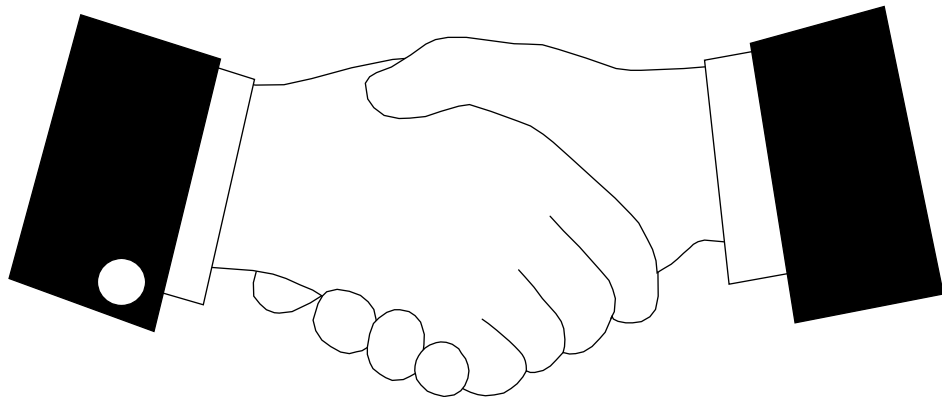


# OPTIONS

PREMIER SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

## OPTIONS AND YOU AT WORK



A HANDBOOK FOR EMPLOYEES

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## I. WHAT IS OPTIONS?

### *...MISSION, VISION, & VALUES*



#### **Mission**

OPTIONS helps people with disabilities live and work in the community.

#### **Vision**

OPTIONS will continue as the premier provider of opportunities that enables people with disabilities to be valued, respected, and integral members of the community.

#### **Core Values**

**Respect** = Being Genuine, Patient, Caring, Kind, Loyal, & Person-Centered;  
Showing Concern; Listening; Using a Positive Tone of Voice  
& Body Language; Demonstrating Give & Take

**Communication** = Listening; Taking Direction; Giving Updates; Returning Phone Calls;  
Sharing Ideas & Information; Asking Questions & Clarifying; Empathizing;  
Paying Attention; Advance Notification; Training

**Team Work** = Being Dependable, Flexible, & Trustworthy; Communicating;  
Completing Work; Showing Initiative; Helping to Work Open Positions;  
Working Productively & Efficiently

**Dependability** = Being Prompt, Responsible, Present, Self-Motivated,  
Supportive, Dedicated, Accountable, & Committed to Producing Quality Work;  
Completing Tasks; Following Through

Values are easy to talk about, but to truly live these values requires a real commitment to exhibit them every day. If we want OPTIONS to be the best that it can be, we need to model and support each other as we work to demonstrate OPTIONS Mission, Vision and Values.

## ***...OPTIONS PRINCIPLES***

### **OPTIONS believes that:**

- All individuals are of equal value and have a right to maximize their potential.
- All individuals have the same basic needs.
- All individuals can learn and contribute to the community.
- All individuals have the right to be fully participating members of their community.
- All individuals process information through their own unique pictures of a quality world.
- All individuals should be given as many opportunities as possible to make choices about their lives.
- Individuals with disabilities and/or their families can best determine their service needs in employment, living arrangements and community participation.

### **OPTIONS further believes that:**

- We are committed to quality in the actions of all our people.
- We earn trust by fulfilling commitments and abiding by the spirit of agreement and understanding. We strive to deliver what we promise.
- We are committed to working together as a team with genuine concern and respect for one another. We are committed to helping team members accomplish their goals and to grow professionally and personally.
- As an organization, we are a resource to families, employers, organizations, individuals, and the community at large.
- Services at OPTIONS are person-centered, and the organization makes every effort to provide these services in a timely manner. The services preferred by individuals OPTIONS supports are reflected in their Individual Plans of Care.
- We are committed to the preventative maintenance of all our equipment.

## ***...WHAT IS A DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY?***

People with developmental disabilities share some common characteristics. They have difficulty in the acquisition of cognitive, language, motor, or social skills. This may involve a general delay, as in developmental disability or the delay may be in a specific area of skill acquisition. The term “developmental disability” refers to any mental and/or physical disability that starts before the age of 18. The term includes individuals with cerebral palsy, autism, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy as well as intellectual disabilities.

## **...WHAT IS AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY?**

According to the DSM-5, intellectual disability involves impairments of general mental abilities that impact adaptive functioning in three domains, or areas. These domains determine how well an individual copes with everyday tasks:

- The **conceptual domain** includes skills in language, reading, writing, math, reasoning, knowledge, and memory.
- The **social domain** refers to empathy, social judgment, interpersonal communication skills, the ability to make and retain friendships, and similar capacities.
- The **practical domain** centers on self-management in areas such as personal care, job responsibilities, money management, recreation, and organizing school and work tasks.

Although IQ scores are no longer part of the diagnostic criteria, they should still be considered in the overall assessment.

While intellectual disability does not have a specific age requirement, an individual's symptoms must begin during the developmental period and are diagnosed based on the severity of deficits in adaptive functioning. The disorder is considered chronic and often co-occurs with other mental conditions like depression, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and autism spectrum disorder.

Professionals estimate that 3% of the general population of the United States have an intellectual disability. There are over 250 causes; they include genetic irregularities, problems during pregnancy, at birth or after birth, and environmental factors.

On October 5, 2010, the United States President, Barack Obama, signed bill S.2781 into federal law. The bill known as "Rosa's Law" removes the term "mental retardation" and "mentally retarded" from federal health, education and labor policy and replaces them with people first language "individual with an intellectual disability" and "intellectual disability."

People with disabilities want to be treated as people first. Efforts should be made to focus on what they can do. References to disabilities should be made by saying "a person with an intellectual disability or a person who is blind." The focus should be on the person and their uniqueness and value.

Every effort should be made to treat the person with respect and dignity. Conversations should encourage eye contact and may include signs and gestures in order to communicate. The most important thing is to let the person know you care by listening.

## **...FROM OUR HISTORY BOOK ON DEVELOPMENTAL/INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY**

### **1956**

The Hammond Civitan Club is organized to aid mentally retarded children.

