Code of Ethics and Conduct Policy

Montezuma Valley Volunteer Community Service Organization (MVVCSO)

Effective Date: June 28, 2025

Purpose

The Montezuma Valley Volunteer Community Service Organization (MVVCSO) is committed to serving the Ranchita community with the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and accountability. This Code of Ethics and Conduct Policy establishes expectations for ethical behavior and professional conduct for all individuals associated with MVVCSO, aligning with its mission, 2025 bylaws, and applicable laws, including the California Corporations Code and the California Nonprofit Integrity Act. It also supports MVVCSO's readiness for grant funding by demonstrating strong ethical governance.

Scope

This Code applies to:

- All Directors (Article IV, Section 1).
- All Officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Vice roles) (Article V, Section 1).
- All Volunteers, including those in volunteer programs (Article XIII).
- All Committee Members (e.g., Finance, Grant, Community Engagement, Ethics, Election Committees) (Article VI).
- Any Authorized Users of MVVCSO digital services or social media accounts (e.g., RCO@Gmail, ranchita@mvvcso.org) (Article VII, Section 1).
- Any other individuals designated by the Board to represent MVVCSO in an official capacity (e.g., grant coordinators, community liaisons).

Policy Principles

1. Integrity and Honesty

- Act in good faith, with honesty, and in the best interests of MVVCSO and the Ranchita community, per California Corporations Code § 5231 (duty of care).
- Refrain from misrepresentation, fraud, or deceit in all MVVCSO activities, including financial transactions, communications, and reporting.
- Disclose any conflicts of interest and recuse oneself from related decisions, per Article IV, Section 6, and the Board-approved Conflict of Interest Policy.
- Avoid self-dealing transactions as defined in California Corporations Code § 5233, ensuring no personal financial gain from MVVCSO decisions unless fully disclosed and approved.

2. Transparency and Accountability

- Maintain accurate and accessible records of MVVCSO activities, including financials, minutes, and membership rosters, per Article VII, Section 1, and the California Nonprofit Integrity Act (Government Code § 12586).
- Report suspected misconduct promptly to the Ethics Committee, protected by whistleblower provisions (Article XI).
- Comply with all MVVCSO policies, including the Debit Card Use Policy, Permitted Use Agreement for Digital Services, and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).
- Ensure actions are authorized by the Board or relevant committee, avoiding unilateral decisions unless permitted in emergencies (Article IV, Section 7; Article VIII).
- Cooperate fully with audits, investigations, or reviews conducted by the Finance or Ethics Committees (Article VI, Section 1A, 1D), as required by strict grantors and California law.

3. Inclusivity and Respect

- Foster an inclusive environment, ensuring all community members are treated with dignity, regardless of age, income, disability, or background, per Article XII and California Civil Code § 51 (Unruh Civil Rights Act).

- Provide accessible materials and accommodations (e.g., large-print, screen-reader-compatible formats, translation services), per Article XV and the Americans with Disabilities Act (28 CFR § 36).
- Refrain from discrimination, harassment, or retaliation in any form, adhering to California Civil Code § 51 and ensuring equal opportunity in all MVVCSO activities.

4. Responsible Stewardship

- Use MVVCSO resources (e.g., funds, digital services, equipment) solely for approved organizational purposes, avoiding personal use (Article IV, Section 2).
- Adhere to financial limits and approval processes for expenditures, per Article IV, Section 2C, the Debit Card Use Policy, and California Corporations Code § 5231.
- Protect confidential information, including membership data and financial records, in compliance with the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) (Article III, Section 2C).
- Ensure all financial transactions are documented, approved, and auditable, supporting transparency for grantors and compliance with the California Nonprofit Integrity Act.

5. Community Focus

- Prioritize the needs of the Ranchita community in all decisions, seeking input through public forums, surveys, and community engagement (Article IV, Section 2B; Article VI, Section 1C).
- Represent MVVCSO professionally in all interactions, including social media, ensuring alignment with the organization's mission (Article VI, Section 1C).
- Support MVVCSO's programs, such as volunteer initiatives and hardship assistance, to promote community resilience (Article XIII; Article XIV).

6. Compliance with Laws and Bylaws

- Adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, including California Corporations Code §§ 5221-5238 (Director duties, indemnification) and the California Nonprofit Integrity Act (Government Code § 12586).
- Follow MVVCSO's 2025 Bylaws, SOPs, and Board-approved policies, ensuring actions align with organizational governance (Article VIII).
- Comply with grant-specific requirements, including ethical use of funds, reporting, and adherence to grant terms, as applicable.

Enforcement

Reporting Misconduct

- Suspected violations of this Code shall be reported to the Ethics Committee via the Secretary (37370 Montezuma Valley Rd, Ranchita, CA 92066, or ranchita@mvvcso.org).
- Reports will be investigated confidentially, and findings will be reported publicly (excluding confidential details), per Article VI, Section 1D.
- Whistleblowers are protected from retaliation under Article XI and California Labor Code § 1102.5.

Consequences of Violations

Violations may result in:

- Verbal or written warning, documented by the Ethics Committee.
- Suspension from duties, access (e.g., digital services, debit cards), or committee roles, pending Board review.
- Removal from the Board, officer position, or volunteer role, per Article IV, Section 4, and California Corporations Code §§ 5221-5223.
- Restitution for damages caused (e.g., unauthorized expenditures, data breaches).
- Referral to legal authorities for fraud, theft, or other criminal acts, per California law (e.g., Penal Code § 502, unauthorized access).

Appeals

- Individuals disciplined may request a review by the Board within 14 days.
- A special meeting will be convened per Article III, Section 4B, with a final decision made by majority Board vote.

Training and Implementation

- All covered individuals must complete an annual ethics training session, coordinated by the Ethics Committee, covering this Code, bylaws, conflict of interest, and relevant laws (Article VI, Section 1D).
- Training will include modules on California Corporations Code §§ 5231 and 5233, CCPA compliance, and grant-specific ethical requirements.
- The Code shall be posted within 7 days at the food bank, community bulletins, and online (if available), in large-print and screen-reader-compatible formats, per Article XV.
- The annual report shall summarize ethics training participation and any reported violations, certified by the President, Secretary, or a CPA (Article VII, Section 3).

Review

- The Ethics Committee shall review this Code annually, with updates approved by a majority Board vote and posted publicly within 7 days (Article VI, Section 1D; Article XV).
- Voting Members may propose amendments via the Annual General Meeting or special meeting (Article VIII).

Affirmation Statement

I, the undersigned, affirm that I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the MVVCSO Code of Ethics and Conduct Policy. I commit to upholding the principles of integrity, transparency, inclusivity, and community focus in all my actions on behalf of MVVCSO. I acknowledge that failure to comply may result in disciplinary action, including suspension, removal, restitution, or legal consequences, as outlined in the Code and MVVCSO Bylaws.

Name: _____

Role: ☐ Director ☐ Officer ☐ Volunteer ☐ Committee Member ☐ Authorized User ☐ Other (specify: _____)

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____