

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

ALL CLIENT INFORMATION IS CONFIDENTIAL

It is the policy of Vera House, Inc. to keep confidential any information concerning agency clientele. Information about clients is released to third parties only with the written permission of the client or as consequence of a court subpoena that Vera House is unable to quash. The only exception to the policy is in cases of suspected child abuse or neglect or intent or plans to harm self or others.

Written permission from clients to release information must be in the form of original documents. When necessary to meet client needs, permission may be granted via telephone conversations with clients, witnessed by a third party, or through fax transmittal. The client must clearly indicate what information may be released, to whom, and for what purpose.

SUBPOENAS FOR CLIENT INFORMATION

Requests for client information from subpoenas should be responded to according to the SUBPOENA PROTOCOL.

CLIENT REQUESTS FOR RECORDS

Clients can have a copy of their file. Requests for copies must be made in writing, and maintained in the original case file. Please REFER TO THE RECORD REQUEST POLICY.

SHELTER LOCATIONS

The physical locations of the Vera House shelters are also confidential information. Any individuals (including clients, maintenance workers, staff, board members, volunteers, etc.) who MUST visit the physical location of the agency shelters are informed of the confidential nature of the program and required to sign a "Confidentiality Agreement".

PERSONNEL INFORMATION

All information about staff, personal and professional, is kept confidential, unless staff specifically authorizes the release of such information. The exception to this is when information related to performance is shared with supervisors or the agency Executive Director. This standard of confidentiality should also be maintained between co-workers.

Staff/Board/Volunteer Name (Please Print)

Sandra J. Russell

Staff/Board/Volunteer Signature Date

Sandra J. Russell
12/13/23

A world free of violence and abuse.

VE, RHOLISE

I N C O R P O R A T E D

VERA HOUSE, INC. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND CERTIFICATION

I, the undersigned Member of the Board of Directors of Vera House, Inc., hereby:

- a. acknowledge receipt of the foregoing Conflict of Interest Policy (the "Policy Statement"),
- b. confirm that I have disclosed in the space provided below (or in an attached document, if so indicated below) any conflict of interest, or possible conflict of interest, within the meaning of the Policy Statement relating to me of which I am current/ aware:
- c. certify that no conflict of interest, or possible conflict of interest exists, except as disclosed above (or on the attached document, if so indicated above).
- d. acknowledge that prior to the initial election of any director, and annually thereafter, such director shall complete, sign and submit to the secretary a written statement identifying, to the best of the director's knowledge, any entity of which such director is an officer, director, trustee, member, owner (either as a sole proprietor or a partner), or employee and with which the Corporation has a relationship, and any transaction in which the Corporation is a participant and in which the director might have a conflicting interest.
- e. confirm that I understand Vera House, Inc. is charitable and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption, it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes:

**POLICY APPROVED BY VERA HOUSE, INC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS
ON JUNE 17, 2014.**

SIGNATURE *Sandra J. Russell*

PRINT NAME *Sandra J. Russell*

DATE *12/13/23*

723 James Street | Syracuse, NY 13203 | P (315) 425-0818 | F (315) 425-8942

Crisis & Support: (315) 468-3260 | TTY Line (315) 484-7263

www.verahouse.org

THE ROLE OF A VERA HOUSE BOARD MEMBER

While the Board of Directors functions as a body in its deliberations and policy-level decisions, the members are elected as individuals. Each individual board member must accept and support the mission, values and goals of Vera House, Inc.

VISION: A world free of violence and abuse

MISSION: Prevents, responds to and partners to end domestic and sexual violence and other forms of abuse

VALUES:

- Giving **UNCONDITIONAL CARE** to the people we serve and our community.
- Working in **COMMUNITY** to advance justice and serve all who seek our support.
- Providing **TRAUMA INFORMED** care to the people we serve and working toward healing for all.
- Honoring **INTERSECTIONALITY** and centering the truths of the historically excluded and oppressed people we serve.
- Embracing **ACCOUNTABILITY** for ourselves and our community as we strive to interrupt the social norms that cause harm.