### **1958**

Hammond Civitan enrolls students and hires a homebound teacher, Mrs. Vita Shilling.

### **1960**

Ponchatoula Civitan is organized. A class for Ponchatoula children is begun with Mrs. Vivian Hollis.

### **1961**

Parents and Friends of Retarded Children of the Hammond Area organized. Dr. C.M. Fagan is the first president.

### **1963**

The Ponchatoula Association for Retarded Children was organized.

The Amite Association for Retarded Children was formed.

### **1964**

Hammond State School opens as a large 24-hour facility for people with mental retardation.

### **1965**

The Hammond and Ponchatoula ARC's merge.

### **1967**

A sheltered workshop, known as C. M. Fagan Special Services opens for adults with mild mental retardation.

### **1972**

Louisiana Act 368 passes, landmark legislation for people with mental retardation, mandating education for those with I.Q.'s over 30, ages 5-18.

### **1972**

Mary Pirosko moves to Hammond and joins the Hammond-Ponchatoula ARC. She works with Louisiana ARC and the Office of Mental Retardation to begin a Day Developmental Training Center.

### **1973**

The name the Hammond-Ponchatoula ARC is changed to the Tangipahoa ARC. The first class serves all ages and all levels of developmental/intellectual disabilities. It opens at the First United Methodist Church in Hammond and Barry Meyer is the Supervisor.

### **1975**

Tangipahoa Association for Retarded Children is now known as the Tangipahoa Association for Retarded CITIZENS (TARC).

### **1975**

The Education for the Handicapped Act (Public Law 94-142) establishes that public schools must provide ALL children from ages 3 -22, with a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment.

### **1977**

TARC begins to redirect its efforts toward infants under the age of three and adults with developmental/intellectual disabilities.

### **1979**

TARC hires its first Chief Executive Officer, Sylvia Bush. The focus of the training becomes Sheltered Work Activities for adults and Early Intervention for infants.

### **1980**

On December 4, the building on East Church St. in Hammond, which houses TARC's programs, burns. The next year the programs move to various locations in Hammond and Ponchatoula.

### **1982**

On January 25, TARC individuals move into a permanent building in the Hammond Industrial Park. The land is donated by the City of Hammond. The building is erected with donations and with Hazel Fletcher, Ruth Ann Threadgill, Mayson Foster, Mary Pirosko, and Elizabeth Wagner personally guaranteeing a loan

### **1983**

TARC begins to teach individuals to work in the community. Work crews are developed.



**1984**

In March TARC opens Our House, the first community home in Tangipahoa parish. Our House is for six women with developmental/intellectual disabilities.

**1984**

The Church St. building has been rebuilt. In August TARC's Early Intervention program moves to the Church St. building.

**1985**

In January TARC begins finding individual jobs for people with developmental/intellectual disabilities in the community.

**1985**

In May TARC opens Pershing House, the second community home in Tangipahoa parish. Pershing House is for six men with developmental/intellectual disabilities. TARC experiences community opposition and ends up in litigation with the City of Hammond over zoning and the rights of people with developmental/intellectual disabilities to live in the community.

**1985**

In September TARC begins the first supervised apartment program in Tangipahoa parish.

**1987**

TARC loses litigation and looks for a new location for the Pershing House men.

**1988**

A new home is found for Pershing House men on Oak St. The new community home becomes known as Fortenberry House.

**1989**

Other agencies begin to open community homes in Tangipahoa parish.

**1989**

TARC's board of directors determines that two separate organizations are needed to address the growing needs of people with disabilities. It is decided to reorganize as THE ADVOCATES FOR REAL CHOICES (TARC) AND OPTIONS. Both agencies will be private non-profit service providers with separate volunteer boards of directors.

**1990**

In April, OPTIONS is created.

**1990**

On July 1, TARC and OPTIONS begin operating as two separate agencies. TARC provides infant services and advocacy; OPTIONS provides vocational and residential services. Our House, Fortenberry House, Supervised Apartments and Potpourri Enterprise (vocational services) programs and buildings are all transferred to OPTIONS.

**1990**

The passage of the Federal Fair Housing Act makes it possible to re-open the General Pershing St. Group Home as Alpha House, OPTIONS third community home.

**1990**

The New Opportunity Waiver is approved, providing federal funds for additional OPTIONS services, which include Personal Care Attendants, Family Support, Supervised Independent Living, vocational services and environmental modifications.

**1990**

The Americans with Disabilities Act is signed into law guaranteeing the civil rights of 49 million Americans.

## **...THE HISTORY OF OPTIONS**

### **1990**

In April, Grace Gasaway, Board President and Barry Landry, Secretary/Treasurer sign incorporation documents creating OPTIONS, Inc. OPTIONS is formed as a private non-profit organization with a volunteer Board of Directors.

In July TARC transfers Our House, Fortenberry House, Supervised Apartments and vocational services to OPTIONS. Sylvia Bush, Chief Executive Officer, along with the staff of these programs, become OPTIONS employees.

In July Alpha House opens for six women with developmental/intellectual disabilities.

### **1991**

In January the Board of Directors authorizes the purchase of land and construction of a wheelchair accessible community home.

In June OPTIONS begins providing Family Support and Personal Care Attendant services.

In November, La Casa, a community home for six men with developmental/intellectual disabilities and behavior disorders, opens in Pumpkin Center.

### **1992**

OPTIONS services continue to expand. A management consultant is hired to assist OPTIONS in developing a plan to manage growth and increase quality services.

### **1993**

In April, the Administrative Team is re-organized. A Financial Director and Human Resources Director positions are created. Supervised Independent Living, Family Support and Personal Care Attendant services become the Waiver Team. The Waiver Director position is created to coordinate these services.

### **1994**

OPTIONS, Inc. continues to seek innovative ways to increase quality. To achieve this goal, OPTIONS focuses on the growth and development of its most important resources-its people. Staff is provided with training in Dr. William Glasser's principles of Reality Therapy, Control Theory and Quality Management.

## **1995**

Parents, individuals, and staff rally to address budget cuts through fund-raising activities and a letter writing campaign. Staff scales-back programs while maintaining quality. Some cuts are reversed.

