

## ASBDC Accreditation Committee

### Code of Ethics A Guide for Accreditation Committee Members

**Purpose:** The ASBDC Accreditation Committee sets forth this Code of Ethics to guide the ethical standards for professional conduct when serving as a member of the ASBDC Accreditation Committee. These standards represent the expectations for committee members when engaged as a committee member, dealing with other committee members, or interacting with other SBDCs, their host institutions, staff and the general ASBDC membership. Each committee member will sign the Code of Ethics annually.

**Member:** While serving as a member of the Accreditation Committee, members shall conduct themselves with integrity, objectivity and fairness. Each committee member will provide the highest quality of service possible on behalf of the committee and the Association of SBDCs.

#### **1. Accreditation Committee Members shall:**

- a. Be fully committed to competence, objectivity and integrity and assure uniformity and fairness in the application of the ASBDC Accreditation Standards.
- b. Be engaged and collaborate with other Committee Members to establish effective policies and procedures to enhance the accreditation process.
- c. Be knowledgeable of and follow the accreditation policies and procedures established by the Accreditation Committee.
- d. Make every effort to be fully prepared to discuss scheduled reports of state/region accreditation reviews and be available in a timely manner to attend committee meetings and conference calls when they are scheduled.
- e. Be informed concerning the issues and findings outlined in the Accreditation Team's report being considered. Careful preparation will allow each committee member to effectively and ethically participate in the committee's discussions and decisions.
- f. Represent the committee in a professional manner at all times while conducting an accreditation visit and respect others' time by adhering to schedules and honoring set appointments.
- g. When appointed to serve as the Accreditation Team Leader, make every effort to understand and fulfill the team leader's role and coordinate the team visits according to the Accreditation Committee guidelines.

#### **2. Members' responsibilities to the state being reviewed shall be:**

- a. To inform SBDC Lead Center Director and staff of the purpose, scope and procedures and expectations of the Accreditation Committee and the review team.
- b. To communicate with the Lead Center SBDC in a timely manner and schedule the visit well in advance of the arrival of the Accreditation Review Team.
- c. The Team Leader has responsibility for coordinating the team assigned to conduct the state/region accreditation visit. This responsibility includes coordinating and communicating the visit plan and organizing the team in such a way as to ensure a successful and professional accreditation visit.

- d. To promote the Accreditation Committee with integrity and professionalism in relationships with other Lead Center Directors, hosts, clients, colleagues and others.
- e. To make it a priority to set aside preparation time prior to a Lead Center SBDC’s review to gain an understanding of the Lead Center’s network, its self-study and supporting materials.
- f. To protect the confidentiality of privileged information obtained from the SBDC being reviewed.
- g. To identify “Best Practices” and innovative ideas and seek permission to share those with the greater SBDC network.
- h. To respect and support diversity by not discriminating based upon age, color, culture, disability, ethnic group, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, marital status or socioeconomic status.

**3. Members’ responsibilities and expectations to the committee include:**

- a. Committing to attend all Accreditation Committee training designed to enhance understanding of the accreditation standards and consistency in conducting reviews and preparing reports.
- b. Rendering all decisions based on accreditation standards and committee policies considering available facts and trends presented or gathered through on-site visits; utilizing professional judgment without succumbing to individual influence or special interest groups.
- c. Preparing all reports according to committee guidelines and submitting the reports according to the policy guidelines and in a timely manner.
- d. Avoiding Conflicts of Interest or the appearance thereof.
- e. Self-disqualifying from any Lead Center SBDC assignment where the Committee member cannot be objective and unbiased.
- f. Participating in discussions and decisions of Accreditation Committee and accepting the will of 2/3 vote of the Committee once a decision is made.

**Violations to the Accreditation Committee Code of Ethics**

If I observe infractions of this Code, I will report the issue to the Chair of the Accreditation Committee for review and disposition. The Chair will name a sub-committee comprised of Accreditation Committee members to review and adjudicate any perceived or real infraction and prepare a report for the Accreditation Committee’s review and final decision. The decision of the Committee is final and there are no appeal rights.

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Committee Member

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Committee Chair

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Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Revised & Adopted – January 13, 2011