: Expand Geographic Reach

Actions:

- Identify underserved districts through demographic and needs assessment
- Launch outreach campaigns tailored to new regions
- Build satellite locations or mobile units for remote support

Opportunities Capitalized: Underserved communities, school demand
Threats Mitigated: Competition, limited visibility

Strategic Goal 3: Increase Client Engagement and Caseload Capacity

Actions:

- Streamline intake and referral processes with technology
- Leverage peer navigators or community ambassadors
- Introduce group services where applicable to manage caseload volume

Strengths Used: Established client-centered model
Weaknesses Addressed: Capacity, outreach limitations

Strategic Goal 4: Enhance Employer and Community Partnerships

Actions:

- Launch a formal employer partnership program with clear benefits
- Host quarterly roundtables with community and business leaders
- Highlight successful placements and testimonials in outreach

Opportunities Capitalized: DEI trends, employer needs
Threats Mitigated: Job scarcity, economic volatility

Strategic Goal 5: Implement Data-Driven Decision Making

Actions:

- Invest in or optimize a case management/data system
- Train staff in data literacy and reporting
- Create dashboards for real-time program performance tracking

Strengths Used: Commitment to improvement
Weaknesses Addressed: Inconsistent data usage, decision lags

Strategic Goal 6: Invest in Staff Development and Infrastructure

Actions:

- Launch staff training pathways and professional development plans
- Introduce staff recognition and wellness programs
- Upgrade technology and workspace as budget allows

Strengths Used: Mission-aligned staff, leadership vision
Weaknesses Addressed: Burnout, infrastructure gaps
Threats Mitigated: Turnover, morale issues

Implementation & Monitoring

Timeframe	Key Milestones	Metrics to Track
Year 1 (2023-2024)	Expand new districts, launch data system pilot	Client growth %, region coverage, staff feedback
Year 2 (2024–2025)	Strengthen employer network, reduce average caseload	Employer participation, client job placements
Year 3 (2025–2026)	CARF reaccreditation, system-wide quality reviews	KPI scorecards, service impact outcomes

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Summary

This plan aligns your mission and strategic goals with a clear understanding of internal capabilities and external realities. The focus on quality, expansion, efficiency, partnerships, data, and people positions your organization for sustainable impact through 2026 and beyond.

SECTION D

INPUT FROM PERSONS SERVED AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS-Obtain Input
Recognizing that Tree of Life is dedicated to the people we serve. Our organization maintains a continual focus on the expectations of persons served and other stakeholders. Policies and procedures direct our focus to soliciting, collecting, analyzing, and utilizing input from all stakeholders to create programs and services that meet or exceed the expectations of the persons served, the community and other stakeholders. The input of stakeholders is essential in moving forward in success.

1.D.1.a. and b.1
Gathering information is key to is to identification to help better understand how the organization is performing from the perspective of all stakeholders. Tree of Life maintains a central focus on individuals served. The following methods are used on an ongoing basis to collect data: persons served input is collected from direct observation of staff by the collecting of information using your senses by observing clients activities, behaviors, and other key aspects that relates to the participants progress and individual employment goals. These are recorded in ongoing case notes and monthly progress reports. Personal Interviews is the face to face collection of information using questions from employers to gather information about the worksite as well as the participant. These are recorded using ongoing case notes and monthly progress reports as well. Surveys are completed at the beginning and end of the service performed by the person served. These are recorded with entrance and exit survey questions.

1.D.1.b.2
Tree of Life also understands other groups are beneficial for data collection. Personnel is also essential to a solid foundation for building success. Tree of Life completes staff evaluations to monitor, track, and record performance of all staff of their effectiveness in implementing and carrying out organization's goals and objective for the program. Staff are also asked to give feedback at the end of the performance evaluation. This data collected also assists the organization in strategic planning.

1.D.1.b.3
Concerted effort is directed to gathering input from families, Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA), accreditation authorities (CARF), and community employers. Input obtained from these stakeholders are used to help determine stakeholder expectations and preferences, and to help the governance better understand how the organization is functioning from the perspective of its stakeholders.

1.D.1.c.
Mechanisms utilize to solicit and collect information range from the formal to informal. Tree of Life utilizes a variety of mechanisms and venues to solicit and collect information from stakeholders. These mechanisms are as follows: program/service development, formal and informal communication via telephone, e-mail, and in person, GVRA networks, GVRA performance Improvement Activities.
Other methods include: follow up calls to collect data from current and past clients as well as community employers. Callback forms are completed to record and collect data to measure progress of the persons served, services offered are relevant and to identify

strengths and challenges of the Work Ready Program. Calls are completed semi-annually.

1.D. 2.

a. The Managing Director continually analyze input and the resultant information is integrated into the business practices of our organization to help determine if Tree of Life is: Meeting the current needs of all stakeholders, offering relevant services/programs, and Identifying potential new opportunities for growth and development. Methods used to analyze input obtained is to complete the process of tracking outcome data from the following: person served connected to employment, person served connected to career counseling and case management, person served connected to different industries in the community (competitive employment), person served placed on the job for over 90 days, person served placed on the job for over 12 months, and completing intake forms (demographics). Another example, with the approval of the board Tree of Life, pursuing CARF Accreditation will help our Work Ready program to stay current with changes and effective service delivery of persons served. New policies and standards are being implemented throughout the entire program. Data collected from persons served and stakeholders have assisted with this process. CFO also uses this information for outcome measurements.

b. Uses the input in: Stakeholder feedback is continually utilized in program planning, performance analysis, performance improvement, strategic planning, organizational advocacy, financial planning, resource planning and workforce planning.

1. Program Planning has been modified by adding new policies and standards that are CARF approved. These standards include changes to pre employment and supported employment services to persons served and other stakeholders (GVRA and community employers) involved. Also, modifying service delivery, identifying, developing, improving, or eliminating services are examples. For instance, supported employment cases has seen a dramatic decline over the past 3 three years and an increase in student services. Tree of Life recently was approved by GVRA to deliver Pre Employment Transition Services for students with disabilities ages 14 to 18 because of the need in the area served. This program planning resulted in increased dedication to youth activities as an example of input driven service delivery modification.

2. Performance Improvement is completed by setting clear employment goals for each person served. This improvement is processed by meeting with all necessary parties to ensure the overall employment goals are achieved. This includes all stakeholders (Provider, GVRA Counselor, client, client support, community employer, etc.) to collaborate. This information is collected in a Client Information Form, Individual Service Plans, Intake forms, receiving Physiological and medical Evaluation Forms, and other forms to assist in the improvement of services delivered. Also, stakeholder audit assists with performance improvement.

3. We view strategic planning and performance improvement to be connected. Our strategic planning process is based on the collection, analysis, and utilization of input from persons served, staff and other stakeholders. Strategic Planning is modified with the data collected

and calculated to identify clear objectives for the Work Ready Program. Objectives are implemented when these priorities are set with this information is collected. Following this process ensures that our leadership maintains a viable planning structure. The framework of our strategic planning process is based on CARF's standards to improve quality services.

4. Organization Advocacy is implemented by past clients and their performance. This information is used during orientations for staff, persons served, and other stakeholders to identify clear personal responsibilities by signing the orientation form. These individual responsibilities help to grow the organization and the Work Ready Program. Another form of advocacy includes the Managing Director meeting with Community Employers to advocate for persons served. Completed are "In person" community employer (Stakeholder) meetings with discussions of ways to streamline or modify job tasks/routines; assist with identifying natural supports, assist with skills set matching work sets, and establishing communication process in the workplace.

5. Fiscal stability is the foundation upon which Tree of Life has built our organization. Investment of resources is based, in part, on the input we work diligently to gather from GVRA and our community employers. Financial Planning and collecting information how each person is served helps to guide and direct how the budget for each following year will be allocated. A monthly budget is completed to collect this data. This budget includes fixed items such as insurance, social media costs, human resources, and supplies.

6. Dedication of resources to program development or modification for purposes of performance improvement are all driven by input from persons served, staff and other stakeholders. Resource Planning is administered from collecting and implementing data collected by tracking (financial) resources and allocating these resources in the appropriate and most efficient areas in the Work Ready Program.

7. Workforce Planning is implemented from data collected from persons served, the demographic need, and the stakeholder needs. This information drives the direction of workforce planning. This information is collected from intakes and referrals from Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA).

SECTION E

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

1.E.1
Definitions:
1. Compliance: the process of making sure your organization and employees follow all laws, regulations, standards, and ethical practices that apply to your agency.
1. E. 1.
Tree of Life Incorporated operates by a leadership team who lead, direct, and make decisions to stay compliant by meeting on a regular and as needed basis. These meetings are held the 4th Saturday of each month to complete the following legal requirements:
a. Everyone who works directly with the persons served are legally required to complete and pass state background checks. Tree of Life currently utilizes independent contractors which requires completion of a Form W-9 and sign a contract and orientation guideline/ agreement form. The Managing Director approved by the leadership team administers these services to staff. Tree of Life currently have 3 staff members (1 full time managing director and 2 part time employment specialists).
b. Regulatory requirements are completed by the leadership team annually through 990 form filings each year; also, the leadership team completes annual registration of agency motor vehicles.
c. Upon approval of the leadership team, confidentiality education is completed by the Managing Director and the other staff member annually to keep current with the organizations changes with policies and standards.
d. Tree of Life Incorporated have the following forms to stay compliant with legal requirements: incident forms for violations, compliant risk assessments, code of ethics policy, and formal complaint form. If there is an incident, all reports are given to the Managing Director who gives information to leadership team. The leadership team manages and investigates all reports to stay compliant.
e. The leadership team completes annual licensing requirement from the Secretary of State and the local city licensing.
f. The leadership team complete each year a renewal contractual agreement with Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency. The following is required to stay compliant: confidentiality, critical incident reporting, investigations, indemnification, insurance, contract administration, and compliance with law.
g. Tree of Life receives funding from state provided services. Debt Covenants do not apply to our organization.
h. The leadership team stays compliant with corporate status by registering for annual Secretary of State and completing the annual 990 form to stay compliant.
I and J. Upon approval of the leadership team, the Managing Director administers orientation for all persons served. During the orientation participants are trained in advocacy and privacy rights. They are required to complete a form acknowledging they have trained in this area.
k. Upon approval of the leadership team, The Managing Director administers orientation for the other staff member with Tree of Life. During orientation employment practices of the following are discussed: equal opportunity employment, sexual harassment, discrimination, unfair wages, and code of ethics.
l. Staff and persons served are required to complete mandatory drug testing before services are provided; and before staff can begin working. Drug testing is given by community partner. Participant is given drug form by Managing Director during

orientation. Once orientation is completed, participant is scheduled an appointment with the community drug testing partner. Once the results come back, depending on the outcome of the test, the participant can start work/services or referred back to their VR Counselor is failed. If seeking employment, the person can reapply for employment after 180 days.

1.E.2
Personnel Written Procedures
Tree of Life Incorporated takes responsibility by implementing written procedures for protecting the staff who works directly with persons served in providing efficient job placement services along with programming to individuals with disabilities and to the diverse population served.

Definitions:
1. Subpoenas: the process of making sure your organization and employees follow all laws, regulations, standards, and ethical practices that apply to your agency.
2. Search Warrants: a legal document authorizing a police officer or other official to enter and search premises.
3. Investigations: carry out a systematic or formal inquiry to discover and examine the facts of (an incident, allegation, etc.) to establish the truth.

Tree of Life Incorporated operates by a leadership team who lead, direct, and make decisions to stay compliant by meeting on a regular and as needed basis. These meetings are held the fourth Saturday quarterly to make decisions. Topics related to personnel are discussed and implemented for review to establish written procedures carrying out subpoenas, search warrants, investigations, and other legal actions.

If and when law enforcement agents appear at Tree of Life Incorporated office with a subpoena, warrant, or any other legal issue, the leadership team must be the direct contact for liaison with the law enforcement agents. First and foremost, the leadership team will immediately contact outside counsel. If possible, outside counsel should immediately come to Tree of Life Incorporated office site of the search (if different). If outside counsel is not readily available, the leadership team will discuss further. The leadership team should inform the law enforcement agents that counsel has been contacted and ensure that counsel is able to connect with the law enforcement agents on site.

The leadership team should inform law enforcement agents that the organization intends to cooperate fully with their search and will assist the agents in locating and identifying documents responsive to the search. Despite the disruption in the organization's ongoing business that a search presents, it is essential for the individuals interacting with the law enforcement agents to maintain a tone and demeanor that establishes a cooperative (and not hostile) relationship.

Counsel should request a copy of the subpoena, search warrant, or any other legal document which law enforcement agents are normally required to bring and provide to the operator of the premises. It is imperative to determine whether the warrant is a search warrant (authorizing an inspection of places where materials responsive to the warrant are likely to be found); a seizure warrant (a narrower legal device often used in property forfeiture proceedings allowing merely the seizure of a particular item, such as a computer or personal property); a witness subpoena (it is because you are believed to

have either witnessed a crime or are able to provide information about a person that has been. Your subpoena will list a date and time for you to appear in court. In most cases, you will be appearing at a trial); subpoena duces tecum (an attorney is asking that you produce documents or some type of records that are under your control. In many cases, you can mail or scan the documents and email them. In some cases, you can deliver them in person at a date prior to the date on your subpoena if you arrange it with the requesting attorney); or a deposition subpoena (you are not a party to the lawsuit, but you are being asked to provide testimony. You may be asked questions and must provide answers, or you may have to produce documents. This subpoena is different than a subpoena duces tecum because you will be providing evidence during the discovery process, and the evidence you provide may not be used in a court hearing if the attorney ultimately believes it won't be useful.)

Counsel must ensure that the premises to be searched and the items to be taken are covered by the warrant or subpoena or another legal document. Counsel should point out for the law enforcement agents any issues identified concerning the scope of the requests in the document However, it is important to keep in mind that prior to the warrant's execution, a federal or state judicial officer had reviewed the application for the search warrant or subpoena and found that there was probable cause to believe that the items called for by the warrant were likely to be found on the premises. Additionally, counsel should obtain the names and contact information of the agents executing the warrant or subpoena (at a minimum, the supervisory agent) as well as the prosecutor in charge of the investigation.

In executing the search warrant, law enforcement agents may temporarily and reasonably restrict the activities of the staff to ensure that no responsive materials are removed or destroyed. Law enforcement agents may also inquire as to whether there are weapons on the premises (for their own safety). This is a standard request, even during the search of a business, and should not be cause for alarm. Staff should not make any attempts to restrict law enforcement agents from searching any areas. If a dispute arises about whether responsive materials may be found in a particular location on the premises, or whether a particular type of document is responsive to the warrant, the organization must involve outside counsel and take notes about the relevant issues, but no attempt should be made to block the agents from the search. Any such acts could be viewed by the agents as an attempt to obstruct the search or destroy evidence and could result in even a temporary arrest of the employee.

Staff on the premises when a warrant is executed should be instructed to assist law enforcement agents in identifying the records called for by the warrant or subpoena. To the extent possible, such assistance should be provided with counsel present. It is imperative to instruct employees that, unless cleared by counsel, they should not answer "interview" questions that go beyond what is necessary to assist law enforcement agents to identify the location of relevant records. Such questions may seem innocuous but may later become problematic. For example, employees should not answer questions such as "Do you make entries in this trading blotter?" or "How do you record certain information?" These questions are not relevant to determining whether certain items are responsive to the warrant or subpoena. Counsel should keep a record of any such questions and any answers given. If law enforcement agents appear to be asking excessive questions, counsel should ask to speak to the supervisory agent in charge or the prosecutor in charge to address this issue.