OPTIONS holds its first HOLIDAY PRANCE Run/Walk fundraiser through downtown Hammond.

## **1996**

Newly elected state legislators and OPTIONS get to know each other. The Florida Parishes' delegation responds to the needs of people with disabilities.

Emphasis continues on staff training, team building and having each employee and individual focus on doing his/her BEST.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Holiday Prance is held in conjunction with the Southeastern Louisiana University Homecoming.

## **1997**

In order to foster and direct the growth of OPTIONS, Resource Development goals are developed. The goals of Resource Development include community awareness and the development of new revenue sources. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Holiday Prance is held in conjunction with Southeastern Homecoming.

## **1998**

The 1<sup>st</sup> OPTIONS TELETHON is held on May 23<sup>rd</sup> at Hammond Square Mall and is shown on Channel 17. Celebrities and community leaders join together to let the community know about the great work OPTIONS does and to raise money to help support OPTIONS mission. The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Holiday Prance is held in conjunction with the Southeastern Louisiana University Homecoming.

OPTIONS begins to provide Crisis Intervention Services through a contract with the state.

## **1999**

OPTIONS first Legislative & Business Appreciation Breakfast is held. The 2<sup>nd</sup> OPTIONS TELETHON is held LIVE on Florida Parishes Television – Channel 17 on May 27<sup>th</sup>.

OPTIONS continues to expand services to individuals and their families through Home and Community Based Waiver funding.

## **2000**

An Awareness Program is developed. Customer delight and synergy are the goals. The theme is "I'm Proud of My OPTIONS."

The 3<sup>rd</sup> OPTIONS TELETHON is held at Hammond Square Mall on May 13<sup>th</sup>.

The 6<sup>th</sup> annual HOLIDAY PRANCE is held November 18<sup>th</sup>.

## **2001**

OPTIONS creates a new organizational structure to support person-centered services.

The 4<sup>th</sup> OPTIONS TELETHON is held at Hammond Square Mall on April 28<sup>th</sup>.

OPTIONS begins a Capital Campaign to raise money for:

- A new residence for six ladies who live at Our House community home.
- Additional vehicles to provide transportation for people with disabilities.
- A facility in the heart of the community to accommodate growth.
- An endowment fund to ensure the future of services for people with disabilities.

## **2002**

OPTIONS expands its ironing services to Ponchatoula. People can now bring their ironing to Hammond or Ponchatoula.

OPTIONS begins a Horticulture Education Program to provide employment opportunities for people with severe disabilities. Project begins with hiring a person who specializes in training people with disabilities to work with plants. A greenhouse is constructed with help from community.

The 5<sup>th</sup> OPTIONS TELETHON is held at Hammond Square Mall on April 27, 2002.

## **2003**

Thanks to the support of the community, the Capital Campaign is successfully completed. Six ladies who live at Our House move into their new home on Green Acres Drive. A new building is constructed for OPTIONS Horticulture program and for storage. It is located next to the main office. OPTIONS' purchases several new vans and the endowment fund is started.

The 6<sup>th</sup> OPTIONS TELETHON is held at Hammond Square Mall on April 26, 2003.

## **2004**

A comprehensive incentive program, known as Measuring for Success, is developed for individuals working in OPTIONS vocational program as well as all

employees. Measuring for Success identifies quality indicators and then recognizes everyone who meets the standard. The 7<sup>th</sup> OPTIONS TELETHON is held at Hammond Square Mall on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

## **2005-2006**

The staff of OPTIONS provides quality care for participants successfully during Hurricane Katrina. OPTIONS exceeds the TELETHON 2006 goal held at North Oaks Health System. OPTIONS also purchases a gas generator for LaCasa community home. OPTIONS provides the opportunity for key staff to be certified as Ham Radio Operators in preparation for future storms.

An acre of land is donated for OPTIONS SAFE HAVEN. The main office is updated with new flooring and paint for the front office area. The vocational department grows significantly with new contracts for the assembly area. OPTIONS horticulture department plant sales increase by 57%. Hurricane preparation and safety awareness increases, thus decreasing accidents and workers compensation costs.

## **2007-2008**

OPTIONS continues to serve more individuals with disabilities. As of April 2008, OPTIONS is serving 190 individuals. Based on the need to develop more work opportunities and increase wages for people with disabilities, OPTIONS reorganizes at the Executive Management Level. The Vocational Director position is restructured to focus intensely on the Vocational Program and other areas that address the growth of OPTIONS.

Two new community-based work sites are developed: Shreddergator & Mardi Gras Bead Recycling & Resale. Also, OPTIONS starts a commercial laundry business.

## **2009**

Safe Haven was approved.

## **2010**

The construction of Safe Haven started the beginning of 2010. Safe Haven will be used on a daily basis for vocational training and during storms/hurricanes as a hurricane shelter. An additional ironing and an additional shredding and day habilitation location was opened in Amite.

## **2011**

Construction of Safe Haven was completed and a grand opening was held on October 13, 2011. A large donation was made by Robin Roberts to complete the overhang on the main office. Construction took place to provide more office space in the main office building. OPTIONS is supporting approximately 240 individuals with developmental/intellectual disabilities.

OPTIONS held the annual Legislative and Business Appreciation Breakfast at North Oaks Health System. The annual Telethon concluded on May 3, 2011 at the Hammond Regional Arts Center.

## **2012**

A Groundbreaking was held on September 13, 2012 for C'est Tres Bon! a federally funded apartment complex that will provide housing for 10 individuals.

OPTIONS created a new business, OPTIONS Fabulous Finds, a resale store, in Ponchatoula. The Grand Opening was held on October 10, 2012. An anonymous donor provided funds to cover the first year of rent of the resale store, weaving looms and contribute to nursing program.

Karen Pfeifer approached OPTIONS and in October 2012 started a Saori Weaving Program.

OPTIONS held the annual Legislative and Business Appreciation Breakfast at North Oaks Health System. The 15<sup>th</sup> annual Telethon concluded on May 3, 2012 at Middendorf's Restaurant.

OPTIONS Safe Haven building was very successfully used as a hurricane shelter for the first time during Hurricane Isaac – August 28<sup>th</sup>.

