



Catholic Charities Confidentiality Policy

Catholic Charities subscribes to the principles of confidentiality for our clients and seeks to respond to a number of contemporary service delivery issues. There are several guiding principles to this policy statement:

1. This policy looks to the protection of every client's right to have personal information shared in the client-worker relationship upheld as confidential and private.
2. Catholic Charities is committed to privacy and confidentiality of an individual's medical records and social security numbers. In cases where social security numbers are not necessary, they are not collected. If provided, efforts to delete or ensure strict security controls to protect data are made.
3. The establishment of a definitive policy on confidentiality is also seen as a protection for the employee of Catholic Charities; in the absence of specific guidelines in this area, both personnel and the agency itself are left more open to inconsistent, poorly-informed and careless practice decisions and possible legal action resulting there from.
4. The client-worker relationship is greatly enhanced when service is carried out in accordance with up-to-date, professional standards of confidentiality. Of particular importance is the principle of informed consent for the release of agency information to third parties.
5. An important issue is that of the agency-employee relationship. The agency itself is entitled to the right of confidentiality regarding its internal workings and difficulties. The agency would be able to expect its employees to represent the agency in a respectful, professional manner in the community. By the same token, employees have the right to expect that the agency will hold confidential and use appropriately personal and professional information gathered during employment.
6. It must be understood that the type of confidentiality being discussed and advocated here is relative and not absolute. As professionals working in an organization, we cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality to clients; if such were the case, no information gathered in the helping process would ever be passed on to anyone or anything in any form. Rather, it is acknowledged that for adequate service delivery, workers, students, supervisors, administrators, clerical staff, consultants, etc., need to share confidential information with one another as part of the team working together to provide appropriate services. Thus, the promise of confidentiality should be a relative one.
7. All Catholic Charities policies are reviewed by legal counsel to assure compliance with state and federal regulations as part of the agency-wide review of its mission and response to client need. Legal counsel is also sought out frequently on more general issues, including conditions under which client information may be released without client consent.

Catholic Charities Confidentiality Policy Acknowledgment

(Directors, Staff, Temp Agency Staff, Mentors, Senior AIDES, Interns, Volunteers)

I, _____, have read Catholic Charities' policy statement on confidentiality and fully understand the information contained therein. Further, I will abide by the guiding principles stated in the document. I understand that any client or sensitive (outside the public domain) agency information which is disclosed to me in any manner while I am employed or otherwise serving at Catholic Charities is confidential and must be treated as such. I understand that disclosure of confidential client or agency information cannot be given without the informed, written consent of the client or the Executive Director (in the case of the agency).

Signature

Date