At the end of the search, law enforcement agents should provide counsel with a copy of their inventory of items seized and ask that it be inspected and signed by one of the leadership team. Counsel should take time to carefully review the inventory and make sure that it is as accurate as possible before signing. This document may later be used to argue that the organization effectively consented to certain items being taken even though they may not have been responsive to the warrant or subpoena. Finally, before agents leave with documents and/or computers, the leadership team should focus on particular records that are vital to the ongoing day-to-day management of the business and ask outside counsel to negotiate to retain working copies of any such records.

1.E.3
Written Procedures for Records

Tree of Life Incorporated takes responsibility for implementing written procedures for secure and confidential records in providing efficient job placement services along with programming to individuals with disabilities and to the diverse population served.

Tree of Life Incorporated operates by a leadership team who lead, direct, and make decisions to stay compliant by meeting on a regular and as needed basis. These meetings are held quarterly. Addressed are policies and procedures that protects and secures the records of all stakeholders involved as well as adhering to legal and regulatory requirements.

a. Confidential documents could be anything from financial records, contracts, budgets, legal information to personal information held by staff and/or persons served. The risks posed for any of this sensitive information going missing, either by accident or through criminal activity, are extremely low. This is especially true because starting January 2021, our organization files are electronically based documents and files need to be held for a lengthy amount of time. By implementing preventative measures, it helps to keep our administrative records safe and by adopting better data protection procedures helps to improve security.
b. The records of persons served, and all staff files are kept in one locked and secured location at Tree of Life Incorporated's office. Copies are paper and digital.
c. For the security and confidentiality of all records only leadership are designated to access records and are required to complete annual training where an acknowledgement of policies is signed and understood. All electronic devices with sensitive information have secured passwords (locked) and can only accessed by authorized staff. Storage of records are kept in the locked office file cabinet where authorized staff has access to the cabinets and keys to the office door. Files(USB Drive) are kept secured in a fire, water, and protectant gear. When disposing of sensitive information, it is shredded by authorized staff; and then shredded documents are taken to a secure site that accepts disposing of information. Our organization site is Staples. (This also includes I.E.3.d).
e. To stay in compliance with applicable laws Tree of Life incorporated agrees to abide by all state and federal laws, rules, and regulations, GVRA policies and procedures respecting confidentiality of an individual's records. The information shall remain the property of the organization. The organization shall report any unauthorized disclosure of information.
f. Timeframe for documentation held for the records of the person served is indefinitely. Older files are locked and secured at the organization office location. Tree of Life

Incorporated recently in November of 2020 started to use both digital and paper secured system with OneDrive and DocuSign.

Timeframe for staff to complete client documentation includes all files to upload within 10 business days to the Managing Director. Managing Director loads to computer hardware within 5 business days. Files include the following: critical incident forms, referral form, invoice forms, individual service plan, intake form, orientation form, and service survey form. Staff are required to have client and staff signatures completed and submitted for ongoing progress reports before the last Friday of each month.

Policy: Timely Documentation of Records for Persons Served

Purpose

To ensure accurate, complete, and timely documentation of all services, contacts, and relevant information in the records of persons served, supporting quality care, compliance, and continuity of services.

Policy

All staff members providing services must complete required documentation in client records within a specified timeframe to ensure up-to-date and reliable records.

Procedure: Timeframe for Documentation

1. Documentation Timeframe

- All service notes, assessments, progress reports, referrals, and other required documentation must be entered into the client record within 10 business days of the service delivery or event.
- In urgent cases or incidents, documentation must be completed within 24 hours.

2. Documentation Standards

- Documentation must be legible, accurate, and complete.
- Use objective, clear language and avoid subjective opinions.
- Include date, time, staff name, and role for each entry.

3. Monitoring and Compliance

- Supervisors will review records weekly to monitor documentation timeliness.
- Late or missing documentation will be addressed promptly through corrective action plans or coaching.
- Persistent delays may result in disciplinary action according to organizational policy.

4. Exceptions

- In exceptional circumstances (e.g., emergency, technology issues), staff must notify their supervisor immediately and provide an estimated completion date.

5. Training

- All relevant staff will receive training on documentation standards and timelines during orientation and ongoing professional development sessions.

Responsibilities

- Staff: Ensure timely and accurate documentation of all services and client interactions.
- Supervisors: Monitor documentation compliance, provide feedback, and support staff in meeting timelines.
- Quality Assurance: Conduct periodic audits of records and report findings to leadership.

Review

This policy and procedure will be reviewed annually or as needed based on regulatory changes or organizational needs.

About the Policy:
Effective July 1, 2023
Responsible: Chief Executive Officer
Policy Contact: Jennifer Hughley/ jennifer@treeoflifeincorporated.org

SECTION F

FINANCIAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

1F.

1.(a/b). Tree of Life Incorporated strives to be financially solvent, conducting fiscal management in a manner that supports our mission and annual performance objectives. We are a growing organization which believes that through financial solvency our organization can position itself to take advantage of opportunities and deal effectively with challenges that comes with a growing company.

The leadership team focuses on daily operational cost and incorporates planning for long-term solvency. Financial planning and management activities are strategically designed to meet established outcomes for the persons served, as well as organizational performance objectives in accordance with our strategic plan. The following methods are used to adhere to acceptable accounting practices: monthly financial reports, strategic planning documents, board minutes, annual budget, and annual stakeholders' audits.

1.F.2
Financial Reports

The leadership team approves an annual budget developed prior to the beginning of the fiscal year which runs January to December. Reasonable projections include information on actual versus budgeted income and expenses on a monthly and year to date basis, with variances and a balance sheet. The monthly Statement of Financial Activities and Statement of Financial Position are used as planning tools to assist in maintaining financial stability. Annually, Tree of Life Incorporated renews a contact with Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency. This input helps to develop and establish historical performances.

Detailed reports documenting fiscal operations and financial status are generated monthly in the following categories: contractor expense, meals/travel, salary/training, supplies, fixed, and community resources. These detailed reports are disseminated to the leadership team only. On an annual basis, GVRA reviews the documenting reports. Written budgets are approved by the leadership and are attached.

1.F.3
Reports summarizing fiscal operations and financial status are generated on a monthly basis and reviewed by the leadership team. Information on actual versus budgeted income and expenses on an year to date basis are established, with variances and a balance sheet. Tree of life Incorporated produces an annual performance report. Persons served and staff (Managing Director and Employment Specialists) have access to this information as well. On an ongoing basis, GVRA reviews the documenting reports. This report reflects the overall status and plans of financial results for the year.

1.F.4
The leadership team identifies and reviews an annual budget developed prior to the beginning of the fiscal year which runs January to December. Reasonable projections include information on actual versus budgeted revenue and expenses on a year to date

basis. Reviewed also are internal and external factors: financial trends, financial challenges, opportunities, management information, industry trends, and areas needing improvement.

Internal Examples:
An example of internal financial trend is moving into a paperless system (process of how to more effectively handle caseloads). Paperless systems include Docusign and Microsoft Outlook to maintain deliverance of hybrid and remote services to persons served.

An example of internal financial challenges is reviewed with data backup systems through the Microsoft Outlook software which was also purchased for security protection.

An example of internal financial opportunities includes expanding services into more counties and increasing youth population for the new budget.

An example of management information is the Managing Director manages and records caseloads size annually with past caseload size.

External Examples:
Tree of Life Incorporated uses Wells Fargo monthly financial statements as an external financial trend.

Tree of Life Incorporated external financial challenges include acquiring a third party accountant to complete an external audit and other monthly financial statements. (Due to increase in funding and transition of CFO).

Tree of Life Incorporated new external financial opportunities includes the New Pre-Employment Transition Youth Services (School Transition Programs).

Tree of Life Industry trends include Policy Shifts and Funding Priorities:

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) reauthorization may increase emphasis on outcomes and accountability.
- State VR agencies are expanding school-to-work transition programs and public-private partnerships.
- Opportunity: Stay engaged in policy advocacy and pursue contracts aligned with new funding streams.

1.F.5
Tree of Life Incorporated has a separate third-party relationships with Good360/Lowes Retail. Our organization discloses financial information (the 990 and 1099 tax forms) to these partnerships to support our mission, value, and annual performance of persons served. A separate annual contract from each party is reviewed by the leadership team, included are the responsibilities legally, contractual, and program participation guidelines. The material transactions for Good360 have increased the past several years.

1.F.6
Tree of Life Incorporated CEO has responsibility and authority in all financial activities, such as purchasing materials and capital equipment, writing checks and making investments. Our system of internal controls is based on our fiscal activities and has been designed to allow for changes/fluctuations in our business enterprise. This system was developed and is monitored by the organization's CFO who is qualified to examine internal/dual controls. The leadership approves internal/dual controls annually.

A written policy and procedures have been developed and are maintained, including internal control practices. This policy address methods for receiving cash, checks, or other financial instruments; disbursing funds, including petty cash, other cash checks, or other financial instruments; managing the use, receipt, or disbursement of funds through purchase orders, invoices, and organizational debit cards.

Financial management initial and ongoing training is provided through the Relias Learning Portal.

Fiscal Policies and Procedures with Internal Controls

Purpose
To establish fiscal policies and internal control procedures to ensure proper handling of financial transactions, safeguard organizational assets, and maintain transparency and accountability in financial management.

Policy Statement
All financial transactions will be conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and adhere to internal controls designed to prevent misuse, fraud, and errors.

Receiving Cash and Checks
- All cash and checks must be logged immediately upon receipt.
- Cash and checks must be stored in a locked, secure location until deposited.
- Deposits must be made within 2 business days.
- A second staff member must verify the deposit log against the receipt book monthly.

Managing Debit/Credit Card Receipts
- Debit/credit card donations or payments must be processed through a secure, PCI-compliant system.
- Reconciliation of debit/credit receipts must be completed monthly by the bookkeeper.
- Any discrepancies must be reported and investigated immediately.

Disbursement of Funds
- All disbursements must be supported by original invoices or receipts.
- A check request form must be completed and approved by an authorized manager.
- Two signatures are required on checks over $500.
- Electronic disbursements must be initiated by Officer and approved by a second Officer.
- Petty cash transactions must be documented, with receipts attached and reconciled monthly.
Bank Reconciliation

- Bank accounts will be reconciled monthly by the bookkeeper and reviewed by the Executive Director.
- Any discrepancies must be documented and resolved within 5 business days.

Segregation of Duties- Financial reports must be reviewed by leadership independent of daily transaction processing.

Financial Reporting
- Monthly financial statements will be prepared by the Bookkeeper and reviewed by the Executive Director.
- Quarterly reports will be presented to the Board of Directors.
- An annual financial review or audit will be conducted by an independent CPA.

Review
These fiscal policies and procedures will be reviewed annually and updated as needed to comply with changes in regulations and best practices.

About the Policy:
Effective July 1, 2023
Responsible: Chief Executive Officer
Policy Contact: Jennifer Hughley/ jennifer@treeoflifeincorporated.org

1.F.7
Service Billing
Tree of Life Incorporated ensures that billing invoices match service delivery information in the records of the persons served. Our proactive approach helps reduce or eliminate costly audit exceptions. Our Managing Director implements reviews that provides for the implementation of any necessary corrective actions to assist in this process.

Reviews focus specifically on the appropriateness of the current service billing. Reviews are conducted by the Managing Director and reviewed by the CFO to compare the invoices and authorizations, service dates and times entered, and types of services provided to the persons served. The Managing Director completes an annual end of the year report of service billing.

The CFO adopted reviews to ensure all services are being billed appropriately; and to consider the following: trends, areas needing improvement, and actions to be taken.

1.F.8
Tree of Life Incorporated is not responsible for fee structures. An annual contract is renewed by the set standards of Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency. However, the leadership team does review the fee structure annually and applies this information to the service billing quarterly reviews and annual report.

1.F.9
Tree of Life Incorporated contracts with Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency. According to their requirements, because Tree of Life is a contractor that expends at least $100,000 in Federal/State funds during their accounting year agree to have an

independent third party accountant prepare an audited entity-wide financial statements for that year. Assertions concerning the basis of financial statement preparation must be made by the Chief Financial Officer.

Tree of Life Incorporated agrees to submit the financial statements in the quantities set (3) forth within 180 days after the close of the Contractor's fiscal year to the Office of Fiscal Services and Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts.

Internal Auditing Activities

Purpose: Tree of Life Incorporated values integrity among our population served and understands, appreciates, and respects each client, each client's family and all key players involved in making our community of people successful and productive by agreeing to comply with corporate compliance for federal funding.
Definition:

I.   Audit is a to conduct an official financial examination.

     E. Internal Auditing Activities

1. Financial Statements: Responsibility to report the financial position and results of operations and cash flow of the organization in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles to our Board of Directors which includes an annual audit.

2. Internal Controls: Integrated system of internal control designed to provide reasonable assurances that we will operate in effective and efficiency operation including reliable statements and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. An annual and risk assessment of the internal control system are provided.

3. Certification of Form 990: The Board of Directors has the responsibility to review and sign the Internal Revenue Service Form 990 to attest to the accuracy and completeness of its contents as well as to the accuracy of financial reports utilized during the year and in preparation of the Form 990. The financial statements and Form 990 will not contain any untrue material statements or facts and will not be misleading in their presentation.

4. Conduct: Operate in a manner that upholds the integrity of the organization. Uphold all applicable laws and regulations and furthering the ability to accomplish the mission of the organization. Being a responsible steward of the resources of the organization.

1.F.10
Tree of Life Incorporated does not serve as a representative payee for persons served, is not involved in the managing of funds of the persons served, nor receives benefits on behalf of the persons served.

SECTION G

RISK MANAGEMENT

Tree of Life has adopted a risk management plan designed to manage risk and reduce the severity of a loss if one were to occur. This risk management plan must include the following: identification of loss exposures, analysis of loss exposures, identification of how to rectify identified exposures, implementation of actions to reduce risk, monitoring of actions to reduce risk, reporting results of actions taken to reduce risks, and inclusion of risk reduction in performance improvement activities.

Definitions:
1. Risk: is the likelihood that a harmful consequence (death, injury or illness) might result when exposed to a hazard.
2. Risk control: means taking action to first eliminate health and safety risks so far as is reasonably practicable, and if that is not possible, minimizing the risks so far as is reasonably practicable. Eliminating a hazard will also eliminate any risks associated with that hazard.
3. Risk Assessment: is the process of evaluating and comparing the level of risk against predetermined acceptable levels of risk.
4. Risk Management: is the application of a management system to risk and includes dentification, analysis, treatment and monitoring.
5. Risk Owner: is the person(s) responsible for managing risks and is usually the person directly responsible for the strategy, activity or function that relates to the risk.

1.G.1.a
(1) Tree of Life Incorporated implements a risk management plan that identifies loss exposures. The aim of risk management is to maximize opportunities in all activities of Tree of Life Incorporated and to minimize adversity. This policy applies to all activities and processes associated with the normal operation of the organization.
(2). It is the responsibility of all Board of Directors and staff to identify, analyze, evaluate, respond, monitor and communicate risks associated with any activity, function or process within their relevant scope of responsibility and authority. Annual trainings are administered each year on risk management.
(3). Risk management is a key governance and management function. Tree of Life Incorporated is proactive in its approach to risk management, balances the cost of managing risk with anticipated benefits, and undertakes contingency planning if critical risks are realized (exposed).

(4). Tree of Life Incorporated has the primary duty to ensure the health and safety of persons served and all staff at the workplace. A duty to ensure health and safety requires the organization to manage and reduce risks by minimizing those risks so far as is reasonably practicable.