OPTIONS and Hammond Kiwanis establish the Aktion Club on OPTIONS Main Campus. Aktion Club provides adults with disabilities an opportunity to develop initiative, leadership skills and to serve their communities.

## **2013 – 2014**

The OPTIONS Enrichment Program started on March 17, 2014. This program encourages people with disabilities to enjoy self-growth, friendship, recreation and the arts through community partnerships.

OPTIONS High Tea, a highly anticipated event, was held on May 24, 2014 at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Ponchatoula with special guest WWL TV Sally-Ann Roberts.

The Grand Opening was held on October 9, 2014 for C'est Tres Bon! a federally funded apartment complex that will provide housing for 10 individuals.

## **2015**

March 18, 2015 new, mission-based tours were started to help the community learn about the passion of OPTIONS. Tours are held on OPTIONS campus several times each month.

May 7, 2015 The OPTIONS Weaving Studio opens for business on OPTIONS Main Campus.

November 12, 2015 OPTIONS 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Be the Key Breakfast is held at Southeastern Louisiana University Ball Room

Thanks to a generous anonymous donor, OPTIONS begins Barnyard OPTIONS, an animal assisted therapy program for people with disabilities. Goldie, a rescue dog, becomes OPTIONS therapy dog in training.

## **2016**

On May 12<sup>th</sup>, OPTIONS Board of Directors adopts new by-laws which establish an Advisory Board to work in conjunction with the Board of Directors.

On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, OPTIONS 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Be The Key Breakfast is held at Southeastern Louisiana University Ball Room.

## **2017**

In February, a donor sponsored biking program was established for OPTIONS participants at Chappapeela Sports Park.

In August, OPTIONS established a satellite enrichment day program location at First Christian Church in Downtown Hammond.

On September 23<sup>rd</sup>, OPTIONS partnered with Spoga to hold the 1<sup>st</sup> Ballin' 4 OPTIONS Charity Basketball game. With the leadership of Jeff Day, Ballin' 4 OPTIONS founder, this event was created to engage individuals with disabilities into activities that allow participants to be physically active and build connections with non-disabled members of the community.

On November 2<sup>nd</sup>, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Be The Key Breakfast is held.

The 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Legislative and Business Appreciation Breakfast is held.

## **2018**

In spring, a donor sponsored basketball program began on OPTIONS campus. Two basketball goals and supplies were donated by the Rucker Family Foundation to promote health and fitness and to allow Ballin' 4 OPTIONS participants the opportunity to practice year round.

In June, Good Morning America Co-Host and OPTIONS Advocate/Supporter, Robin Roberts, comes to OPTIONS to visit with OPTIONS participants.

In July, OPTIONS along with other disability providers began the SAVE OUR SERVICES statewide Campaign. These S.O.S. efforts developed to address years of devastating cuts to Medicaid funding for waiver and community home services.

**2019**

OPTIONS launched “Plan Your Legacy,” a planned giving program. This program encourages planned giving through wills, insurance policies, trusts and retirement accounts. Donors making this commitment are inducted into OPTIONS Legacy Society.

OPTIONS held its 1<sup>st</sup> Student Volunteer Event, TIED 2 OPTIONS, from July 22<sup>nd</sup> – July 26<sup>th</sup> at First Christian Church in Downtown Hammond.

Taskmaster Pro, an electronic documentation system for all programmatic services was established within the entire agency.

REBASE – RESTORE: After many years of advocacy efforts, OPTIONS and service providers throughout the state finally received a modest increase to our funding. This increase does not cover the current cost of services. It only brings our funding levels back to where they were in 2008!

### ***...WHO MAKES UP THE GOVERNING BODY OF OPTIONS?***

The governing body of OPTIONS is a Board of Directors consisting of the elected officers, the immediate past president, and additional directors. Members of the board are relatives of people with developmental disabilities, participants with disabilities and/or concerned members of the community.

The Board of Directors has the responsibility for and authority over the policies and activities of OPTIONS. The board designates the Chief Executive Officer to act as chief administrator and delegates authority to this individual to manage OPTIONS.

The Board of Directors shall establish an Advisory Board of 8-12 people who have a passion for the OPTIONS Mission and are interested in Program Services; at least three (3) members of the Advisory Board shall be people with a relationship with someone receiving services from OPTIONS, Inc.; at least one (1) member of the Advisory Board will be a person with a disability who is receiving services from OPTIONS. One (1) member of the Board of Directors will serve as the Liaison and Chair of the Advisory Board. The Advisory board will have at least two (2) meetings per year.

### ***...DESCRIPTION OF OPTIONS SERVICES***

OPTIONS is a 501c3 private non-profit organization, which provides services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Services include: Work Training and Job Placement, Supported Independent Living, Personal Care Attendants, and Community Homes. Admissions for all of these services are based on OPTIONS ability to have the financial resources to meet each individual's needs.

To receive services, an individual must be willing to participate in goal directed activities as outlined in their Comprehensive Plan of Care or Individual Service Plan. Applicants must not be in need of mechanical restraints, nursing care or have a history of serious injury to themselves or others; this includes any criminal record. Individuals must be

Approved by the OPTIONS Board of Directors February 3, 2020



diagnosed with an intellectual or developmental disability. Exceptions are made on a case-by-case base with approval by the Chief Executive Officer.

<b>PROGRAM DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>DAY PROGRAM SERVICES</b>
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**Purpose:**

To create an environment for persons with developmental/intellectual disabilities to develop work skills and provide a variety of employment options which help individuals maximize their potential. OPTIONS provides quality training and support services to ensure continued employment.

**Eligibility:**

- Individuals must be at least 18 years of age. Exception may be done, on case-by-case basis, with approval from the Chief Executive Officer.
- Individuals must be diagnosed with an intellectual or developmental disability. Exception may be done, on case-by-case basis, with approval from the Chief Executive Officer.
- Individuals must live on an existing route established by OPTIONS or provide their own transportation.
- Funding must be approved by applicable funding source.

**Services Provided:**

The Vocational Program offers participants the opportunity for growth in areas such as basic skills, safety, work skills, money management, independent living, social skills, and community integration. Services include: vocational job placement, follow along, community-based mobile crew, community-based stationary crew, and campus-based training.

