

## **SECTION 1.15      REPORTING VIOLATIONS OF STATE, LOCAL, OR FEDERAL LAWS, AND WHISTLEBLOWER CLAIMS**

If in the course of his/her employment an employee becomes aware of a violation of any state or federal statute, and/or local law that Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities (JCBDD) has the authority to correct, and the employee reasonably believes that the violation either is a criminal offense that is likely to cause an imminent risk of physical harm to persons, or a hazard to public health or safety, or is a felony, the employee shall notify the Human Resources Coordinator or Superintendent of the violation. Subsequently, the employee should be instructed to immediately, with the Human Resources Coordinator or designee, prepare a written report that provides sufficient detail to identify and describe the violation. The report must specify the date and time of its preparation. JCBDD shall be responsible for investigating and correcting such violation if one exists. Within 24 hours of notification, JCBDD will provide written notification to the employee who reported the violation of any effort to correct the alleged violation or hazard, or of the absence of the alleged violation or hazard.

If JCBDD does not correct the violation or make a reasonable and good faith effort to correct the violation, the employee may file a written report that provides sufficient detail to identify and describe the violation with the appropriate public official or agency that has regulatory authority over the Employer and the services it provides.

If an employee becomes aware, during the course of his/her employment, of a violation by a fellow employee of any state or federal statute or any work rule or department policy, and the employee reasonably believes that the violation either is a criminal offense that is likely to cause an imminent or physical harm to persons, or a hazard to public health or safety, or is a felony, the employee shall notify Human Resources Coordinator or Superintendent of the violation. Subsequently, the employee should be instructed to immediately, with Human Resources Coordinator or designee, prepare a written report that provides sufficient detail to identify and describe the violation.

All employees are required by law to report cases of suspected abuse and neglect of individuals including aged, blind, disabled, and children whether they receive services from JCBDD. The standard for reporting is "a reasonable cause to believe" that abuse or neglect was committed against a person who has a disability, is aged, blind, or who is a minor. Mandated reporters are immune from civil or criminal liability because of filing a report providing the report was made in good faith. If the issue to be reported falls within the definition of MUI/UI reporting, the employee must follow those guidelines set forth in Ohio law and JCBDD policy.

To report a violation of Ohio Revised Code Chapters 3704, 3734, 6109, or 6111 (Air Pollution Control, Solid and Hazardous Wastes Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, and Water Pollution Control) that is a criminal offense, the employee may directly notify, either orally or in writing the appropriate public official or agency that has regulatory authority.

An employee shall make a reasonable and good faith effort to determine the accuracy of any information reported. Reasonable and good faith effort may include proof of researching the pertinent law, ordinance, or regulation violated, records of conversations with or documents from knowledgeable authorities, date(s), time(s), and places(s) that the alleged violation occurred, and person(s) involved, etc.

If an employee makes a falsely based report under this section, he/she may be subject to disciplinary action, including suspension or removal, for reporting information without a reasonable basis to do so under those parts.

JCBDD shall not take disciplinary or retaliatory action against the employee for making a legitimate report or as a result of the employee having made any inquiry or taken any action to ensure accuracy of any information reported.