(5). Deciding what is 'reasonably practicable' to protect people from harm requires weighing up certain matters, including the likelihood of a hazard or risk occurring and the degree of harm that would result, and then making a judgement about what is reasonable in the circumstances. The Board of Directors monitor these actions to reduce risks.

(6). All reports are completed on an incident report and given to the Managing Director who in returns gives it to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors follows steps to investigate and taking the necessary steps to fix and reduce additional risks.

(7). These reports or situations helps to drive improvements of inclusion of risks reduction. The Board meets of a regular basis to discuss and eliminate these issues and concerns. Timelines are developed and plans are modified as needed.

1.G.1.
b.(1) Board of Directors meet annually to review risk management policy and procedures.
(2) Board of Directors update if needed risk management during quarterly meetings.

Risk Management Plan

The assessed risks are reviewed for actions needed and performance improvement as part of the quarterly Compliance Huddle/Management Meeting. Review may be part of the regular agenda (i.e. drills, critical incidents) or added based on actual incidents.

Area of Exposure	Level of Risk	Areas of Impact	Implementation of actions	Monitor of Actions/Results
Client Services	Low-0 reported	Employment Outcome	Implement orientation.	Source: Intake forms, progress reports, and surveys FY 23, 24, 25
Staff Safety & Performance	Low-0 reported	Job Competence	Ongoing Trainings	Source: Client Feedback, Surveys and Program Evaluations FY 23, 24, 25

Area of Exposure	Level of Risk	Areas of Impact	Implementation of actions	Monitor of Actions/Results
Financial Operations	Low-0 reported	Compliance	Financial Reporting and Risk Management Plan	Sources: Monthly statements, Audit, RMP FY 23, 24
Technology	Low-0 reported	Service Delivery and Confidentiality	Increase speed and accuracy	Source: Website ONGOING
Legal & Regulatory Compliance	Low-0 reported	Legally operate and remain in good standing	Leadership oversees and review annually	Source: Audits, Final contract reports GVRA programs met goals in FY22, 23, 24, 25

1.G.2.

a. Tree of Life Incorporated partners Next and Hartford Insurance to cover for the following risks: Hazard, Workers Compensation, Commercial General Liability, Business Auto, Malpractice/Professional Liability, and Commercial Umbrella.

(1). Insurance coverage is adequate and followed by the guidelines of the GVRA contract requirements.

(2). Each year Hartford Insurance completes an annual audit to keep Tree of Life Incorporated compliant. The Board of Directors review insurance coverage annually as well.

b. Tree of Life Incorporated pays monthly and annual coverages to protect assets. The Board of Directors also manages these assets and coverages quarterly.

C. Includes:

(1) Property coverage includes Commercial General Liability Policy of annual aggregate limit of $3 million.

(2) Malpractice/Professional Liability Policy limit of $1 million per occurrence/ $3 million aggregate policy limits.

(3) Commercial Umbrella Policy have an annual aggregate limit of $ 3 million; and Business Auto Policy has a $ 1million per occurrence/ $3 million dollar amount policy limits.

1.G.3.

Communications Policy and Written Procedures

1. Purpose

This policy outlines the procedures for managing external communications, including media relations and social media engagement, to ensure accurate, professional, and

consistent messaging that protects the reputation and privacy of the organization and individuals served.

2. Media Relations Procedures

2.1 Authorized Spokespersons

Only the following roles are permitted to speak on behalf of the organization to the media:

- Executive Director (or CEO)
- Communications Manager/Coordinator
- Board Chair (as designated)
- Program Director (with prior approval)

All other staff must direct media inquiries to the Executive Director or designated spokesperson.

2.2 Responding to Media Inquiries

- All media requests must be forwarded immediately to the Communications Office or Executive Director.
- Staff must not respond "off the record" or give informal comments.
- When appropriate, an official statement will be prepared and approved before release.

2.3 Press Releases and Public Statements

- Press releases must be reviewed and approved by the Communications Office and Executive Director prior to distribution.
- Press releases should align with the organization's mission, strategic goals, and tone.

3. Social Media Procedures

3.1 Official Social Media Accounts

The organization will maintain official accounts on platforms such as:

- Facebook

Only authorized personnel may post on behalf of the organization.

3.2 Posting Guidelines

- All posts must reflect the mission, values, and professionalism of the organization.
- Do not post confidential client information, even with identifiers removed, without prior written consent.
- Use respectful, inclusive, and non-discriminatory language.
- Avoid political endorsements, offensive content, or religious proselytizing.

3.3 Personal Social Media Use

Employees are expected to:

- Not represent personal views as official organizational positions.
- Not share confidential or internal information about clients, programs, or operations.
- Add a disclaimer (if relevant): *"Views expressed are my own and do not reflect the views of [Organization Name]."*

4. Confidentiality and Privacy

- Client images, stories, or information must not be shared without prior consent using a signed release form.
- When using anonymized success stories, remove all identifiers and obtain program manager approval.

5. Monitoring and Oversight
- The Communications Department will monitor official social media pages and public media coverage.
- Any inappropriate or unauthorized posts will be removed immediately, and the responsible party may be subject to disciplinary action.

6. Crisis Communication
- In the event of an emergency or reputational crisis, all communications must be handled by the Executive Director.
- A pre-drafted crisis response template and talking points will be developed and stored securely.

7. Violations
Violation of this policy may result in:
- Verbal or written warning
- Suspension of communication privileges
- Disciplinary action, up to termination

8. Review and Updates
This policy will be reviewed annually and revised as needed to reflect changes in technology, best practices, or regulatory requirements.

About the Policy:
Effective July 1, 2023
Responsible: Chief Executive Officer
Policy Contact: Jennifer Hughley/ jennifer@treeoflifeincorporated.org
Applies to: All staff, contractors, interns, and volunteers

1.G.4.a
Tree of Life Incorporated contracts with qualified staff approved by the state of Georgia to deliver services to persons served. Annual performance evaluations are completed by the board in accordance to their contract as well as guidelines of the policies implemented by Tree of Life Work Ready Program (Employment Skills Development).

b. The Managing Director closely monitors staff follows guidelines by having weekly meeting, by having ongoing trainings and developments classes throughout the year.

c. The Managing Director closely monitors staff to follow CARF guidelines by having ongoing trainings and developments classes throughout the year.

d. End of the year annual reviews are performed.

SECTION H

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Tree of Life Incorporated maintains that health and safety are everyone's responsibility. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring that ongoing competency-based training and annual training is provided to promote awareness of this fact.

Definitions:
1. Health: is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.
2. Safety: is the absence of preventable harm to a patient/s during the process of health care and reduction of risk of unnecessary harm associated with health.

1.H.1(a/b)
Tree of Life Incorporated maintains a healthy and safe environment by:
a. Eliminating potential hazards. (Practice social distance, remove loose debris, remove electrical hazards, etc.)
b. All persons served, and staff are professionally trained.
c. Ensure proper safety equipment. (This includes but not limited to smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, first aid kit, and proper PPE for pandemic).
d. Follow health and safety guidelines by local, state, and federal law.

(1.H.2 a/b) Review of Health and Safety written policy and procedures

About this policy:

Department / Area: Administration	Approved By: Jennifer Hughley Grier, CEO	Date Created:	Review / Revised date: NA

Potential Hazards: Fill in those that apply	Safety Equipment:
H M L risk for injury ☐ ☐ ☐ Awkward / sustained postures ☐ ☐ ☐ Forceful exertions ☐ ☐ ☐ Repetitive motions ☐ ☐ ☐ Vibration ☐ ☐ ☐ Skin compression ☐ ☐ ☐ Sharp points / edges ☐ ☐ ☐ Pinch points ☐ ☐ ☐ Material falling ☐ ☐ ☐ Surfaces causing falls ☐ ☐ ☐ Moving machinery ☐ ☐ ☐ Chemicals ☐ ☐ ☐ Biological pathogens ☐ ☐ ☐ Electrical ☐ ☐ ☐ Extreme heat / cold ☐ ☐ ☐ Noise ☐ ☐ ☐ Combustibles / flammables ☐ ☐ ☐ Other _____	Smoke Detector Fire Extinguisher First Aid Kit (antiseptic cream, thermometer, sticky tape, alcohol-free cleansing wipes, scissors, tweezers, sterile gloves, bandages, gauze dressings, eye wash) Wet Floor signs Ladders or Stepstools Back brace Keys to designated staff
	Training /Personal Protective Equipment:
	Health and Safety Training Practice Social Distance Washing Hands frequently Wearing Face Masks

All staff and persons served must ensure that they are trained and follow this safe work procedure **steps below to perform this task safely:**
Scope: All staff and leadership of Tree of Life Incorporated *Reason: To ensure safety of all persons served, staff, and stakeholders.* *Procedure:* *The Managing Director completes this safety checklist as needed. Recommendations cited are noted on the inspection checklist along with suggested actions necessary for improvement.* *Hazards are listed above.* *If an incident is found by the MG and/or reported by another participant or staff, this incident report is completed and turned into the leadership team for an investigation. An investigation is completed, and results and recommendations are given within 30 days of the investigation.* *The Managing Director by the direction of the leadership team completes annual Health and Safety training for all persons served and staff. Each person completes surveys and signs as an acknowledgement form of the training.* *The Managing Director by the direction of the leadership team ensures the organization follows health and safety guidelines by local, state, and federal law.*

1.H.3
Tree of Life Incorporated provides persons served with orientation to reduce identified physical risks.

The Managing Director completes the orientation. Each person served signs and completes a survey for acknowledgment of the training completed. The employment specialist or Job Coach visits the persons served on an as needed basis to review and evaluate along with completing monthly progress reports to measure and record progress.

The following are identified physical risks:
a.   Rights and protection
b.   Confidentiality
c.   Physical and Environmental Safety which includes physical barriers, environmental sensitivities, workplace emergency plans, direct threat, person served work obligation, and employer expectation).

Worksite Safety Procedures – Work Ready Program

Purpose
To ensure a safe and healthy environment for all personnel and persons served within the Work Ready Program worksites, in accordance with CARF standards and local regulations.

Responsibilities
- Managing Director**:** Oversees the implementation and enforcement of safety procedures.
- Employment Specialists: Monitor safety at community work locations and report hazards.
- All Staff: Follow safety procedures, attend required trainings, and report incidents.
- Persons Served: Receive orientation and are encouraged to follow basic safety practices.

General Safety Practices
- Conduct worksite evaluations before placing individuals.
- Ensure reasonable accommodations are made for persons served.
- Maintain clutter-free and hazard-free environments.
- Document and follow up on safety concerns.
- Ensure job coaches are present as needed for higher-risk tasks.

Emergency Procedures
a. Evacuation
- Confirm that each worksite has a posted and practiced evacuation plan.
- Conduct mock drills with persons served where feasible.

b. Medical Emergencies
- Call emergency services immediately.
- Notify supervisor and complete an incident report within 24 hours.

c. Weather-Related Events
- Follow agency protocols and communicate with host employers regarding closures.

Incident Reporting
- Use standardized forms to report any injury, behavioral incident, or environmental hazard.

- Submit reports to the Program Manager within 24 hours.
- Discuss incidents in team meetings for review and preventive planning.

Safety Training
- All staff complete safety training during orientation and annually thereafter.
- Include topics such as workplace violence prevention, injury prevention, and emergency response.
- Persons served receive basic safety instruction relevant to their work assignments.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Provide PPE as required by job tasks and worksite expectations.
- Ensure proper training on use and disposal.
- Evaluate PPE needs during job site assessments.

Infectious Disease Protocols
- Follow CDC and local guidelines for illness prevention.
- Encourage hand hygiene and provide sanitation supplies.
- Maintain protocols for exposure reporting and health screenings if applicable.

Transportation Safety
- Drivers must be licensed, trained, and maintain a clean driving record.
- Ensure vehicle safety checks are done regularly.
- Persons served must wear seatbelts and follow all transport guidelines.

Review and Continuous Improvement
- Safety procedures are reviewed annually or after a critical incident.
- The Employment Services team gathers feedback and updates procedures as needed.
- Managing Director ensures continuous compliance with CARF and legal requirements.

1.H.4

Tree of Life Incorporated provides regular competency-based training and annual on the following topics and techniques: health and safety practices, identification of unsafe environmental factors, emergency procedures, evacuation procedures, identification/reporting of critical incidents, medical management, reducing physical risks, and workplace violence.

1.(a/b). Mandatory health and safety training for personnel occurs at the time of hire and on an annual basis for staff employed more than one year. Persons served also receive health and safety training during orientation.

2. (a/b) Managing Director conduct monthly self-inspections designed to identify potential health and/or safety hazards. These comprehensive self-inspections are conducted at the office of Tree of Life where services are delivered. However, due to Covid 19, all meetings with clients are either completed with an online service (Zoom, Microsoft Team Meets, or phone conferences) or public settings.

The scope and process for self-inspections was developed after considering input from local health and safety authorities. The Managing Director uses a checklist in the process to ensure that all applicable areas are consistently addressed. Recommendations cited are noted on the inspection checklist along with suggested actions necessary for improvement.

3.(a/b) Written emergency procedures comply with local requirements for dealing with the following emergency situations: fires, natural disasters, utility/water outage,

workplace violence, safety during violent or other threatening situations caused by an external entity, and medical emergency.

Emergency and Evaluation Written Procedures has been adopted by the leadership team. They are as described below.

Definitions:
1. Weather Emergency or Natural Disaster: Floods, tornados, wildfires and earthquakes are all examples of natural disasters and weather emergencies that can pose a danger to your business and its employees.
2. Illness or Accident: One or more employees is injured in an accident or becomes seriously ill while at work.
3. Active Assailant: One or more people inside your workplace begin an attack on others.
4. Terrorism: Even if your place of business is not directly targeted by a terrorist attack, terrorism in your community can damage infrastructure and present a number of threats to your business and employees.
5. Industrial accidents: Chemical spills and radiation accidents can have severe public health repercussions.
6. Workplace Violence:

   Tree of Life Incorporated prepares the facility for emergencies by first discussing the process of alarm systems, emergency lights and equipment with the property manager. Once approved and discussed by property manager, The Managing Director completes a safety checklist monthly. Recommendations cited are noted on the inspection checklist along with suggested actions necessary for improvement.

   Tree of Life Incorporated has weather radio alerts that signals from the National Weather Service to alert of both weather and non-weather emergencies.

   Tree of Life Incorporated maintains safety equipment. Checks and replenishes first-aid supplies regularly and test fire extinguishers. The local fire department offer this service. The Managing Director completes a safety checklist monthly. Recommendations cited are noted on the inspection checklist along with suggested actions necessary for improvement.

   Tree of Life Incorporated has 2 staff members (Managing Director and Job Coach). The Managing Director and Job Coach are both trained and educated to identify and respond to emergency situations. For example, competency trainings are completed annually by both staff.

   Aspects of evacuation for both staff are as follow:
   - Evacuate when appropriate.
   - Each person account for the other person involved.
   - Be able to identify of essential services.
   - Be able to identify emergency phone numbers.
   - Notification of appropriate emergency personnel.

Tree of Life Incorporated does not tolerate violence committed in the workplace by or against staff, persons served, or stakeholders. Staff are prohibited from making threats or engaging in violent activities.

Prohibited conduct is listed below:
- Causing physical injury to another person
- Acting out in aggressive behavior or manner that causes fear
- Possessing a weapon while on the property
- Committing acts motivated by, or related to, sexual harassment or domestic violence
- Intentionally damaging employer property or property of another staff.