The job placement department offers opportunities for work in businesses and organizations in the community such as SLU Lab School, Popeye's, Louisiana Department of Labor, Wal-Mart, Albertson's, and others.

<b>PROGRAM DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>COMMUNITY LIVING (SUPPORTED LIVING PROGRAM)</b>
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**Purpose:**

This program assists a person with a developmental/intellectual disability to live in the community as independently as possible and to prevent entry and/or reentry into institutional care. The philosophy of OPTIONS is to develop, improve, and retrain the

adaptive and behavioral skills needed for each person to maximize their potential. Each person's maximum potential is unknown and it differs from person to person.

OPTIONS offers services that are tailored to each person's individual needs, wants, and skills.

**Eligibility:**

- Individuals must be diagnosed with an intellectual or developmental disability. Exception may be done, on case-by-case basis, with approval from the Chief Executive Officer.
- Individuals must be at least 18 years of age. Exceptions may be done, on case-by-case basis, with approval from the Chief Executive Officer.
- Funding must be approved by applicable funding source.

**Services Provided:**

The Supported Living Program offers participants the opportunity to live in an apartment or house of their choice. Services are provided based on each participant's Person-Centered Plan. Services may include training such as:

- Domestic Skills (cooking, groceries, shopping, etc.)
- Personal Care (dressing, hygiene)
- Community Integration (social and recreational skills)
- Money Management (budgeting, paying bills)
- Health Training (dietary, medications, etc.)

Participants are financially responsible for all living expenses and drug/medical bills not covered by Medicaid/Medicare or private insurance.

<b>PROGRAM DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>FAMILY SUPPORT</b> <b>Personal Care Services</b>
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**Purpose:**

To provide care of individuals in their family home or apartment who are unable to care for themselves because the primary caregiver is absent or in need of relief. While not rehabilitative or remedial in nature, Family Support includes assisting the individual with meal preparation, hygiene, light housekeeping, taking individuals on leisure activities, etc. Services may be provided to any developmentally/intellectually disabled individual on either an emergency or planned basis in the individual's home.

**Eligibility:**

- Individuals must be diagnosed with an intellectual or developmental disability. Exceptions may be done, on case-by-case basis, with approval from the Chief Executive Officer.

- Services are provided for all ages.
- Funding must be approved by applicable funding source.

**Services Provided:**

Direct Service Workers provide a participant with assistance in self-help skills as well as shopping, housekeeping, cooking, laundry, leisure activities, and other tasks that ensure the participant maintains a safe, healthy and stable living environment. The direct care staff may accompany a participant to appointments, assist in activities that enhance the participant’s employability, and facilitate the individual receiving any service that is specified in his/her written plan of care.

<b>PROGRAM DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>COMMUNITY HOMES</b>
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**Purpose:**

To provide hands on training, support, and warm home-like living arrangements for individuals. All staff strive to ensure that the individuals' needs are met so that they may reach their fullest potential and independence. Some of the training provided includes, money management, eating skills, domestic and safety skills, vocational skills, personal care skills and self-help skills.

**Eligibility:**

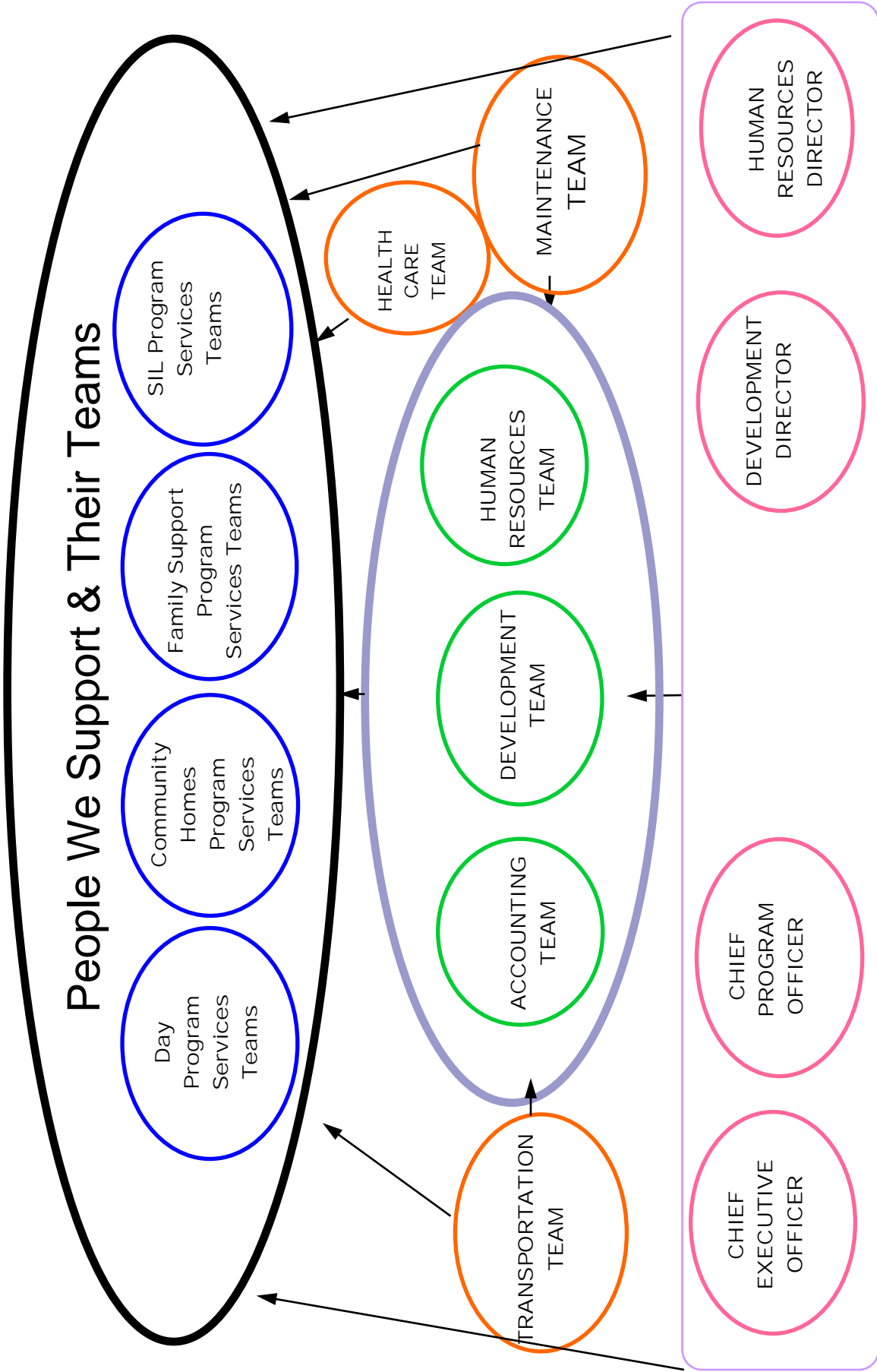
- An individual must be at least 18 years of age, developmentally/intellectually disabled and must be eligible for Title XIX benefits. Exceptions may be done, on case-by-case basis, with approval from the Chief Executive Officer.
- An individual must also be willing to participate in active treatment and community activities. Individuals must also be willing to fully disclose all financial information and be willing for the agency to become representative payee for SSA, SSI, VA/Civil Service benefits; etc.