DECISION MAKING

Board members are responsible for seeing that decisions they make reflect the mission and goals of the organization. Decisions made by the board should also reflect the concern for and knowledge of the organization's total needs. An individual must become well-informed about the work of the board and should be prepared to challenge and to ask discerning questions. Before decisions are reached, all points of view should be fully explored, even at the risk of creating displeasure, and possible consequences of each decision should be considered. Each board member, regardless of point of view, is responsible for supporting the decisions of the board publicly.

LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY

No individual board member, regardless of knowledge, expertise, or community contacts, has any right or authority to act upon her/his own in the name of the agency unless delegated specific authority by the board of directors.

Legal action against boards of directors of not-for-profit or nonstock corporations have led to an increased awareness of the need for the individual board member to be alert to her/his conduct when making key decisions for the corporation. Board members have primary responsibility for management of the organizations and are liable for consequences of negligent or willful mismanagement.

POLICY MAKING

Board members should understand and accept the role of a policymaker as different from the role of carrying on day to day operations. Although individual board members very often work in productive partnership with employed staff members, it is not prudent for individuals or for the board as a whole to become involved or to interfere in problems dealing with staff members. Decisions related to the release of staff and disciplinary problems are in the domain of the Chief Executive Officer. It is her/his prerogative to seek advice from the board in handling these problems. Although the board of directors determines personnel policies, sets salary ranges, and adopts salary budgets, it does not concern itself directly with individual salaries or the administration of staff salaries. The Chief Executive Officer determines individual salaries and sees that each individual staff member is appropriately supervised on job performance.

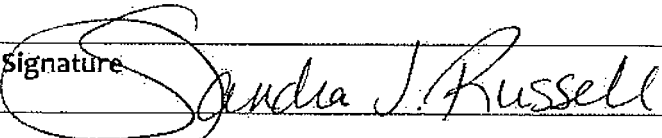
FINANCIAL

A major responsibility for each board member is to participate actively in developing the agency's financial resources by making a personal financial contribution, by influencing contributions from others, and by supporting and participating in agency fund raising events.

Although not personally involved in preparing the details of the budget, board members should understand the budget building process as it relates to agency goals and objectives and to financial reports and the annual audit.

Below is a checklist for individual Board members to use in monitoring their own performance as Directors:

- Accept the organization's philosophy and position on affirmative action and equal employment opportunity.
- Be willing and available to attend training.
- Read material distributed through mailings and at board meetings.
- Attend all board meetings.
- Participate actively in board discussions and debates.
- Use appropriate parliamentary procedures, including the proper framing of motions.
- Keep the board's work confidential until such time as it is released.
- Participate actively in at least one board committee.
- Support and attend agency fund raising events.
- Know the agency's financial position and budgets well enough to assess the impact of board decisions on the financial condition.
- Support and promote the agency's funding efforts in line with one's abilities and make financial contributions when personal resources allow.
- Support the majority decisions of the board.
- Understand the board's legal responsibilities and be alert to the legal implications of board actions.
- Abstain from any action that might lead to or be perceived as a conflict of interest.
- Refrain from becoming involved in staff conflicts.

Signature 	Date: 12/13/23
---	----------------



Vera House Email Accounts for Board Members

This document is intended to provide guidelines for appropriate use of Vera House email accounts. As a Board member of the agency, you will be given access to an agency email account. The purpose of this email account is to protect the agency's privacy, your confidentiality agreement, and provide you with an easy way to access/store Vera House Board information sent via email.

- At no time should you use your Vera House email account to correspond regarding anything outside of Vera House business.
- When your Board term ends, your email account will be deactivated by the agency.
- Board members will not be added to any agency staff distribution lists.
- Board members will not use their email accounts to reach out to any agency staff members.
- All policies and procedures will continue to be followed as outlined in other documents and current bylaws.

The following signature and disclaimer should be added to your email:

First and Last Name | Role if applicable, Board of Directors | Vera House, Inc.

Pronouns:

723 James Street, Syracuse NY 13205

24-Hour Crisis & Support Lines (315) 468-3260

**This email is being sent from a member of the Board of Directors, I am not employed by the Vera House agency.*



Name:

Date:

Sandra S. Russell

12/13/23