



SUBJECT	Case Handling Procedures
Policy #:	VRP-0305
Date:	September 14, 2007 (<i>Updated Logo, ORC # and changed reference from RSC to OOD 10-18-16</i>)
From:	John Connelly, Executive Director
Origin:	Kimberly Zianno Hudak, Associate General Counsel
Supersedes:	N/A

AUTHORITY

This policy is issued in compliance with Ohio Revised Code §3304.15 which establish the power and authority of the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities and its executive director to develop all necessary rules in furtherance of its statutory duty to provide vocational rehabilitation services to all eligible persons with disabilities.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish mandatory guidelines for handling cases when the consumer is a relative, significant other, or acquaintance of the VR staff member. As public employees, we are charged with being prudent stewards of the monies, and it is essential that the public have confidence in the administration of OOD's VR case services. Public confidence depends on whether the public trusts that employees of this agency are impartial, fair, and act only in the interest of the people, uninfluenced by any consideration of self-interest, except those inherent in the proper performance of duties. Each employee shall maintain the highest standards of personal integrity, since the public often judges the actions of an employee as reflecting the standards of the employing agency. Therefore, employees will not only avoid improper handling of cases and impropriety, but also the appearance of impropriety.

APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all VR staff.

DEFINITIONS

Relative: An employee's spouse, parents, children, step-children, siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, in-laws (including mother, father, sister, and brother), aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, or a legal guardian or other person who stands in the place of a parent.

Significant Other: A person with whom an employee has a personal relationship and with whom, if discovered, the employee could be perceived to have a self-interest thereby creating the potential for the appearance of impropriety (e.g. life partner, boyfriend, girlfriend).

Acquaintance: A person whom an employee knows and for which the relationship could lead to the appearance of impropriety if the employee took action on his or her case (extended family members, friends).

POLICY

It is the policy of OOD to handle cases in an appropriate manner, adhering to the strictest and highest ethical standards, complying with the Ohio Ethics Commission, the Code of Professional Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors (CRC) and Professional Counselors (PC) under the Ohio Licensure Board, and any and all applicable laws, policies and guidelines, thereby negating impropriety or the appearance of impropriety.

POLICY PROCEDURES

1. Staff must immediately notify his or her immediate supervisor in writing of any known referral that involves a vocational rehabilitation employee, relative, significant other, or an acquaintance. The supervisor will consult with the area office to determine where the case will be handled.
2. OOD employees must not work on, process, authorize, or access any correspondence or documents that pertain to his or her personal case, or the case of a relative, significant other, or acquaintance. Staff members accessing or taking action on the case, either via the hard copy file or via electronic access, is strictly prohibited without prior written approval from the area manager or his or her designee. In addition, staff should reference the Ohio Code of Ethics for public employees, counseling ethics, and any other applicable ethical standards and guidelines.
3. No case is to receive preferential or special treatment, as each consumer shall receive fair, impartial, and equitable service. All cases will be processed in accordance with the law and OOD policy, and without prejudice or favoritism.
4. Violations of this policy will be referred in accordance with HR 2007.01, *Performance Management Policy*.

History: New 9-14-07