Identification and reporting of critical incidents reported by persons served, staff, and other stakeholders is the responsibility of the Managing Director who then reports information to the leadership team. The leadership team completes an investigation; and a final decision is made within 30 business days. Tree of Life Incorporated practices legal and contractual requirements for reporting of incidents to the proper authorities.

Identification, documentation, remedial action and timely debriefings after all reportable events includes, but is not limited to:
- Medication errors
- Use of seclusion or restraint
- Incidents involving injury
- Communicable diseases
- Infection control
- Violence and aggression
- Use or possession of weapons
- Elopement and/or wandering
- Vehicular accidents
- Biohazard incidents
- Unauthorized use or possession of licit or illicit substances
- Abuse or neglect
- Sexual assault
- Suicide or attempted suicide
- Other sentinel events

Tree of Life Incorporated does not administer medications to persons served, staff, or any other stakeholder. All medications are self-administered. Our agency completes medication monitoring by keeping a medication list of each persons served on their individual file. Tree of Life office is only used for administration purposes. Therefore, no medications for persons served are kept in a controlled storage location. This medication list is used for persons served in case of an emergency at their worksite. The job coach interacts with the clients on a regular basis and completes progress reports monthly. Their medical condition including changes to medication is recorded in their monthly progress reports. Medication is monitored through this method. All staff are educated through competency and annual training of medication monitoring. Documentation is kept on file of the both the Managing Director and job coach.

1H4.

8.(a/b) The Managing Director completes a safety checklist as needed. Recommendations cited are noted on the inspection checklist along with suggested actions necessary for improvement. All staff are educated through competency and annual training of reducing physical risks. Documentation is kept on file of the both the Managing Director and job coach.

1H4.

9.(a/b)

Tree of Life Incorporated does not tolerate violence committed in the workplace by or against staff, persons served, or stakeholders. Staff are prohibited from making threats or engaging in violent activities. All staff are educated through competency and annual training of workplace violence. Documentation is kept on file of the both the Managing Director and job coach.

1.H.5

Tree of Life Incorporated implemented the emergency and procedure policy in being prepared and knowing what to do to support person served and all personnel in knowing how to respond to emergency situations.

Emergency Procedures Plan
Types of Emergencies & Procedures
Fire
- Evacuation Required: Yes, immediate and complete.
- Actions:
  - Activate fire alarm and call 911.
  - Evacuate building using nearest exits; do not use elevators.
  - Close doors behind you to contain the fire.
  - Assemble at designated meeting area.
  - Do not re-enter until cleared by fire officials.

Bomb Threat
- Evacuation: Yes, only upon assessment and instruction from authorities.
- Actions:
  - Record and report the threat (note details of caller, time, background noise).
  - Notify building security and call 911.
  - Follow official guidance on evacuation or shelter-in-place.
  - Do not touch suspicious items.

Natural Disasters (e.g., tornado, earthquake)
- Evacuation or Sheltering: Depends on nature and severity.
- Actions:
  - Earthquake: Drop, Cover, and Hold On.
  - Tornado: Move to interior rooms or designated storm shelters.
  - Follow weather advisories and emergency alerts.

Utility Failures (electric, gas, water, HVAC)
- Evacuation: Only if threat to safety exists.
- Actions:
  - Notify facilities and emergency services if hazardous.
  - Shut off utilities if safe and trained to do so.

- o Use emergency lighting or backup power systems.
- o Relocate activities if critical services are disrupted.

Medical Emergency
- Evacuation: Only if environment is unsafe.
- Actions:
  - o Call 911 immediately.
  - o Provide first aid/CPR if trained.
  - o Do not move the injured unless absolutely necessary.
  - o Assign someone to meet emergency personnel.

Violent or Threatening Situation
- Evacuation or Shelter-in-Place: Follow *Run, Hide, Fight* protocol.
- Actions:
  - o Run: Escape if safe.
  - o Hide: Lock and barricade in a secure room.
  - o Fight: As last resort, incapacitate aggressor.
  - o Call 911 when safe.

Evacuation Procedures
- Evacuate when instructed by alarms, emergency personnel, or if threat is immediate.
- Follow exit signage and staff instructions.
- Meet at designated assembly points.
- Supervisors to account for all persons.
- Do not re-enter until officially cleared.

Shelter-in-Place Procedures
- Shelter during severe weather, toxic releases, or active threats.
- Secure all doors and windows.
- Remain quiet and low-profile.
- Follow updates from emergency personnel.

Safety, Accountability & Continuity
- Safety First: Protect lives above all.
- Account for All: Use rosters and check-ins at assembly or shelter sites.
- Essential Services: Maintain critical programs with alternate locations, virtual services, or emergency kits.
- Training & Drills: Conduct regular drills for all emergency types.

Emergency Contact Numbers

Agency	Phone
Fire/Police/EMS	911
Local Emergency Management	[706-298-3675]
Leadership Contact	[706-333-8728]

Communication & Notifications
- Notify emergency authorities immediately.
- Use internal communication systems (text, email, PA system) for staff alerts.
- Communicate with clients, families, and community partners promptly and sensitively.
- Designate media spokesperson for press inquiries.

About the Policy:
Effective June 2, 2025
Responsible: Chief Executive Officer
Policy Contact: Jennifer Hughley/ jennifer@treeoflifeincorporated.org
Applies to: All staff, contractors, interns, and volunteers

1.H.6
Tree of Life Incorporated has evacuation routes that are accessible by using Exit signs over the doors and is clear of obstructions such as equipment, furniture, or locked doors. Persons served and staff during orientation are trained how to identify signages in case of emergencies in the workplace.

1.H.7.
Tree of Life Incorporated office space is only used for administration by less than the equivalent of one full time staff (Managing Director) during each week. This standard does not apply.

1.H.8
Tree of Life Incorporated does not provide services at the administration office but does provide service delivery to community worksites. It is important to train persons served on emergency procedures at their community worksite. All persons served and staff are trained on the following: fire, bomb threats, natural disasters, utility failures, medical emergencies, violent situations, and physical evacuation. Persons served are also given a tour of their actual worksite prior to beginning job training. However, to address the importance, a policy and procedure has been adopted for service deliveries in community worksites for persons served.

Policy and Procedures for Service Delivery at Community Worksites

About this Policy:
Effective January 1, 2021
Established December 14, 2020
Responsible: Jennifer Hughley/jennifer@treeoflifeincorporated.org

Scope:
If all persons served, staff, and stakeholders.

Policy Statement:
Tree of Life Incorporated has adopted emergency procedures for delivering services to persons served and staff in community worksites. Included are the following: consideration of any emergency procedures that may already be in place at the service delivery site; the physical environment, including accessibility of the service delivery site; basic needs in the event of an emergency; and provision for communications by personnel while providing services regarding decisions to continue or discontinue services.

Reason for the Policy:
To emphasize the need for review as most important aspect for emergency procedures.

Definitions:

1. Emergency- Emergency- a serious, unexpected, and often dangerous situation requiring immediate action.

Procedures for Non-Owned/Operated Service Delivery Locations

When providing services at sites not owned, leased, or operated by TREE OF LIFE, the following guidelines must be observed to ensure safety and continuity:

Consideration of Existing Emergency Procedures

- Obtain and review the host site's existing emergency procedures prior to initiating services.
- Integrate and comply with site-specific plans where applicable.

Physical Environment & Accessibility

- Assess the layout, emergency exits, accessibility features, and potential hazards.
- Ensure staff and clients are aware of location-specific features that may affect emergency response.

Basic Needs in an Emergency

- Identify availability of restrooms, shelter areas, first aid supplies, water, and food (if needed).
- Establish nearby emergency support resources (e.g., hospitals, shelters).

Actions to Be Taken

- Follow host facility's procedures unless TREE OF LIFE policies are more stringent.
- Evacuate or shelter as directed by local/site management or emergency personnel.
- Report incidents to both TREE OF LIFE leadership and host site representatives.

Communication While Providing Services

- Personnel must carry charged mobile phones and know key contacts for both TREE OF LIFE and the service site.
- Clearly communicate with supervisors regarding the decision to continue or discontinue services.
- Notify clients in a timely and appropriate manner about any disruptions or changes.

Safety, Accountability & Continuity

- Safety First: Protect lives above all.
- Account for All: Use rosters and check-ins at assembly or shelter sites.
- Essential Services: Maintain critical programs with alternate locations, virtual services, or emergency kits.
- Training & Drills: Conduct regular drills for all emergency types.

Emergency Contact Numbers

Agency	Phone
Fire/Police/EMS	911
Local Emergency Management	[706-298-3675]
Leadership Contact	[706-333-8728]

Communication & Notifications

- Notify emergency authorities immediately.
- Use internal communication systems (text, email, PA system) for staff alerts.
- Communicate with clients, families, and community partners promptly and sensitively.

- Designate media spokesperson for press inquiries.

1.H.9
Tree of Life Incorporated's commitment to providing a safe environment is reflected in the first aid expertise and emergency resources that are available to meet the needs of the populations we serve; including people trained to respond and locating first aid equipment and supplies in locations that are known and quickly accessible during work hours.
The need for specific training of CPR and First Aid is documented with the staff agreement during orientation. Staff take online courses to receive this certificate. Certificates are placed in the staff files; and are renewed on an annual basis.

First aid supplies and equipment are readily accessible to personnel. First aid kits contain items recommend by health and safety authorities and are available at all sites where services are provided and, in all agency, owned vehicles.

First aid supplies are regularly checked by the Managing Director and replenished as needed. A monthly checklist is completed by the Managing Director documenting that required items are available and that outdated supplies are appropriately disposed of.

Emergency policies and procedures are in place to ensure that information about persons served is readily available to staff on a need-to-know basis. An initial orientation to emergency information on persons served is provided immediately to staff upon their employment.

Staff are required to provide emergency contact information at the time of hire. This information is contained in their personnel file and can be easily accessed in case of an emergency. Emergency information pertaining to the persons served is maintained in their case file and is readily available in case of emergency. Online files containing emergency information are utilized when services are provided off-site. The job coach is responsible for ensuring that current emergency contact maintained for everyone they serve.

1.H.10

Tree of Life Incorporated's CEO practices; and follows written procedures regarding critical incidents that includes prevention, reporting, documentation, remedial action, and timely debriefings conducted following critical incidents.

<center>Policy and Procedures regarding critical incidents</center>

About this Policy:
Effective January 1, 2021
Established December 15, 2020
Responsible: Jennifer Hughley/jennifer@treeoflifeincorporated.org

Scope:
If all persons served, staff, and stakeholders.

Policy Statement:

Tree of Life Incorporated has adopted procedures for determining what constitutes a critical incident, how investigations are to be conducted, how documentation is to be completed, who is responsible for completing documentation, who is to be notified and where documentation of incidents is to be kept.

Reason for the Policy:
To emphasize the need for review as most important aspect regarding critical incidents.

Definitions:
1.   Critical Incident- is any actual or alleged event or situation that creates a significant risk of substantial or serious harm to the physical or mental health, safety or wellbeing of persons served, staff, or stakeholder.

Procedures
Written procedures vary in form and format, but all procedures for incident reporting address:
☐ Prevention
☐ Prompt reporting of each incident to:
-Identified person within Tree of Life Incorporated
-Regulatory agencies as required
☐ Identification, documentation, remedial action and timely debriefings after all reportable events includes, but is not limited to:
☐ Medication errors
☐ Use of seclusion or restraint
☐ Incidents involving injury
☐ Communicable diseases
☐ Infection control
☐ Violence and aggression
☐ Use or possession of weapons
☐ Elopement and/or wandering
☐ Vehicular accidents
☐ Biohazard incidents
☐ Unauthorized use or possession of licit or illicit substances
☐ Abuse or neglect
☐ Sexual assault
☐ Suicide or attempted suicide
Overdose
☐ Other sentinel events

1.The Managing Director is responsible for ensuring staff are aware of incident reporting procedures. Incident reporting requirements are reviewed during each staff member's initial orientation and further training is provided on an ongoing basis.

2. In the event of a critical incident, the following steps must be taken to ensure safety and well-being of persons served, staff, and other stakeholders.

a. The Managing Director will provide all those affected by the incident with access to factual information;
b. Coordinate the de-briefing of those affected within 8 hours of the incident;

c. Liaise with emergency services or authorities, if required;
d. Monitor the need for counselling for those affected by the incident and facilitate, if required.
e. On-going assessment should be made for additional support from outside agencies.
f. Record of incident to be made and kept in administration and/or persons served files.
g. Review of procedure to occur annually. In the event of a critical incident a review should be conducted initially within 2 weeks and then monthly as deemed necessary
h. Standardized forms are used to report incidents, accidents, and injuries.
i. Copies of completed forms and written documentation summarizing the incident, accident or injury are retained in incident logs, records of persons served and/or personnel files.
j. These reports and summaries, along with reports of any "near-misses" (situations where serious consequences were avoided) are reviewed by the leadership team. The purpose of this review is to identify and eliminate hazards, review and analyze trends and promote a safer environment.

1.H.11.
Incident reports are reviewed at the leadership team quarterly meetings in an effort to address causes, trends, areas needing improvement, implementation of the actions, whether the actions taken accomplished the intended results, necessary education and training or staff; prevention of recurrence, internal reporting requirements; and external reporting requirements.

Tree of Life Incorporated identifies the frequency of certain incident types. If trends or increased frequency in certain incident types is identified, the leadership team identifies, and documents in meeting minutes, measures instituted to reduce the likelihood of similar incidences recurring. This information is communicated to other appropriate parties. Quite often specific incidents and the action taken become the topic of future staff training.

Tree of Life ensures that all personnel are trained, and are aware of, incident reporting requirements. This training takes place at the time of hire, on an annual basis for individuals employed more than one year and on an "as needed" basis. Documentation of completed training is included in the staff's file and is reviewed by the Managing Director at the staff's annual review.

The reporting of all critical incidents is required. Timely reporting of incidents ensures that significant information is communicated and that significant events that could jeopardize the health and/or safety of persons served, staff, and other stakeholders are reported.

A form for reporting critical incidents has been developed to ensure that all necessary information about the incident is included. Information that is required to complete this form includes the time, date, and location of the incident; who was involved; what led to the incident; a detailed description of what happened; the consequences of the incident; witnesses; who was notified; and follow-up recommendations. Staff completing this form are responsible for providing descriptive and factual information and for forwarding

a copy to the corporate compliance officer.

It is the responsibility of the leadership team to determine what format and where the documentation of incidents will be maintained. She is responsible for ensuring that incident reports are stored in a secure area and developing timelines for how long documentation of critical incidents must be kept. The leadership team also maintains an incident log to summarize causes and trends.

Critical Incident Analysis and Leadership Review
All critical incidents are analyzed and reviewed by TREE OF LIFE leadership to enhance safety, response, and operational effectiveness:
Causes and Trends
- Identify root causes, contributing factors, and recurring patterns.
- Maintain a log of incident types, frequencies, and related conditions.
Areas Needing Improvement
- Evaluate policies, communication, infrastructure, and staff response.
- Gather feedback from involved personnel and stakeholders.
Corrective Actions and Implementation
- Develop action plans with timelines and responsibilities.
- Assign individuals to carry out improvements.
- Monitor implementation progress through leadership oversight.
Evaluation of Outcomes
- Assess whether corrective actions achieved intended results.
- Adjust strategies or reinforce measures where necessary.
Education and Training
- Provide training based on incident lessons learned.
- Update emergency response drills and resource materials.
Prevention of Recurrence
- Introduce systemic safeguards and accountability measures.
- Promote a culture of safety and continuous improvement.
Reporting Requirements
- Fulfill internal reporting to leadership, governance, and safety committees.
- Comply with external regulatory reporting obligations as applicable.
Safety, Accountability & Continuity
- Safety First: Protect lives above all.
- Account for All: Use rosters and check-ins at assembly or shelter sites.
- Training & Drills: Conduct regular drills for all emergency types.
Emergency Contact Numbers

Agency	Phone
Fire/Police/EMS	911
Local Emergency Management	[706-298-3675]
Leadership Contact	[706-333-8728]

Communication & Notifications
- Notify emergency authorities immediately.
- Use internal communication systems (text, email, PA system) for staff alerts.
- Communicate with clients, families, and community partners promptly and sensitively.