**Services Provided:**

OPTIONS has four community homes.

All four of our community homes are in Tangipahoa Parish. Two homes are located near SLU, one home is close to the Hammond airport, and one home is in Pumpkin Center. Each home has 24-hour staff, including an overnight staff member who remains awake during sleeping hours to provide for the various needs of the individuals.

# OPTIONS, Inc. ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



## **II. PROGRAM SERVICES**

### ***...ADMISSIONS AND DISCHARGES***

#### **Admissions Policy**

OPTIONS provides day program services, employment training, personal care, supported independent living services, and community homes to individuals who are 18 and over. Individuals under the age of 18 may receive personal care services with the approval of the admissions committee. Individuals under the age of 18 may not receive day program services, employment services or independent living services.

OPTIONS serves individuals with a primary diagnosis of a developmental/intellectual disability.

To protect the safety of other participants and staff, applicants must be free from arrests or convictions of violent felonies or sex offenses. A significant history of violence towards others or substantial property destruction will be carefully reviewed by the admissions committee to assess risk and determine if we are able to provide services.

OPTIONS is not equipped to serve participants with complex medical needs, including individuals with a feeding tube or ventilator. Individuals who need injectable medication must be able to self-administer injections. OPTIONS is not able to serve individuals that require a two person transfer.

OPTIONS serves individuals within Tangipahoa Parish. Exceptions may be approved on a case by case basis by the CEO if the location of services to be provided is within 20 miles of the OPTIONS offices.

OPTIONS shall not refuse admission to any applicant on the grounds of race, national origin, ethnicity or disability.

#### **Admissions Procedures**

- Initial inquiry is received.
  - Inquiries should be referred to Chief Program Officer or designee, however all management staff can take an inquiry call.
  - Phone screening and Service Request Form is completed.
  - Interview is scheduled, if appropriate.
  - Team Leader is assigned to coordinate application and intake.
  - If no services are needed from OPTIONS, referrals of community resources are provided.
  
- Application for Services is completed at interview with participant and family.
  - Detailed information is gathered.

- Joint interviews can be done to assess SIL/PCA/Community Home needs and vocational needs together. However, the assigned coordinator may assess appropriateness for either service.
- Admissions committee meets weekly to review applications.
  - Committee consists of admissions coordinators, Team Leaders, division directors, CEO (when needed) and Director of Nursing.
  - Committee addresses medical, psychological/psychiatric, addictions, vocational, social, physical needs.
  - Committee determines if OPTIONS is capable of meeting participant needs and has adequate staff to provide the services requested.
  - Family/participant and support coordinator are notified of decision. If OPTIONS is unable to meet the needs of the applicant this will be documented on the Application for Services.
  - If OPTIONS is able to provide services, but there is no current opening or limited staff availability, the individual may choose to be on a waiting list for those services.
- If OPTIONS will serve the participant, Intake procedures begin
  - Participant is assigned to primary intake person (admissions coordinator or designated manager.)
  - CPOC activities are completed with the support coordinator if applicable.
  - Person-Centered Plan and intake paperwork/consents are completed.

## **Discharge Policy and Procedure**

### **Voluntary Transfers and Discharges**

Upon notice by the participant or authorized representative that the participant has selected another provider or has decided to discontinue services, OPTIONS will assist with planning for a participant's voluntary transfer or discharge in conjunction with the support coordinator.

OPTIONS will participate in a transfer or discharge planning conference with the participant, family, support coordinator, legal representative and advocate, if such are known, in order to facilitate a smooth transfer or discharge, unless the participant declines such a meeting.

Upon written request and authorization by the participant or authorized representative, a copy of the current ISP shall be provided to the participant or receiving provider.

Upon written request and authorization by the participant or authorized representative, a copy of the discharge summary shall be disclosed to the participant or receiving provider.

The written discharge summary shall be completed within five working days of the notice by the participant or authorized representative that the participant has selected another provider or has decided to discontinue services. The discharge summary shall include, at a minimum, a summary on the health, developmental issues, behavioral issues, social issues, and nutritional status of the participant.

## **Involuntary Transfers and Discharges**

OPTIONS will consider an involuntary transfer or discharge in the following circumstances:

- The participant's health has improved sufficiently so that the participant no longer needs the services.
- The safety or health of a participant(s) or provider staff is endangered.
- The participant or family refuses to cooperate or interferes with attaining the objectives contained in the Comprehensive Plan of Care or Individual Program Plan.

OPTIONS will provide a written notice, via certified mail, return receipt requested, of the involuntary transfer or discharge to the participant, a family member of the participant, if known, and to the authorized representative, if known, at least 30 days prior to the transfer or discharge.

When the safety or health of participants or OPTIONS staff is endangered, written notice shall be given as soon as practicable before the transfer or discharge.

