

ACCESS CONNECTICUT NOW, INC.
POLICY STATEMENT

This Policy Statement includes the following:

- Code of Ethics
- Responsibilities of Board of Directors and Advocates
- Financial Transparency Statement
- Guidelines for Advocates

This Policy Statement is intended to supplement the bylaws. In any instance where there may be a conflict between this Policy Statement and the bylaws, the bylaws shall control.

This Policy Statement and the bylaws shall be publicly displayed on the Access Connecticut website.

CODE OF ETHICS

All board members, officers and advocates shall comply with the following:

- Understand and commit to Access Connecticut as defined by the bylaws and Policy Statement.
- Accurately represent the proposals and arguments of Access Connecticut in all communication. It is critically important that Access Connecticut be perceived as speaking with one voice.
- Internal communication within Access Connecticut is confidential and proprietary. Wider circulation requires the permission of the author.
- No board member, officer or advocate shall use the Access Connecticut affiliation for private or personal advantage.
- The Access Connecticut title can only be used in conjunction with activities, policies and legislation that have been formally endorsed by Access Connecticut.
- Add timely and substantive questions consistent with your conscience and your convictions while supporting the majority decision on issues decided by the board.
- Get to know other board members, officers and advocates and build a collegial working relationship that contributes to consensus. Treat each other with respect, dignity, fairness and courtesy.
- Represent the organization in a positive, supportive and respectful manner at all times and in all places, including but not limited to interactions with legislators, governmental officials, and other organizations, as well as interviews, publications or representations in media and social media. Board members and officers will be mindful that their personal actions may reflect on the public credibility and reputation of Access Connecticut.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE VICE PRESIDENT OF ACCESS CONNECTICUT

- Must have potential for fulfilling the responsibilities of the office of the President, including the qualifications as specified in the President description.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SECRETARY OF ACCESS CONNECTICUT

- The Secretary is responsible for maintaining all official Access Connecticut records as required by bylaws and Connecticut law.
- The Secretary shall record the minutes of meetings and shall store these in a repository accessible to all Board members. The Secretary shall also keep minutes of meetings open to advocates which shall be made available upon request to all board members and advocates.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF TREASURER OF ACCESS CONNECTICUT

- The Treasurer will ensure that every donor to Access Connecticut receives a personal acknowledgement of their donation in a timely manner.
- The Treasurer will maintain a list of all donors and provide the list to the President on a regular basis.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE VICE PRESIDENT OF DEVELOPMENT

- The Vice President of Development shall develop ongoing relationships with individuals and organizations which support the mission and legislative goals of Access Connecticut, and whenever possible obtain their written endorsement.

FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY

As a nonprofit organization Access Connecticut will seek to employ best practices in both transparency and accountability. The following information, as well as any other financial information designated by the board, will be displayed publicly on the Access Connecticut website.

- All current and past federal and state tax returns.
- The determination letter from the Internal Revenue Services which establishes the 501(c)(4) status of Access Connecticut.
- A statement that contributions that donations to Access Connecticut are not tax deductible. In addition, this statement shall be included in all solicitations made by Access Connecticut for donations.

- Whenever a board member or officer has a financial or personal interest in any matter coming before the board, the affected person shall a) fully disclose the nature of the interest and b) withdraw from discussion, lobbying, and voting on the matter. Any transaction or vote involving a potential conflict of interest shall be approved only when a majority of disinterested directors determine that it is in the best interest of the Access Connecticut to do so. The minutes of meetings at which such votes are taken shall record such disclosure, abstention and rationale for approval.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- In addition to the responsibilities specified in the by-laws and Policy Statement, the Board of Directors have the following additional responsibilities:
 - Make serious commitment to participate actively in Access Connecticut activities.
 - Regularly attend board meetings and other important related meetings.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRESIDENT OF ACCESS CONNECTICUT

- The President shall possess the following qualifications:
 - A commitment to the mission of Access Connecticut
 - Proven democratic leadership skills
 - Strong management ability
 - Broad understanding of adoption issues as they relate to each position in the adoption constellation
 - A history of active participation in and commitment to adoption reform
 - Ability to speak and write well and represent Access Connecticut to the public, legislators, and the media
 - A willingness and ability to commit the time and energy to carry out the duties of the office
- The President prepares the agenda and presides over meetings of the Board, advocates and the general affairs of Access Connecticut.
- The President is responsible for ensuring all policies of the Board are carried into effect.
- The President will secure a majority vote of the Board in approving all policies, resolutions and legislation adopted by Access Connecticut.
- The President may delegate to board members or advocates responsibility for clearly defined activities or events, and is accountable to the board to follow up that expectations are met.
- The President shall maintain the security of Access Connecticut proprietary information including but not limited to the website, volunteer list, email newsletter list and Face Book Page. Passwords and login information to these assets shall be provided to at least two Board members.

GUIDELINES FOR ADVOCATES

1. Be Respectful.

Passion, determination, and even anger (passionate, respectful anger) can persuade people and be helpful. So can a calm demeanor, logic, information and facts. Contempt, sarcasm, whining, etc. turns people off. Enough said.

2. Listen To People.

Be sure to listen carefully to what people's concerns may be, so you can respond to their questions *specifically*. When they ask about birth mothers, what is their specific concern? E.g. – Do they think birth mothers don't want contact? Let them know 95% of birth mothers want to be contacted. Do they ask about the tiny percentage of birth mothers who don't want to be contacted? Explain how Contact Preference forms work. You get the idea.

3. Ask Them To Listen.

Many people know little about the issues or have questions/concerns. Ask them if they would be willing to learn more about by following our [Face book](#) page or reviewing our website. A big part of our job is informing people about the issues.

4. Inform Yourself

There is A LOT of good information on our website, some of it quite particular and helpful to us here Connecticut. Make sure you know your basic facts.

5. Ask For Help.

We're here to help you, answer questions people have that you can't, and provide what resources we can. Ask.

6. Be Kind To Yourself

This is a more or less emotional issue for many of us, and it can take a lot of energy to talk about it, especially with the uninformed or the opposed. Be kind to yourself.