- Designate media spokesperson for press inquiries.

1.H.12
The persons served, personnel and other stakeholders are provided ongoing training regarding the prevention and control of infections; and communicable diseases including the coronavirus. Training is based on individual needs and complies with legal and regulatory requirements regarding the use of standard or universal precautions in the programs we provide and with the persons we serve.

Examples are as follow:
1.Staff education on universal precautions, vaccination, screening, identification, reporting, investigation, control and/mitigation. handwashing technique, the use of alternative cleansing solutions, practicing social distance, wearing a mask for further safety precautions, and posted signs.
2.Educations for the persons served regarding the prevention and control of infection or other communicable diseases occurs during orientation (individually) and through provision of video materials.

Tree of Life Incorporated has adopted written policy and procedures concerning hazardous materials that provide for safety in handling, storage, and disposal.

About this Policy:
Effective July 1, 2021
Established July 1, 2024
Responsible: Jennifer Hughley/jennifer@treeoflifeincorporated.org

Scope:
If all persons served, staff, and stakeholders.

Policy Statement:
Tree of Life Incorporated implements comprehensive procedures to address the prevention, identification, and response to infections and communicable diseases:

Definition:

1. Infectious and Communicable Diseases- caused by microorganisms such as bacteria, viruses, parasites and fungi that can be spread, directly or indirectly, from one person to another. Some are transmitted through bites from insects while others are caused by ingesting contaminated food or water.

Infection and Communicable Disease Control Procedures

Standard/Universal Precautions
- Enforce use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and hygiene protocols.
- Ensure handwashing facilities and sanitizer are readily available.
Vaccination
- Encourage or require vaccination in accordance with public health guidance.
- Maintain vaccination records for staff and, when appropriate, for persons served.
Screening and Identification
- Conduct symptom screening and health questionnaires.

- Identify and respond promptly to suspected or confirmed cases.

Reporting and Investigation
- Report infections to local health authorities as required.
- Investigate transmission sources and exposure risks.

Control and Mitigation
- Isolate affected individuals if applicable.
- Sanitize affected areas and adapt service delivery to reduce exposure.

Training and Education
- Provide education on infection control to staff, clients, and stakeholders.
- Conduct regular training updates based on latest health guidelines.

Safety, Accountability & Continuity
- Safety First: Protect lives above all.
- Account for All: Use rosters and check-ins at assembly or shelter sites.
- Essential Services: Maintain critical programs with alternate locations, virtual services, or emergency kits.
- Training & Drills: Conduct regular drills for all emergency types.

Emergency Contact Numbers

Agency	Phone
Fire/Police/EMS	911
Local Emergency Management	[706-298-3675]
Leadership Contact	(706-333-8728)

Communication & Notifications
- Notify emergency authorities immediately.
- Use internal communication systems (text, email, PA system) for staff alerts.
- Communicate with clients, families, and community partners promptly and sensitively.
- Designate media spokesperson for press inquiries.

1.H.13

Tree of Life Incorporated transportation for persons served is provided in a safe manner consistent with the regulations of the local authorities.

a. All drivers must have appropriate license to operate agency vehicle.
b. Our agency requires annual motor vehicle reports.
c. Insurance coverage according to Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency guidelines are required for vehicles and passengers.
d. Vehicle safety features are monitored for persons served, staff, and other stakeholders.
e. Vehicle safety equipment are monitored for persons served, staff, and other stakeholders.
f. Accessibility are monitored for persons served, staff, and other stakeholders.
g. Training for staff is provided regarding procedures and unique needs of persons served annually.
h. Written emergency procedures available in the vehicle.
i. Communication devices available in the vehicle and monitored.
j. First aid supplies available in the vehicle and monitored.
k. Maintenance of vehicle according to manufactures recommendations.
l. This does not apply. No contract transportation services apply.

About this Policy:
Effective July 1, 2021
Established December 15, 2020
Responsible: Jennifer Hughley/jennifer@treeoflifeincorporated.org

Scope:
If all persons served, staff, and stakeholders.

Policy Statement:
Tree of Life Incorporated has adopted procedures regarding emergency transportation services.

Definition:
1. Emergency transportation-transportation provided when life, health, or safety is in danger which may include the following:
   - Accident related to the vehicle
   - Any life-threatening situation
   - Loss of consciousness
   - Chest pain
   - Seizures
   - Head injury
   - Allergic reactions
   - Compound fractures
   - Choking, etc

Procedures
1. Tree of Life Incorporated expects persons served, staff, and other stakeholders to not eat or drink in agency vehicle(s), and to conduct themselves in a professional manner.
2. In the case of an emergency, please follow the steps:
   a. Dial 911 (with location, problem, individual present condition, sequence of events that lead to emergency, phone number, and stay on the phone with dispatcher if possible)
   b. Do not move the victim unless safety dictates.
   c. If needed, complete CPR trainings until medical team comes.
   d. Contact Managing Director. Incident report completed by Managing Director. If needed, a police report will be completed.
3. In case of evaluation, collect personal belongings, if possible, get to safety as quick as possible. Call 911.
4. In the case of behavior harm or threating situations, call 911.

1.H.14
Tree of Life Incorporated administration office is used for the equivalent of one full time staff (Managing Director) on a weekly basis. This standard does not apply.

1.H.15
Tree of Life Incorporated administration office is used for the equivalent of one full time staff (Managing Director) on a weekly basis. This standard does not apply.

1.H.16

Tree of Life Incorporated has adopted written policy and procedures concerning hazardous materials that provide for safety in handling, storage, and disposal.

About this Policy:
Effective January 1, 2021
Established December 15, 2020
Responsible: Jennifer Hughley/jennifer@treeoflifeincorporated.org

Scope:
If all persons served, staff, and stakeholders.

Policy Statement:
Tree of Life Incorporated has adopted procedures for handling, storing, and disposal of hazardous materials.

Reason for the Policy:
To emphasize the need for review as most important aspect regarding hazardous materials.

Definitions:
1.   Hazardous materials- are substances that could harm human health or the environment or wellbeing of persons served, staff, or stakeholder.

Procedures
1.In the event a question arises regarding the purchase, storage, handling or disposal of these materials, persons served, staff, or stakeholder are encouraged to contact the Managing Director. The Managing Director will follow the policy and procedures for health and safety.

2.All hazardous materials are to be stored, handled, and disposed in accordance with manufacturer's specifications. Where necessary, fume hoods, safety gear and other precautions must be employed.

SECTION I
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

1.I.1
Tree of Life Incorporated is committed to providing the best possible climate for maximum development, delivery, oversight, and support of our Work Ready Program. Maintaining this positive workplace atmosphere aids our human resource development efforts. Our organization has an average 46.5 individuals enrolled per calendar year. Our small organization documents the composition of its workforce. Being a provider of vocational rehabilitation service, we recognize the importance of identifying a "good job match" relative to recruiting and retaining staff. Our Managing Director and Employment Specialists have been approved by the state of Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency to deliver services to people served. Documentation (job description, criminal background, approval from GVRA) is included in their staff files including a signed independent contract approved by the leadership team (CEO, CFO, and Secretary). We are committed to matching individuals to positions that maximize their skills and abilities. Staff training and the potential for advancement/career development represent two means of performance management. Tree of Life staff includes: 1 full time Director and 4 part time employment specialists.

Tree of Life Incorporated provision of training and continuing education through our personnel training programs is evidence of our commitment to the development and retention of quality staff. Our organization believes in promoting from within. Staff training represents a human resource investment that affords opportunities for advancement. This investment aids retention efforts by developing a pool of qualified applicants for positions vacated or created through organizational growth.

1.I.2.
Tree of Life Incorporated has a Managing Director who completes the human resources section which is the single greatest asset and investment for our organization.

It is the responsibility of the leadership team to establish and maintain a staff configuration that meets the needs of program participants in a manner consistent with the mission and goals of our organization.

Extensive ongoing training is conducted with the staff (M.D. and E.S.) to assist them in meeting established outcome expectations of our persons centered philosophy served. Also, through dedicated efforts to develop skills readily interchangeable/cross-trained staff, we ensure our organization meet outcomes and further develop our human resources. Documentation is kept in staff files. Documentation includes: participant orientation, job description, criminal background, drug screen, aapproval from GVRA, and ongoing trainings).

In addition to administrative oversight, our organization utilizes information obtained from our performance measurement, management system, risk management, and strategic planning process to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of current staff. Related data and information are obtained on a regular basis and is incorporated into a variety of reports means for conveying this information includes, but is not limited to; performance analysis reports, annual reports, and team meetings.

The leadership team receives and reviews these reports and uses this information to guide decision making related to workforce development, resource allocation and financial planning. Evidence of the utilization of this information is found in end of the year board meeting minutes, strategic planning documents, ongoing trainings, credentials verification, and performance evaluations.

1.I.3
Workforce development and management practices reflect the organization's mission, culture, person center philosophy, performance measurement/management system, risk management plan, and strategic plan. Proper planning ensures qualified staff are critical to the success of Tree of Life Incorporated. The leadership team is responsible for determining the minimum education and experience requirements for all positions based on the stakeholders requirements. These minimum requirements are clearly stated on each position description and reviewed, at a minimum, annually. This annual review corresponds with the staff's annual performance appraisal and is documented in the staff personnel record. Position descriptions are also reviewed and revised as needed to ensure they reflect the organization's mission and goals. At a minimum this review and revision is completed at the time of annual reviews. The leadership team determines workforce needs identifying the gaps between the present and the future; and implementing solutions to accomplish its mission and goals.

As our organization anticipates expansion and growth, Tree of Life Incorporated is in the process of continuing its success by ongoing recruitment for employment specialists (independent contract workers) in up to 8 counties for the Work Ready Program. To fill upcoming vacancies, our organization considers individuals who are active job seekers. The leadership team is responsible for providing the oversight necessary to ensure that the selection process meets the requirement by their job duties and/or position description.

This selection process is key to retaining a qualified and engaged workforce that continues to drive and impact the direction of the organization's ability to achieve its mission. One strategy is to put in place incentives (offering activities that include flexible scheduling, telecommuting, and competitive wages) to keep new qualified staff motivated and excited.

Tree of Life Incorporated leadership team completes succession meetings to identify actions to be taken by the organization should the Managing Director or one of the leadership team is unavailable. The succession planning includes the CEO, CFO, and secretary. In the case of unavailability, the leadership team discusses and decides; and make the best decision of selecting the best fit person for the seat of leading and guiding the organization towards its mission and goals.

1.I.4
Tree of Life workforce planning ensures that the right people with the right skills are performing their jobs at the right time.

Workforce Planning Framework
1. Workforce Analysis
Objective: Understand current capabilities, identify gaps, and anticipate future needs.
Actions:

- Conduct a skills inventory of current staff to assess capacity for job coaching, placement, case management, and administrative support.
- Analyze caseloads and service delivery metrics to ensure adequate staffing ratios.
- Track turnover rates.
- Use demand forecasting based on participant intake, employer partnerships, and funding trends.

Tools: staff performance appraisals, surveys, and participant service tracking

2. Written Job Descriptions

Objective: Establish clear expectations, roles, and qualifications.

Actions:
- Develop job descriptions for each role, including:
- Include essential functions, required competencies, physical requirements, and accommodations for ADA compliance.

Best Practices:
- Align each description with organizational goals and participant-centered outcomes.
- Include language promoting diversity and accessibility.

3. Review & Update Job Descriptions

Objective: Maintain relevance with evolving organizational and regulatory needs.

Actions:
- Schedule annual reviews of job descriptions.
- Consult program managers and legal/compliance teams to align with:
  - Medicaid/waiver requirements
  - Department of Labor guidelines
  - Grantor/funder expectations
- Include feedback from staff performance evaluations and participant outcomes.

4. Recruitment

Objective: Attract mission-aligned, qualified candidates who reflect the communities served.

Actions:
- Develop inclusive job postings and ensure accessibility of the application process.
- Partner with local colleges, disability networks, and workforce boards.
- Post on niche platforms (e.g., Indeed).

Messaging Tip: Highlight the organization's values, impact, and commitment to career development.

5. Selection

Objective: Ensure consistent, fair, and competency-based hiring.

Actions:
- Use structured interviews and behavioral-based questions tailored to service delivery roles.
- Integrate situational role plays for job developers or employment specialists.
- Assess alignment with core competencies: collaboration, integrity, and impact.

6. Retention

Objective: Maintain high staff morale, reduce turnover, and support long-term engagement.

Actions:
- Provide regular training.
- Offer career ladders and leadership pathways for frontline workers.
- Implement wellness programs, flexible schedules, and recognition systems.

Feedback Loops: Conduct stay interviews and exit interviews to adjust retention strategy.

7. Succession Planning

Objective: Build internal pipelines for leadership and critical roles.

Actions:

- Identify key positions and at-risk roles.
- Develop mentorship and cross-training programs.
- Create succession maps and individual development plans (IDPs) for high-potential staff.

Tip: Ensure planning is included in staff with disabilities and staff from underrepresented groups.

Next Steps

- Establish a workforce planning point person for oversight.
- Draft a living workforce development plan reviewed annually.

Tree of Life Succession Plan

Purpose

To ensure continuity of leadership and maintain organizational stability during transitions, Tree of Life is committed to proactive succession planning for its key roles.

1. Key Positions Covered

Given a lean structure, succession planning focuses on these critical roles:

Role	Current Holder	Successor Type	Backup Person (if known)
Executive Director	[Jennifer Hughley]	Internal (preferred)	[Clint Gilder]
Member Services	[Emauel Veazey]	Internal or External	[Board Member]
Finance/Operations Lead	[Clint Gilder]	Internal	[Board Member]
Secretary	[Temperance Noel]	Internal	[NA]

2. Succession Strategy

Short-Term Emergency Coverage

For unplanned absences (illness, resignation):

- Interim leaders from existing staff will take on duties temporarily.
- A cross-training matrix ensures key functions can be maintained by at least one other staff member.

Planned Transitions

For resignations or retirements with notice:

- A 3-month transition plan will be initiated.
- Includes shadowing, documentation handoff, and introduction to external stakeholders.

3. Leadership Development Actions

Action	Frequency	Owner
Cross-train team members on core functions	Quarterly	Executive Director
Conduct skills-gap assessment	Annually	Executive Director
Identify and mentor high-potential team members	Ongoing	All Leaders
Update succession chart and backups	Annually	Operations Lead

4. Communication Plan

- Internal staff will be notified promptly of any transitions and interim plans.
- Partners and funders will be informed through formal communication from the Executive Director or Board Chair.
- Clear, unified messaging will ensure transparency and continuity.

5. Board Involvement

- The Board of Directors will review and approve all permanent leadership appointments.

6. Review and Update

This plan will be reviewed every 12 months or immediately after a leadership transition.