The written notice of involuntary transfer or discharge shall include:

- a reason for the transfer or discharge
- the effective date of the transfer or discharge
- an explanation of a participant's right to personal and/or third party representation at all stages of the transfer or discharge process
- Contact information for the nearest Advocacy Center including the address and telephone number.
- names of OPTIONS personnel available to assist the participant and family in decision making and transfer arrangements
- the date, time and place for the discharge planning conference
- a statement regarding the participant's appeal rights
- the address and telephone number of the LDH Division of Administrative Law or successor entity; and
- a statement regarding the participant's right to remain with OPTIONS Inc and not be transferred or discharged if an appeal is timely filed

## **Appeal Rights for Involuntary Transfers or Discharges**

If a timely appeal is filed by the participant or authorized representative disputing the involuntary discharge, OPTIONS will not transfer or discharge the participant pursuant to the provisions of this Section.

If a participant files a timely appeal request, the Division of Administrative Law or successor entity shall hold an appeal hearing at the agency or by telephone, if agreed upon by the appellant, within 30 days from the date the appeal is filed with the Division of Administrative Law or successor entity.

If the basis of the involuntary discharge is due to endangerment of the health or safety of the staff or individuals, OPTIONS will make a written request to the Division of Administrative Law or successor entity to hold a pre-hearing conference.

If a pre-hearing conference request is received by the Division of Administrative Law or successor entity, the pre-hearing conference shall be held within 10 days of receipt of the written request from the provider.

If a participant is given 30 days written notice of the involuntary transfer or discharge and the participant or authorized representative files a timely appeal, the participant may remain with OPTIONS and not be transferred or discharged until the Division of Administrative Law or successor entity renders a decision on the appeal.

If a participant is given less than 30 days written notice and files a timely appeal of an involuntary transfer/discharge based on the health and safety of individuals or OPTIONS staff being endangered, the participant may remain with OPTIONS and not be transferred or discharged until one of the following occurs:

- the Division of Administrative Law or successor entity holds a pre-hearing conference regarding the safety or health of the staff or individuals; or
- the Division of Administrative Law or successor entity renders a decision on the appeal.

### ***...PERSON-CENTERED***

People with disabilities want to be treated as people first. OPTIONS believes each person with a disability should have an opportunity to pursue what he or she wants, as long as it is not harmful to themselves or others.

Person-centered approaches are based on the individual's dreams and are developed by the individual with assistance, as desired, from family and friends. The focus is on the person's own life wishes and encourages community involvement and support of the person's dream. It is an attempt to break through the traditional continuum of "one size fits all" services to offer more individualized lifestyle and service selection. The foundation for OPTIONS service delivery change is based on the fundamental belief in the self-worth of each individual.



As a person-centered agency, OPTIONS strives to:

- ✓ have a clear vision and mission, and lives its mission
- ✓ listen to people
- ✓ ensure a culture of caring
- ✓ support pockets of innovation
- ✓ recognize and reward 'Best Practices'
- ✓ limit program size, hierarchy
- ✓ train, support, and value Direct Service Workers
- ✓ think locally, observe globally
- ✓ develop relationships with the community through education and coordination
- ✓ stand behind efforts to give consumers greater control of fiscal supports and choice of provider

## **The Words We Use**

The words we use reflect how we value a person. The way we describe a person lets others know whether or not we think the person is important. We at OPTIONS believe that every person with a disability should be treated as a valued, respected member of the community. The way we speak must demonstrate what we believe.

People should never be identified as their disability. If the disability is needed as part of the story it should be a person with a disability or a person with an intellectual disability. Terminology which emphasizes the person, rather than the disability, is preferred. We are not ignoring a person's disability, but we realize that a person is not defined by that disability.

Look for commonalities rather than differences. The preferred terms focus attention on the uniqueness and value of the individual, rather than emphasizing the disabling condition.

When we identify a person, we should use their name. Other labels are usually not necessary in day to day conversations.

### ***...PARTICIPANT BILL OF RIGHTS***

(a) Information:

Each participant must be informed if rules or regulations concerning conduct change.

(b) Exercising rights:

Each participant must be encouraged and supported in exercising his/her rights as a participant. He/she must be allowed to submit complaints or recommendations concerning the policies and services provided.

- (c) Financial affairs:  
Each participant must be allowed to manage his/her personal finances to the extent they are able. If a participant needs assistance, it must be in writing and comply with acceptable and established record keeping procedures.
- (d) Freedom from abuse and restraint:  
Each participant must be free from all forms of abuse, neglect and restraint.
- (e) Privacy:  
Each participant shall be treated with consideration, respect, and full recognition of his/her dignity and individuality. Privacy should be provided during treatment and care of personal needs. Case records should be treated confidentially. Participants who are competent majors shall give written consent before information contained in the case record may be released to anyone not authorized by law to receive it. In cases of minors or participants that are classified as incompetent majors, the parent or legally authorized person shall give written consent.
- (f) Work:  
Each participant's individual program plan will address their employment goals.
- (g) Freedom of association and correspondence:  
Each participant must be allowed to communicate, associate, and meet privately with individuals of his/her choice, unless this infringes on the rights of another individual, is an immediate threat to their safety, or is contraindicated in the individual service plan.
- (h) Each participant is allowed to retain and use his/her personal possessions and clothing as space permits.
- (i) Participants shall be supplied with a copy of their case record upon written request.
- (j) Participants have the right to participate in the least restrictive person-centered plan program appropriate to his/her needs in order to maximize one's capabilities and to enhance the ability to cope with the environment. The person-centered plan is developed by their support team and is reviewed periodically to measure progress and modify objectives as deemed necessary.
- (k) The Program Coordinator may, for just cause only, deny a participant certain rights. Statements explaining such denial shall be promptly entered into the participant's case record.

**....PREVENTION OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT, EXPLOITATION & DENIAL OF RIGHTS**

OPTIONS believes in providing staff with the skill and knowledge to prevent abuse and neglect. OPTIONS believes we should provide everyone with a warm, friendly, caring

environment that helps them to grow and develop as well as meet their needs. The agency believes in teaching individuals appropriate behaviors. This is achieved through each individual's Comprehensive Plan of Care. Before any individual's rights are restricted or a plan is implemented to address an unwanted behavior, it must be discussed by the Interdisciplinary Team for that individual and then approved by the Behavior Intervention Committee (BIC) / Human Rights Team.

