CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION

**Code of Ethics**

Adopted June 8, 2023 by a vote of the board of directors

The volunteer fire service is the backbone of public safety for much of New York. Fire districts are a primary structure of governance of volunteer fire departments. As stewards of taxpayer funds allocated to fire and rescue services, fire districts stand at the crossroad of emergency services finance and delivery.

The non-compensated citizen commissioners who comprise boards of fire commissioners of these fire districts are entrusted with the care and custody of taxpayer monies, firefighter safety and public protection. To support the efforts of these boards to adhere to the law governing fire districts and to take advantage of the best practices available for processes undertaken by fire districts, the Capital Area Fire Districts Association was formed and continues to operate in its designated region.

Just as it promotes ethical, efficient and effective governance of fire districts, the Association promotes and governs its own conduct through responsible leadership, sound organization policies and procedures and this Code of Ethics. As a recognized not-for-profit organization in the State of New York, the Association strives to always be in compliance with the state’s Not-for-Profit Corporation Law and other applicable laws and regulations. It further endeavors to not only abide by best practices of governance, but to champion them with its member fire districts.

It is important that, as its members are subject to the standards of ethical conduct expected of public governmental bodies, and because it is funded with taxpayer dollars paid as dues into this organization, the Association likewise endeavors to adopt standards of conduct similar to and of such exacting nature as those followed by its member districts.

1. All directors, officers, staff, members, vendors and partners of CAFDA will at all times act with honesty, integrity, loyalty, transparency and responsibility in executing on the mission of the organization, as described herein and in the governing documents of the Association.
2. Governance is entrusted to the directors and officers of the Association and all those assuming those roles are expected to conduct themselves with the corporate fiduciary obligations of loyalty, fidelity and care. It is expected, assumed and assured that all actions taken in the name or on behalf of the organization are exclusively in the best interest of the Association and in no way are such interests diluted, compromised or endangered by any personal or pecuniary interests of any director, officer, member or third party, either individually or collectively.
3. No director, officer or member shall use their position or membership in the Association or Association property for personal or private gain.
4. Directors and officers are expected and committed to avoiding actual as well as the appearance of conflicts of interest or any other impropriety. Conflicts and appearances of conflicts of interest are prohibited.
5. Directors and officers and all others entrusted with the funds of the organization commit to and shall manage and expend funds responsibly and prudently. This includes the willingness to be engaged in, cooperate with and otherwise facilitate any and all audits or other financial reviews, be they internal or external in nature. It also includes all efforts to avoid or prevent the wholesale aggregation of member funds as surplus or excess funds beyond the operating needs of the Association.
6. Directors and officers commit to and shall govern and operate the Association with all requisite transparency and openness, and to provide information upon request to any member or other party unless, in the opinion of the board, such release could compromise the health, well-being or best interests of the Association or a member thereof. Such limitation shall not affect the release of information in response the legitimate request of any governmental, judicial or quasi-judicial entity or directive.
7. Directors, officers, members, staff members and vendors shall disclose when there may be a conflict or appearance of conflict and take the appropriate steps to inform the board of such and refrain from voting on any matter relating thereto.
8. No director or officer shall accept anything of value from any vendor, prospective vendor or any other party in conjunction with their duties or position within the Association.
9. A board of ethics shall be appointed by the board of directors, to be composed of three directors. If any matter shall involve a member of the board of ethics, an alternate member of the board of ethics shall be temporarily appointed.

If there is a violation of this code, or the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law as it pertains to this organization, which is included by reference and made a part of this policy, any member may petition the board of ethics for investigation. The imposition of any discipline shall be at the discretion of the board of directors upon a report of the board of ethics, and may include monetary fine, suspension, and/or removal from a position within or from the Association.

This Code of Ethics shall be posted to the Association website.

This Code of Ethics shall take effect immediately upon favorable consideration by the board of directors.