1.I.5
Tree of Life Incorporated demonstrates and practices the policy and procedures for implementing verification of backgrounds of the workforce; actions to be taken in

response to the information received; and timeframes for verification of the backgrounds. Fitness of duty is not required.

Verification of Backgrounds Policy and Procedures

About this Policy:
Effective January 1, 2021
Established December 15, 2020
Responsible: Jennifer Hughley/jennifer@treeoflifeincorporated.org

Scope:
If all persons served, staff, and stakeholders.

Policy Statement:
Tree of Life Incorporated has adopted staff procedures for implementing criminal checks, fingerprinting, drug testing, population checks, and driving records. Included are also workforce credentials, actions to be taken, and timeframes for verification of background.

Reason for the Policy:
To emphasize the need for review as most important aspect regarding hazardous materials.

Definitions:
1. Criminal History: includes review of criminal convictions and probation.
2. Fingerprinting: done by cross-referencing an applicant's fingerprints with a database.
3. Immunizations: Report to keep track of vaccinations.
4. Drug testing: A drug test is a technical analysis of a biological specimen, for example urine, hair, blood, breath, sweat, and/or oral fluid/saliva—to determine the presence or absence of specified parent drugs or their metabolites.
5. Motor Vehicle Records: provides a report on an individual's driving history in the state requested. This search will be run when driving is an essential requirement of the position.
6. Vulnerable population: background checks conducted on individuals who work or volunteer with vulnerable populations like children, the elderly, or people with disabilities. These checks aim to protect vulnerable individuals by ensuring the safety of those working with them.

1.Tree of Life Incorporated requires an employment offer prior to conducting a background check in the following: criminal, fingerprinting, drug testing, driver records, immunizations and vulnerable population check.

2.The Managing Director will order the background checks approval from Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, and an external resource will conduct the checks.

3.The external resources (GBI, GAPS, health department, local drug screening company, Department of Motors Vehicle) will notify the Managing Director regarding the results of the check. In instances where negative or incomplete information is obtained, the

leadership team will assess the potential risks and liabilities related to the job's requirements and determine whether the individual should be hired.

4. Written documentation (verifications) of the background checks will be maintained in the staff files indefinitely throughout their time of employment. However, there may be reasons to resubmit background checks which include suspicious activities for drug use, etc. Then the leadership team will make the decision to retake screenings. In instances where negative or incomplete information is obtained, the leadership team will assess the potential risks and liabilities related to the job's requirements and determine whether the individual should be hired.
Tree of Life reserves the right to modify this policy at any time without notice.

Written procedures that address verification of the credentials of the applicable workforce.

About this Policy:
Effective July 1, 2023
Established December 15, 2020
Responsible: Jennifer Hughley/jennifer@treeoflifeincorporated.org

Scope:
If all persons served, staff, and stakeholders.

Credential & Background Verification Procedures
Applies to: All staff, contractors, and volunteers delivering or supporting direct services

1. Purpose-To ensure that all members of the workforce are properly licensed, certified, or registered as required by law and organizational standards, and are fit to perform their assigned duties safely and effectively.

2. Scope-This procedure applies to:
- Employees and contracted providers in all U.S. states or provinces where Tree of Life operates or delivers services.
- Roles that require professional qualifications (Director).
3. Credential Verification
3.1 Primary Source Verification (PSV):
- Definition: PSV involves directly confirming licensure, certification, registration, and educational degrees with the *issuing entity*.
3.2 Verification Required For:
- Licensure (e.g., LPC, LCSW, RN)
- Certifications (e.g., CRC, CPR, CPI)
- College or professional degrees
- Registrations with relevant boards or agencies
3.3 Accepted Sources for PSV:
- State licensing boards (e.g., GA Composite Board)
- National certifying bodies (e.g., CRCC, NADD)
- Educational institutions (official transcripts)
- Online license lookup portals
3.4 Frequency:

- At hire: All credentials must be verified before service delivery begins.
- Ongoing: Annually or upon license/certification renewal, whichever comes first.

4. Background Checks

4.1 Required for All Roles Providing Direct or Indirect Services:
- Federal and state-level criminal history check (via GCIC or equivalent)
- Sex offender registry check
- Child abuse registry (if applicable)
- Driving record check (if transporting clients)

4.2 Timeframes:
- Initial check: Before the start date
- Trigger-based: Immediately upon notification of alleged misconduct

5. Fitness for Duty Evaluation

5.1 Criteria Assessed:
- Absence of substance use impairments
- Ability to comply with safety-sensitive responsibilities

5.2 Triggers for Fitness Evaluations:
- Return-to-work following a medical leave
- Concerns raised during employment (performance, behavior, incident)

5.3 Evaluation Methods:
- Health clearance forms
- Drug screening
- Job-specific physical exams (in applicable)

6. Actions Taken Based on Information Received

Scenario	Action
Unverified	Employment offer delayed or withdrawn. If current staff, immediate removal from duties until resolved.
Criminal conviction relevant to role	HR will review. May result in disqualification depending on nature/severity.
Failed fitness evaluation	Conditional employment deferred. Return-to-duty contingent on medical clearance or rehabilitation.

Note: All decisions are documented and comply with FCRA, EEOC, ADA, and state-specific employment laws.

7. Documentation and Storage
- Maintain verification records in personnel files.
- Access restricted to HR.

8. Auditing & Review
- Internal audit conducted annually.

1.I.6

New staff of Tree of Life Incorporated participate in an extensive orientation and training process (onboarding activities) within their first two weeks of employment. At a minimum, this process addresses:

☐ Confidentiality requirements
☐ Customer service
☐ Cultural competency and diversity
☐ Expectation regarding professional and ethical code of conduct
☐ Health issues and advocacy including prompt communication/reporting about health issues
☐ Promoting wellness of individuals served

☐ Mobility
☐ Person-Centered practice
☐ Professional boundaries and personal privacy
☐ VA Reporting of suspected abuse and neglect
☐ Rights of the persons served
☐ Rights of personnel
☐ Safety of Persons served
☐ Unique needs of persons served

Ongoing staff training and continuing education is provided through a variety of community resources. The Managing Director is responsible for maintaining comprehensive documentation of the specific training received by each staff. This documentation is retained in the staff training files.

Performance management of our human resource is an ongoing process. Position descriptions, which are reviewed annually, delineate the minimum requirements for each position, including education and experience qualifications, overall responsibilities, specific duties, and essential job functions. The Managing Director identifies the specific skills and characteristics needed by the staff. Through assessing individual knowledge and competencies, the Managing Director identifies the need for additional training related to the types of services being delivered and the individual needs of persons served.

Tree of Life Incorporated identifies mechanisms to communicate policies, procedures through personal use of the organization's email and use of the organization's website.

1.I.7
Tree of Life Incorporated promotes engagement through respect for all individuals in the workforce including open communication, a value drive focus, and initiatives. Also, written policy and procedures have been adopted to address mechanisms to provide feedback, mechanism to address concerns, job postings, promotion, disciplinary action, separation, and prevention of harassment.

Tree of Life Incorporated believes a high level of engagement promotes workforce retention, foster loyalty, and improve organizational performance and value. Examples are open communication through sharing suggestions in team meetings. Value of workforce quality and quantity of services delivered. Initiatives activities such as ceremonies at the end of the year that address most valuable staff and incentives for staff who meet individual work goals and objectives.

Verification of Backgrounds Policy and Procedures
About this Policy:
Effective January 1, 2021
Established December 15, 2020
Responsible: Jennifer Hughley/jennifer@treeoflifeincorporated.org

Scope:
If all persons served, staff, and stakeholders.

Policy Statement:

Tree of Life Incorporated has adopted procedures to address mechanisms to provide favorable and constructive feedback; mechanisms to address concerns; job postings, promotion, disciplinary action, separation, and prevention of harassment.

Reason for the Policy:
To emphasize the need for review as most important aspect regarding workforce engagement.

Definitions:
1.   Workforce engagement: refers to the level of an individual's commitment and connection to an organization.

Procedures

1.Provide open and honest communication to staff on both business and individual performance through regular team meetings and annual staff performance meeting.
2. Provide access for promotions within the organization and opportunities for other job postings through the organization's website.
- Interested staff must complete an internal application and forward it to the Managing Director.
- The Managing Director may initiate the procedure within the same time period and propose staff for the position.
- The Managing Director may, at its discretion, solicit outside candidates during or after the posting period.
3. Ensure that staff terminations are handled in a professional manner with minimal disruption to ongoing work functions. Types of terminations are voluntary and involuntary.
4. Carefully consider employee feedback and where appropriate act on suggestions offered and/or concerns raised; and
5. Provide mechanisms for the investigation and resolution of grievances.
6. Access to updates on new policies and procedures through the organization email system.

Tree of Life reserves the right to modify this policy at any time without notice.

Accessible to the Workforce
About this Policy:
Effective July 1, 2023
Established July 1, 2023
Responsible: Jennifer Hughley/jennifer@treeoflifeincorporated.org

Scope:
If all persons served, staff, and stakeholders.

1. Purpose-To ensure that all workforce members have easy, timely, and reliable access to Tree of Life's current policies and procedures to support compliance, quality service delivery, and workplace accountability.

2. Policy Statement-Tree of Life is committed to maintaining an informed and empowered workforce. All official organizational policies and written procedures shall be:

- Centrally stored
- Regularly updated
- Accessible to all personnel in formats that are easy to find and understand

No staff shall be required to perform duties or comply with expectations that have not been clearly communicated through accessible written guidance.

3. Access Methods-Workforce members will have access to policies through multiple platforms:

- Digital Access:
  - Hosted on the shared drive.
  - Clearly labeled folders by category (e.g., HR, Program Operations, Safety, Client Services).
- Printed Copies:
  - Maintained in physical policy binders in central office locations (e.g., administrative office, break room).
  - Available upon request for staff without reliable digital access.
- Verbal Explanation or Alternate Formats:
  - Available for individuals with visual, language, or reading challenges.
  - Translations or adaptive formats provided upon request in compliance with ADA and DEI standards.

4. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Leadership Team	Ensure policies are current, accessible, and distributed.
Director	Review relevant policies with new hires and during policy updates.
All Staff	Review policies as part of onboarding and ongoing training.

5. Training and Acknowledgment

- New hire orientation includes a walkthrough of policy access locations and highlights of key procedures.
- Annual training refreshers and written acknowledgments are collected to verify continued access and understanding.

6. Updates and Revisions

- Policy changes are communicated within 14 business days via:
  - Email notifications
  - Staff meetings
  - Update logs in shared drives
- Major changes are followed by staff Q&A sessions or targeted training.

7. Monitoring and Review

- Annual review of access effectiveness conducted by HR.
- Feedback on accessibility is welcomed via anonymous survey or direct supervisor channels.

I.I.8

Tree of Life identifies competencies to support the organization in the accomplishment of its mission and goals; and to meet the needs of the persons served by providing workforce development activities that includes continued workshops on pre employment and job placement services for individuals with disabilities. During the workshops, the staff complete self-assessments and provide feedback of workshops. Self-paced workshops are online and to be completed quarterly. The Managing Director includes this in the annual performance by reviewing and evaluating.

1.I.9
Tree of Life Incorporated demonstrates implementation of a performance appraisal process that includes identified workforce, criteria against which people are being appraised, involvement of the person being appraised, documentation requirements, timeframes/frequencies related to the performance appraisal process, measurable goals, sources of input, and opportunities for growth.

Performance Appraisal Policy and Procedures

About this Policy:
Effective January 1, 2021
Established December 15, 2020
Responsible: Jennifer Hughley/jennifer@treeoflifeincorporated.org

Scope:
If all persons served, staff, and stakeholders.

Policy Statement:
Tree of Life Incorporated has adopted procedures for approaches to performance appraisal to establish and maintain an equitable performance evaluation that defines and improves the performance level of both full and part time independent contractors.

Reason for the Policy:
To emphasize the need for review as an important aspect regarding performance appraisal to advance the organization's goals and to enhance communication between the Managing Director and staff.

Definitions:
1.   Performance Appraisal: is a regular review of a staff's job performance and overall contribution to a company. Also known as an annual review, performance review or evaluation

Procedures

1.Our company has a general criterion of what good performance looks like. To achieve a good performance evaluation, staff should:
- Meet your targets consistently.
- Complete your job duties as expected.
- Show a willingness to learn and develop.
- Follow our Code of Conduct and other company policies.
- Have a good attitude and collaborate well with your colleagues.

2. Each staff may excel in one aspect and need improvement in another. But, to remain employed with our company, you should meet a minimum standard for all these aspects and show a willingness to improve where appropriate.

3. Documentation: All performance evaluation forms will be signed by the staff, Managing Director, with a copy of the staff record of continuing education and professional development and any other accompanying memoranda or documentation for review and filing in staff's personnel record. The employee shall be given a copy of the forms and other documents to keep after all signatures and comments have been completed.

4. Performance appraisals are conducted annually for review. During this review, the Managing Director will fill out the performance evaluation report and arrange a meeting with the staff to discuss the review. Through this discussion, the Managing Director aims to:
- Recognize employees who are good at their jobs.
- Talk about career moves and employee motivations.
- Identify areas of improvement.
- Identify overall performance with persons served.

Note: Periodical reviews apply to employees who have completed their onboarding period.

5. Training and development opportunities are available for all staff year long. But, if the Managing Director identifies training needs in a specific area, they can discuss this with the staff during the performance review. An improvement plan can be established.

On-the-job training, job shadowing and other training methods are also appropriate when managers intend to promote a staff soon.

6. Appeals: Any staff who believes his or her performance rating is unfair or inaccurate may appeal by filling out an appeal form.

Tree of Life reserves the right to modify this policy at any time without notice.

1.I.10

Tree of Life Incorporated demonstrates commitment to performance measurement and management. Our organization has an adequate number workforce to implement plans of the persons served. By operating on a referral system through Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA), our organization receives on average 3 referrals every month. With this small caseload the Managing Director with the assistance of the job coach deliver services to meet the mission and goal of the organization, ensure safety by following federal, state, and local guidelines. Also, our staff are educated, has the experience, and trained to ensure safety.

As it relates to unplanned absences, working on a flexible schedule with a small caseload, it is easy to meet demands when working with a staff of 3 (1 full time and 4 part time employment specialists). This includes coordination, organization, teamwork, and preparation. However, to address adequate workforce for a growing organization, proper

and effective selection and recruitment planning is important for the direction of Tree of Life Incorporated, persons served, and other stakeholders.

1.I.11

Tree of Life Incorporated is knowledgeable about and ensures that services are provided in accordance with external and internal requirements which includes regulatory, professional degrees, and trainings to maintain CARF standards. Being a provider for GVRA, our organization staff must meet certain requirements including regulatory (criminal background, professional experience either through experience or a professional degree). Also, as our organization moves forward with being a provider for GVRA, our workforce meeting CARF standards are vital to the process of addressing the provision of services to persons served. All requirements (regulatory, licensure, registration, certification, professional degrees, and trainings) are reviewed during annual leadership meetings and addressed as needed.

1.I.12

Tree of Life Incorporated succession planning addresses future workforce needs; identification of key positions; identification of the competencies required for key positions; review of talent in the current workforce; identification of workforce readiness; gap analysis; and strategic development. Our organization was established June 2014; and as this agency shifts, succession planning is vital to identifying workforce needs. As the number of persons served increases, hiring qualified staff and individuals that fit our culture is one of the biggest needs for workforce.

Beginning the recruitment and selection process is the first step in preparing for future workforce. By using external sources (Team Georgia website, Georgia Department of Labor, company website), our organization plans on collecting resumes to determine who will make it to the interview process. During the interview process, there are certain competencies required. Employment Specialist skills are as follows: effectively manage caseloads; develop individual service plan that fits the needs, skills, and barriers of persons served; ability to adapt to the organization's culture; and effectively connect with employer worksites. The Managing Director skills are as follow: effectively direct business operations; give direction and leadership to achieve the mission and goal of the organization; and continue to develop strategic guidance.

A review will be taken of the current staff (current managing director and job coach) to assess opportunities for growth within the company. The leadership team will complete this review and gap analysis based on the annual performance appraisal along with adding workforce readiness in different areas needed. This information helps to provide goal setting for the organization.

SECTION J

TECHNOLOGY

1.J.1

Tree of Life Incorporated is guided by our leadership team. Moving into a CARF accredited organization we are committed to exploring and, within our resources, acquiring and implementing technology systems and solutions that will support and enhance business processes and practices, privacy, and security of protected information; service delivery; performance management and improvement; and status faction of persons served, personnel, and other stakeholders.

Tree of Life identifies gaps and opportunities in the use of technology by completing ongoing assessments for cell phone usage and renewal every month for the Managing Director; the Managing Director's laptop usage replacement is every 5 years; and the organization's Microsoft Outlook as the email provider and managing caseloads, and website subscription are all renewed monthly.

Sensitive data of persons served are kept private and confidential through our case management system (Outlook OneDrive) where only the Managing Director and leadership team, and Employment Specialists have access. Sensitive data is also secure, confidential, and has back up options through Microsoft Outlook. Passwords are updated every 90 days.

Assistive technology is available on an as needed basis per individual served in our organization. Tree of Life completes the necessary paperwork through GVRA to connect persons served with the necessary Assistive technology to assist with employment needs.

Remote services (zoom and Microsoft Teams) are being utilized to deliver the following services: initial meetings, follow up meetings, progress report meetings, job development, and workplace readiness classes. Information and communication technologies allow for forms to be submitted electronically. Ongoing email and phone communication feedback is obtained for effectiveness of this remote technology service. Examples include progress reports, service agreements, Microsoft Outlook, Docusign, accounting, invoice billings, and Zoom.

1.J.2

Tree of Life Incorporated leadership team has adopted and implemented a technology and system plan that addresses the Work Ready Program. Our plan for technology and system includes: a strategy for using the current technology more effectively and a roadmap for upcoming modifications for expansion and growth to meet the vision and culture needs of our organization.

Tree of Life: Technology and Systems Plan

1. Overview and Purpose

This Technology and Systems Plan serves as a roadmap to ensure that Tree of Life's technology infrastructure aligns with and supports the organization's mission and strategic priorities. It enables:
- Secure, efficient, and modernized operations
- Protection of sensitive organizational and client data
- Streamlined access to services for both staff and clients
- Performance improvement through reliable and data-informed systems
- Effective service delivery with user-friendly, integrated technologies

The plan is reviewed annually and updated as needed to remain aligned with emerging needs and the strategic direction of Tree of Life.

2. Current Technology Inventory

Tool/Device	Primary Use
DocuSign	Secure electronic signatures for contracts and forms
Microsoft Word	Document creation and policy documentation
Email	Core communication channel
Zoom	Virtual meetings, trainings, client consultations
Social Media	Community engagement, fundraising campaigns, public awareness
Team Meetings	Project coordination, decision-making, and team-building
Cell Phones	Mobile access for remote and field staff, communication on-the-go
Computers	Day-to-day administrative work, client recordkeeping, and program tracking

3. Strategic Alignment with Tree of Life Goals
This technology plan directly supports Tree of Life's strategic plan by enabling the following:

Strategic Focus	Technology Support
Business Process Efficiency	Using shared collaboration tools
Data Protection	Implementing strong cybersecurity protocols, encryption, and access controls
Effective Service Delivery	Reliable virtual platforms, modernized communication tools, and user-friendly systems
Access to Services	Mobile device use, web-based forms, and remote communication tools
Performance Improvement	Outcome tracking tools, and internal feedback systems

4. Technology Goals and Priorities (2025–2027)
Goals
- Enable seamless collaboration.
- Protect sensitive data across all systems and devices
- Ensure continuous performance improvement through analytics
- Enhance digital access to services for both staff and community members
- Centralize client, donor, and program data into a secure CRM system

Priorities
1. Standardize and refresh all computers and staff cell phones
2. Launch ongoing tech training and cybersecurity education
3. Implement real-time performance tracking dashboards

5. Technology Acquisition, Maintenance, and Replacement

Category	Policy Overview
Acquisition	Conduct annual needs assessments, align with strategic priorities
Maintenance	Annual security audits, and routine device checkups
Replacement	Computers: Every 4–5 years; Cell Phones: Every 3 years; Software: Reviewed annually

6. Resources Required

Resource Type	Details
Personnel	Dedicated IT support (internal or consultant), trained system administrator
Financial	Budget for hardware refresh, new tools, training programs, cybersecurity tools
Infrastructure	Cloud-hosted systems, secure storage, device management software
Training	Cybersecurity, collaboration tools, data usage policies

7. Implementation Timeline

Initiative	Start Date	Completion Target	Lead Role
Computer and Cell Phone Inventory & Upgrade	2025	Onoing	Director
Staff Tech & Security Training Launch	2025	Ongoing	Director
Performance Monitoring Dashboard	2025	Ongoing	Director

8. Data Protection Strategy
- Enforce role-based access and password management
- Use data encryption for devices and storage
- Implement Mobile Device Management (MDM) for phones
- Require annual security awareness training
- Maintain secure backups for all sensitive data

9. Review and Continuous Improvement
- Annual Review: Conduct a full review to align with fiscal planning
- Update Triggers: Significant program changes, technology failures, security incidents
- Stakeholder Involvement: Include input from leadership
- Documentation: Maintain an evolving tech manual and update digital asset inventory

1.J.3.

Tree of Life Incorporated demonstrates implementation of a technology and information process that includes identifying acceptable use, backup/recovery, business continuity/disaster recovery, and security.

Technology Policy and Procedures
About this Policy:
Effective July 1, 2023
Updated July 1, 2023
Responsible: Jennifer Hughley/jennifer@treeoflifeincorporated.org

Scope:
If all persons served, staff, and stakeholders.

1. Acceptable Use Policy
Purpose:
To define the acceptable use of Tree of Life's technology resources to ensure safe, ethical, and lawful usage.
Guidelines:
- Use organizational resources (computers, email, phones) strictly for business purposes.
- Access only information and systems necessary for one's role.
- Do not install unauthorized software or use organizational assets for personal gain.
- Prohibited: accessing inappropriate sites, downloading pirated content, or using resources for political or commercial activities.
- All activity on Tree of Life systems may be monitored and logged.
2. Backup and Recovery Policy
Purpose:
To ensure critical data is backed up regularly and can be restored in case of data loss.
Procedures:
- Backups performed weekly for all critical systems and cloud-stored files.
- Use encrypted cloud storage with version history and redundancy.

3. Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plan
Purpose:
To ensure minimal disruption during a crisis and rapid restoration of operations.
Components:
- Disaster Types: Natural disasters, cyberattacks, hardware failures, data breaches.
- Recovery Time Objective (RTO): Critical systems restored within 24 hours.

4. Security Policy
A. Access Management
- Terminated staff access revoked within 24 hours.
- Password policy: minimum 12 characters, changed every 90 days.
B. Audit Capabilities
- System logs retained for 1 year.
- Access logs reviewed quarterly.
- Automated alerts for unauthorized access attempts.
C. Data Export & Transfer

- Data exports must be encrypted during transfer.
- Only authorized users may export or transmit client data.
- External transfers require executive approval.

D. Decommissioning & Data Destruction
- Physical destruction (shredding) for media no longer in use.

E. Protection from Malicious Activity
- Endpoint protection software installed on all devices.
- Firewalls and anti-malware tools enabled and updated automatically.
- Phishing simulations conducted semi-annually.
- Suspicious activity must be reported to HR.

F. Remote Access & Support
- Remote desktop access allowed only via VPN.
- Support via secure screen-sharing platforms (e.g., TeamViewer, Microsoft Remote Desktop).

G. System Update
- Updates deployed monthly; critical patches applied within 48 hours.

H. Configuration Management
- Firewalls, routers, and email servers configured using least privilege principle.

I. Change Control
- Major changes require risk assessment and executive approval.
- Post-change reviews held to assess success and identify issues.

5. Training & Enforcement
- Annual mandatory cybersecurity training for all staff.
- Staff must sign an acknowledgment of policy understanding.
- Violations of policy may result in disciplinary action, up to termination.

6. Policy Review and Updates
- The policy shall be reviewed annually or upon significant changes in technology or regulatory requirements.
- Amendments must be approved by the leadership team.

1.J.4

Purpose
To ensure Tree of Life can maintain or rapidly resume mission-critical operations during or after a disaster, facility disruption, cyberattack, or other significant event.
This procedure ensures BC/DR strategies are regularly reviewed, tested, improved, and supported by comprehensive staff training.

2. Annual Review Procedure Overview
Step 1: Schedule and Initiate Annual BC/DR Review
- Timeline: Initiate each year
- Participants: Work ready Programs
- Scope includes: physical infrastructure, technology systems, communication protocols,
Step 2: Conduct a Tabletop Exercise or Simulation
- Simulate disaster scenarios (e.g., facility fire, cyberattack, power outage, public health emergency)
- Document how the organization responds in real-time

- Assign observers to record decision-making, system responses, and staff communications

Step 3: Analyze for the Following

Conduct a structured post-exercise evaluation to assess:

Evaluation Area	Key Focus Questions
Effectiveness	Did critical services continue or resume in a timely manner?
Areas Needing Improvement	Where were delays, failures, or confusion observed?
Actions Needing Improvement	Which existing plans or tools didn't work as intended?
Corrective Actions	What changes or new measures are required?
Implementation of Actions	Were these changes implemented successfully?
Result Assessment	Did the new actions solve the initial problems?
Education & Training	Did staff respond properly? Do they require more training or tools?

3. Post-Evaluation Reporting

Create a formal BC/DR After-Action Report that includes:
- Summary of the test or incident
- Evaluation results (effectiveness, gaps, etc.)
- Recommended improvements
- Assigned responsible staff for each action item
- Deadlines for implementation
- Plan for follow-up review

Submit the report to leadership and store a copy in the secured compliance drive.

4. Improvement Actions & Implementation
- Update BC/DR Documentation: Integrate revised protocols and updated contact rosters

5. Staff Education & Training

Training Requirements:
- All staff must receive annual BC/DR training
- Leadership must review team-specific responsibilities
- Fire drills and evacuation training conducted annually at the new facility
- Director must test system backups and recovery quarterly

Training Components:
- BC/DR policy overview
- Role-specific actions during an emergency
- Contact trees and emergency communication protocols
- Cybersecurity basics for disaster scenarios

6. Documentation & Audit Trail

Maintain:
- Signed training attendance sheets
- Completed after-action reports
- Copies of updated plans and protocols

7. Annual Timeline Snapshot
 Annually Activity
        Conduct BC/DR test and review
        Implement improvements; deliver training
        Conduct follow-up check-in; validate changes
        Update documentation; prepare next year's cycle

8. Policy Review
This procedure will be reviewed annually or after any major incident to reflect lessons learned, facility changes, and updated technology infrastructure.

1.J.5
Tree of Life Incorporated provides documented training to staff to ensure familiarity with the organization's procedures, understand what is sensitive and vulnerable, and are trained on steps to take to protect data assets. This information assists staff with guidance on how to demonstrate technology security procedures when performing job duties. Staff also completes ongoing training. Documentation of training is completed by the providers and is recorded in the staff files.

1.J.6
Tree of Life Incorporated utilizes information and communication technologies to deliver services remotely through video and phone conferencing for education, counseling, follow ups, team meetings, and completing assessments. Written procedures are implemented.

Information and Communication Technology Delivery of Services

About this Policy:
Effective January 1, 2021
Established December 15, 2020
Responsible: Jennifer Hughley/jennifer@treeoflifeincorporated.org

Scope:
If all persons served, staff, and stakeholders.

Policy Statement:
Tree of Life Incorporated has adopted procedures to deliver services of computers, email, the internet, and software daily.

Reason for the Policy:
To emphasize the need for review as an important aspect regarding service delivery for information and communication technology usage.

Definitions:
1.   Technology: communication technologies, including the internet, wireless networks, cell phones, computers, software, middleware, video-conferencing, social networking, and other media applications and services.

Procedures

It is important persons served to know consent is required for delivery of services through video and phone conferencing. The person served during orientation completes an informed consent to acknowledge and confirm Tree of Life using ICT as a method to provide video conferencing, audio conferencing, and photographing.

Tree of Life Incorporated utilizes ICT to makes decisions with persons served for case management services via computer and electronic devices (phone) for routine initial meetings, follow ups, and regular meetings.

During these routine meetings the following are identified: person served start date of service delivery, ongoing usage if changes occur such as technology failure with Microsoft Team Meets or phone failure; and to confirm location of the remote site.

Tree of Life reserves the right to modify this policy at any time without notice.

1.J.7
For service delivery to be effective, staff are trained to use equipment and technology to deliver services and to guide persons served, and others in the remote setting on its use. The following competency-based training on equipment (Microsoft Outlook) is used: features, setup, use, maintenance, safety considerations, infection in control, and troubleshooting. Annual documentation is kept in the staff file.

1.J.8
Tree of Life Incorporated provides appropriate instruction and training to persons served during orientation. Person served are explained the guidelines for remote services either through video or phone conferencing. If the person served needs further assistance, a family member or other support is invited to participate. An informed consent is completed through Docusign before the conference begins.

The software used are Docusign or Microsoft teams. For Docusign, there is an email sent to the persons served for a review, then signature. For Microsoft teams, there is also an email invitation sent to the persons served. Once signed or accepted, a link will be sent back to the person served. There are no trouble shooting for the person served, this is to be completed by the Provider. If there are issues with connection or other problems, the organization uses the manual form which will be mailed to the person served; and a phone conference will be utilized instead.

1.J.9
Tree of Life Incorporated identifies staff will assist with accessing technology services for remote services and face to face meetings. Determined by the identified need, staff assists the person served with transitioning into employment. The staff assists on the job if there are technology needs. For instance, employment specialist assists with clocking the person served into work. The employment specialist while assisting will be able to determine during the planning stage, what accommodations or modifications are needed relating to interventions, equipment, materials, and environment of the remote site.

1.J.10
Tree of Life Incorporated, prior to the start of each remote session, all participants are identified including the originating site and remote site. The following information is relevant: credentials of the provider, structure and timing of services, recordkeeping, scheduling, contact between sessions, privacy and security, potential risks, confidentiality, billing, rights, and responsibilities.

1.J.11
Tree of Life Incorporated maintains equipment according with manufacturer's recommendations. Staff is educated on the following equipment: Microsoft Outlook.

1.J.12
Tree of Life Incorporated identifies procedures that address the unique aspects of service delivery via information and communication technologies, including: the provider becoming familiar with the procedures of that setting in the event where there is an emergency involving the person served; and access to emergency contact information for the person served and local emergencies resources information.

<p align="center">Technology and Systems Plan</p>

About this Policy:
Effective January 1, 2021
Established December 15, 2020
Responsible: Jennifer Hughley/jennifer@treeoflifeincorporated.org

Scope:
If all persons served, staff, and stakeholders.

Policy Statement:
Tree of Life Incorporated has adopted procedures unique aspects of service delivery via information and communication technologies.

Reason for the Policy:
To emphasize the need for review as an important aspect regarding service delivery for information and communication technology usage for persons served at remote sites and emergency contacts availability.

Definitions:
1.   Technology: communication technologies, including the internet, wireless networks, cell phones, computers, software, middleware, videoconferencing, social networking, and other media applications and services.

Procedures

Tree of Life Incorporated identifies service delivery via communication and technology for remote sites where persons served are training or employed, have access to data is especially important in the case of an emergency. Microsoft Outlook is management system that can be accessed from any computer or cell phone (work device). Persons served emergency contact information and resources can be accessed (password protected) by the Managing Director and the employment specialists, with the approval

of the leadership team. Another collaboration tool utilize by our organization for remote sites includes Microsoft Team in the case of emergencies for persons served. Microsoft Team is secured and protected.

Tree of Life reserves the right to modify this policy at any time without notice.

RIGHTS OF PERSONS SERVED

1.K.1
Principle Statement
Tree of Life Incorporated is committed to protecting and promoting the rights of persons served. This commitment guides the delivery of services and supports and our ongoing interactions with the persons served.

Rights Policies
Our organization ensures comprehensive policies regarding the protection of human rights and the dignity of persons served have been adopted and implemented. Rights of persons served policies are communicated to the persons receiving services in a manner understandable to them prior to service delivery and updates throughout their tenure at Tree of Life Incorporated.
An array of policies, procedures, and practices to promote the following rights of the persons served:
• Confidentiality of information
• Privacy
• Freedom from abuse, financial or other exploitation, retaliation, neglect or humiliation
• Access to their own files & pertinent information to assist with decision making
• Investigation and resolution of alleged infringement of rights.

Informed consent or refusal or choice regarding:
o Service delivery
o Release of information
o Concurrent services
o Composition of service delivery team

Access or referral to:
Legal entities
Self help support and advocacy support

Access to:
Investigation and resolution of alleged infringement rights and other legal rights including

Examples are:
Documentation of policies and practices promoting rights of persons served include:
☐ Individualized Person-Centered Service Plans
☐ Codes of Ethical Conduct
☐ Maintenance of a single confidential record for each person served
☐ Consent for Release of Information forms
☐ Initial Program Planning Meeting Notes
☐ Interdisciplinary Team Meeting Notes
☐ Sign out/in sheets
☐ Client Rights Acknowledgement
☐ Internal Investigation Results Summaries
☐ Website Postings

Organizational policies, procedures and practices are designed to nurture and protect the dignity and respect of the persons served.

1.K.2
Communication of Rights

Tree of Life Incorporated has adopted and implemented a system of rights that nurtures and protects the dignity and respect of the persons served. Staff members are responsible for ensuring that rights information is transmitted in a manner and fashion that is clear and understandable. Rights information is included during orientation along with notes, conveyed in individual planning and replanning meetings and presented through PowerPoint presentations.

Concerted effort is devoted to conveying complete rights information to the individuals we serve that are always available for review and/or clarification.
In addition to rights training, persons served are encouraged and supported in self advocacy efforts. These efforts place great emphasis on facilitating the comprehension of rights, taking into consideration cultural differences, ethnicity, academic aptitude and learning styles of persons served.

Examples
Some examples of the venues for communicating rights to the individuals we serve include:
☐ Initial Planning/Orientation Meetings
☐ Website
☐ Marketing Brochures
☐ Organizational Code of Ethical Conduct
☐ Formal/Informal Face to Face Discussions

Tree of Life – Rights of Persons Served Policy Provisions

1. Purpose
To ensure that all individuals receiving services from Tree of Life are aware of their rights in a manner that is clear, accessible, and affirming—prior to or at the start of services—and that they can access these rights at any point during service delivery.

2. Policy Statement
Tree of Life is committed to respecting, protecting, and promoting the dignity and rights of every person served. These rights will be clearly communicated in a format and language the individual can understand and will be available for reference throughout the duration of service.

3. Communication of Rights
a. Timing
 • Rights must be reviewed and explained:
   o Before service delivery begins (whenever possible), or
   o At the point of service initiation (e.g., intake or first contact)
b. Method of Communication
 • Use language appropriate to the individual's literacy level and preferred language.
 • Provide alternate formats when necessary:

- Large print, braille, or audio for individuals with visual impairments
- Translation or interpretation services for those with limited English proficiency
- Easy-read versions for persons with intellectual disabilities

c. Staff Responsibility
- The designated intake or case worker is responsible for ensuring that each person served:
  - Receives the Rights of Persons Served materials
  - Has the opportunity to ask questions and receive clarification
  - Signs an acknowledgment of understanding (when applicable)

4. Access to Rights Information
- Rights documentation must be available at all service sites at all times.
- Post a summary version of the Rights of Persons Served in public-facing areas (e.g., lobbies, intake offices).
- Ensure a full version is provided in intake packets and client handbooks.
- Rights information must be re-reviewed annually with persons in long-term service and upon request.

5. Training and Staff Accountability
- All staff are trained during onboarding and annually on how to:
  - Communicate rights respectfully and clearly
  - Document acknowledgment appropriately
  - Respond to rights-related questions or grievances

6. Monitoring and Review
- Periodic audits (e.g., quarterly) will verify:
  - That rights are being communicated at intake
  - That materials are available and accessible
  - That client records include acknowledgment where appropriate

About this Policy:
Effective July 1, 2023
Established July 1, 2023
Responsible: Jennifer Hughley/jennifer@treeoflifeincorporated.org

Scope:
If all persons served, staff, and stakeholders.

1.K.3
Tree of Life Incorporated identifies clear protocols related to formal complaints, as defined by the organization. (Updated and Attached)

Grievance Policy and Procedure

About this Policy:
Effective July 1, 2023
Established July 1, 2023
Responsible: Jennifer Hughley/jennifer@treeoflifeincorporated.org

Scope:
If all persons served, staff, and stakeholders.

Reason for the Policy:
To emphasize the need for review as an important aspect regarding methods used to explain to personnel and persons served in a way that meets their needs.

1. Policy Statement
Tree of Life is committed to providing high-quality, respectful, and equitable services. We recognize the right of every person served to file a formal complaint when they believe their rights, dignity, or quality of care have been compromised. No individual shall face retaliation, discrimination, or loss of services as a result of filing a complaint.

2. Definition of a Formal Complaint
A formal complaint is a written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction made by a person served (or their representative) concerning:
- The quality or appropriateness of services provided
- Interactions with staff
- Violations of rights
- Unsafe conditions
- Discrimination or unfair treatment

Complaints may be made in writing, electronically, or orally and will be treated with equal seriousness.

3. Non-Retaliation and Accessibility
- Tree of Life prohibits retaliation against anyone who submits a complaint.
- Submitting a complaint will not affect access to services.
- Complaint procedures will be readily available at all service locations, including:
  - Front desk areas
  - Client handbooks
  - Organizational website
- Forms, instructions, and assistance for filing a complaint will be clearly posted and accessible.

4. Efforts to Resolve the Complaint
Our approach to complaints is person-centered and focused on resolution. Steps include:
- Acknowledging and listening to the concern
- Investigating the issue fairly and confidentially
- Proposing solutions or corrective actions when necessary
- Providing updates and final outcomes to the person served

5. Levels of Review
Level 1: Informal Resolution
- Persons served are encouraged (but not required) to raise concerns directly with a program or service staff member.

Level 2: Formal Internal Review
- Complaint submitted to a supervisor, case manager, or the designated complaint officer
- Investigation completed within 10 business days
- Written response provided with findings and next steps

Level 3: Administrative Review
- If dissatisfied with Level 2, the complaint may be escalated to the Program Director or Executive Director
- Final decision made within 10 additional business days

6. Timelines
- All complaints will receive an initial acknowledgment within 3 business days
- Investigations and decisions are typically completed within 10–20 business days
- Extensions may apply if more information is needed, but the person served will be notified in writing

7. Written Notification
The person served will receive:
- A summary of the complaint
- The results of the review or investigation
- Any actions taken or proposed
- Information about further options, including appeals or external review

Notifications will be clear, timely, and in the person's preferred format whenever possible.

8. Rights and Responsibilities

Party	Rights	Responsibilities
Person Served	To be heard, respected, supported, and free from retaliation	To provide accurate information and engage respectfully
Staff	To respond without personal risk or retaliation	To handle complaints promptly, respectfully, and confidentially
Advocates	To assist in navigating the process	To act in the person's best interest and maintain confidentiality

9. Access to Assistance
- Tree of Life provides access to internal advocates, and
- Will refer persons served to external advocacy organizations if needed
- Clients may designate a family member, friend, or caseworker to assist in the process

10. How to File a Complaint
Complaints can be submitted:
- In person to any Tree of Life staff member
- By calling the [Designated Complaint Officer's Phone Number]
- In writing to [P.O. Box 3304 Lagrange GA 30241]
- By email at [info@treeoflifeincorporated.org]

Assistance with completing a complaint is always available—just ask.

11. Documentation of Complaints
- All formal complaints will be documented in a secure, centralized log maintained by the Complaint Officer or designated staff member.
- Documentation will include:
  - Date of receipt
  - Nature of the complaint

- o Steps taken to investigate and resolve
- o Outcome of the complaint
- o Dates of all communications and resolutions
- Complaint records are retained in accordance with Tree of Life's data retention policy and are reviewed during quality improvement efforts.

1.K.4

An analysis of formal complaints gives our organization valuable information to facilitate change that results in better customer service and results for persons served.

Tree of Life Incorporated leadership team conducts an annual review of complaints to determine whether formal complaints were received, the existence of any trends, identify areas for performance improvement, note any actions that need to be taken, implementation of actions, and whether actions taken accomplished the intended results.

Our system of formally reviewing complaints, grievances and appeals assists in risk management and provides valuable information that is used to facilitate change that results in better customer service. This comprehensive review is helpful in identifying changes that need to be made in service delivery and in determining the effectiveness of changes that have been made. Note* No complaints have been filed with Tree of Life Incorporated person served. No data analysis to perform.

ACCESSIBILITY

1.L.1

Principle Statement

Tree of Life Incorporated works to promote accessibility and the removal of all barriers for the persons served, personnel and other stakeholders. To this end, we have developed a comprehensive accessibility planning process to address the following barriers to accessibility:

1. Architecture (office space used for administration purposes only).
2. Environment (office space used for administration purposes only.)
3. Attitudes (identified)
4. Finances (identified)
5. Employment (identified)
6. Communication (identified)
7. Technology (identified)
8. Transportation (Ongoing)
9. Community Integration (Ongoing)
10. Any Other Barrier

Leadership

Tree of Life Incorporated' leadership team is actively involved in promoting and ensuring full program and service access for all persons served. Our leadership's advocacy efforts include respecting ethno-cultural diversity and ensuring that language and cultural differences are not barriers to fully accessing and truly participating in all available services.

It is the desire and responsibility of all individuals in leadership roles to advocate for:

☐ Equal access to all programs and services

☐ Value for persons receiving services

☐ Safety of persons receiving services

Tree of Life' ongoing planning to enhance accessibility includes:

☐ Providing reasonable accommodations and supports to promote equal opportunity for participation of persons served as members of our organization's leadership and staff.
☐ Providing for our organization's participation in community efforts to promote social, economic, employment and transportation opportunities for persons with disabilities.
☐ Implementing a referral system that assists the persons served in accessing and using other resources that are accessible when an accommodation cannot be made by our agency.

Tree of Life evaluates and carefully considers the merits of all requests for accommodation to determine whether any remedial actions are appropriate.

The governance utilizes a comprehensive, but "user-friendly" accessibility planning process to identify and address the needs of persons served, agency personnel and other stakeholders. This planning process is specifically designed to remove barriers that limit access to services and/or leadership.

The goal of Tree of Life Incorporated accessibility planning process is to identify and address accessibility issues in order to enhance quality of life for those served, maintain nondiscriminatory employment practices, meet legal mandatory regulatory requirements and satisfy stakeholder expectations.

1.L.2 Accessibility Planning

Objectives:

1.   Identify barriers
2.   Removal of barriers
3.   Areas needing improvement

Members of the leadership team has adopted an Accessibility Plan to the identified barriers that limit access to Tree of Life' services.

Tree of Life Accessibility Plan (Summary Format)
This Accessibility Plan identifies major categories of potential barriers and outlines planned or ongoing actions to improve accessibility. It is reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect organizational changes, new accessibility standards, or emerging needs.

Accessibility Area	Barrier Status	Actions to Be Taken	Timeline	Review/Update Notes
Architecture	New Facility	Assess for ADA compliance; ensure physical accessibility where required	Q1 2026	Annual review for compliance; update if office functions change
Environment	New facility	Evaluate lighting, noise, and workspace comfort for inclusivity	Q1 2026	Annual evaluation; include in facility audits
Attitudes	Identified	Provide mandatory disability inclusion training for all staff	Q2 2026	Review staff feedback and adjust training content annually

Finances	Identified	Create financial assistance resources or partnerships to support accessibility	Q3 2026	Review program utilization and funding opportunities annually
Employment	Identified	Implement inclusive recruitment and reasonable accommodation processes	Q4 2025	Annual HR audit; collect feedback from employees with disabilities
Communication	Identified	Ensure all public-facing content is available in plain language and alternative formats	Q3 2025	Quarterly review of materials and request tracking
Technology	Identified	Upgrade systems for screen reader compatibility and keyboard navigation	Q2 2026	Annual digital accessibility test
Transportation	Ongoing	Partner with local transportation providers; offer support services for access	Ongoing	Ongoing tracking and feedback analysis
Community Integration	Ongoing	Strengthen partnerships with accessible venues and service providers	Ongoing	Monitor engagement levels and update resources
Any Other Barrier	Emerging barriers may arise	Maintain open reporting channels; document and address new issues as identified	Ongoing	Included in annual accessibility review

Accessibility plans identify barriers and the corrective action that is necessary to address them, establish a priority ranking for each item, project the costs associated with each item, identify potential funding sources, target completion dates, identify the party

responsible for each item and summarize how barrier removal will facilitate consumer choice, community integration and access.

Promoting accessibility is our enduring commitment. Maintaining vigilance concerning Tree of Life' accessibility and effecting change to address integration of persons served into their communities of choice is a perpetual organizational focus.

1.L.3

Tree of Life Incorporated works closely with stakeholder, Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency All services provided by Tree of Life are accessible to any person who meets GVRA specific eligibility/entrance criteria. Reasonable accommodations are provided as necessary to enable individuals to fully access any desired service and truly participate in all activities sponsored by our organization. This includes providing equal opportunity for all persons served to participate in company sponsored training and/or social events. Central to this process is the comprehensive person-centered planning process that is completed with each individual served.

 Examples
The following examples illustrate accommodations that have been made:

 Meetings to initiate services include a discussion of any accommodations an individual may need to access chosen services. At this time, individuals establish a work schedule based on hours of operation and may be adjusted to accommodate for individual vocational rehabilitative considerations. Also, employment specialists are utilized as job supports/accommodations until the person served become stabilized on the job.
 Through our comprehensive personal planning process individuals and other stakeholders identify reasonable accommodations. Collaborative efforts are then undertaken to make the accommodation. For example, an individual seeking supported employment in the community as a receptionist identified the need for a headset to effectively respond to telephone calls. A headset was purchased and training in its use was provided. Subsequently, with job development assistance, the individual secured a position as a receptionist wherein she utilized the equipment to complete her requisite duties.