Each employee is responsible to ensure that every individual is provided with Active Treatment and Quality Care in an environment that helps them to grow and develop. To promote growth and development, the environment must be free of Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation, or Denial of Basic Civil Rights.

Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Denial of Basic Civil Rights include but are not limited to the following:

Abuse as the infliction of physical or mental injury or the causing of the deterioration of a participant

General Abuse: overwork, refusal of meals/water, participants not wearing safety glasses, staff not following infection control/standard precautions when working with a participant

Physical Abuse: spanking, beating, hitting, punching, twisting limbs, pinching, hair pulling

Sexual Abuse: rape, fondling, exhibitionism, voyeurism (peeping tom)

Verbal Abuse: threats (I'm going to get you), raising voice (shouting, yelling), judgmental statements (insults), cursing

Neglect is the failure to provide the proper or necessary medical care, nutrition, or other care necessary for the participant's well-being.

General Neglect: failure to give participant medication, participants not dressed properly (torn clothes), exposure of anatomy, failure to report any participant injury or health issue

Service Neglect: failure to provide participant supervision at all times unless written in participant's IPP that he can function independently, failure to provide and document participant training, missing participant appointments without cause

Environmental Neglect: failure to report any safety issue, (vehicle or facility), not properly labeling chemicals or having Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for all chemicals, not maintaining the environment according to Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) standards, (not cleaning tub after each use)

Exploitation is the intentional expenditure, diminution, or use of the property or assets of a person without the documented consent of the person regardless of the value of said property.

Extortion: acquisition of a thing of value by intimidation or physical force, borrowing money from participants, asking participants to buy something for you, accepting gifts from participants valued over \$25.00, and identity theft.

Each participant's rights are outlined in OPTIONS' Bill of Rights, which each participant signs when he/she is admitted.

Denial of Rights: Invading privacy, reading mail without permission, searching participant's purse, room, etc. without permission, denial of telephone calls, talking about participants outside a professional setting

Punishment: Depriving participant of rights without the approval from the Behavior Intervention Committee/Human Rights Team.

Participants will be physically restrained only when they are in danger of injuring themselves or others. In most cases, the area can be cleared so the participant has time and space to calm down without confrontation. Any time a participant is physically restrained, the on-call person is notified **immediately**.

Injury of Unknown Origin: Any bruise or injury in which there are no witnesses & participant cannot explain must be reported.

**Action to Be Taken:**

If an employee suspects or knows of any violation of abuse, neglect, exploitation, injury of unknown origin, or denial of basic civil rights, he/she will ensure immediate safety, seek emergency medical care if needed, then report it immediately to the on-call person, Team Leader/Supervisor, and the Division Director. The on-call person will immediately report the situation to the Human Resources Director and the Chief Executive Officer and family member. The employee will submit a written report to the Division Director before the end of his/her shift and all contacts, including date and time, will be documented with case notes and the Critical Incident Report form.

All allegations of abuse or neglect are addressed immediately, and may need to be reported to the appropriate state protective agency and law enforcement.

If the situation is not addressed within 24 hours, the employee must report it to the Chief Executive Officer. **Failure to report any suspected abuse, neglect, exploitation, injury of unknown origin, or denial of participant rights may lead to immediate dismissal.**

To ensure the participant is free from retaliation and the investigation is handled in a professional manner, the employee may be suspended. If the allegation is not substantiated, he/she will be reinstated with retroactive pay. If the allegation is substantiated, the situation will be evaluated to determine if criminal action is involved. The State of Louisiana has strict penalties for abuse, neglect, and exploitation or violation of basic civil rights.

**When an allegation of abuse, neglect or exploitation is substantiated, retraining will be provided to all DSWs employed by the agency as appropriate.**

### ***...INCIDENT REPORTS***

If an employee is in doubt about a situation, they will immediately contact the on-call person for the program in which they are working.

Incidents will be documented on an incident report form before the end of the workday. Incidents include, but are not limited to, staff or individual injury, individual medical and behavioral issues, situations involving family, employers or the community members, vehicle and other accidents, allegations of abuse or neglect and any other circumstances that may affect the safety and well-being of the individuals or staff.

### ***...INVESTIGATIONS***

Internal investigations are conducted anytime a systematic information gathering process is needed. Situations that may require an internal investigation include, but are not limited to, allegations of abuse or neglect, allegations of harassment, accidents, grievances, and unusual occurrences. **Internal investigations are to be completed within five (5) working days, when possible.** Depending on the type of investigation, various state agencies must be notified within twenty-four hours and a written report or progress report must be submitted within three (3) working days.

In order to ensure OPTIONS has all the necessary information to provide a positive work environment, employees are expected to cooperate with all internal and external investigations. Administrative suspensions are used to remove any employee directly involved in the reported allegation. If the allegation is not substantiated, the suspension will be with pay. If the allegation is substantiated, he/she will be subject to disciplinary suspension, which is without pay. Other disciplinary action, which may include termination, may be taken.

An employee may be subject to Disciplinary Action for failure to cooperate in an investigation. For more information on investigative procedures, contact the Human Resources Director.

## **...PARTICIPANT HEALTH**

### **Doctor's visit checklist:**

- Participant's photo ID, face sheet, Medicaid card/Medicare card – make a copy of these and keep in medication binder
- Current list of all medications
- Bring service objectives (examples: blood sugar, blood pressure, weight, bowel movement, food logs)
- Consultant order
- Participant's list of medical diagnosis and allergies for new Doctor's visits. (This can be found on Participant's 90L or CPOC)
- Please know reason for the visit and be prepared to give the doctor current symptoms, how long conditions or complaints have existed. Have information on how the participant has been eating, sleeping, any behaviors, bowel/bladder patterns, etc.

#### **Accompany the participant into the examination room and obtain the following:**

- Completed Consultant Order
- Staff should complete the area entitled "Options Notes" and sign accordingly. **Please ask questions** about any medication changes, treatments, diagnosis or new orders the doctor is making.
- Make a follow-up appointment and write the date and time on the Consultant Order

#### **After the doctor's visit the staff must:**

- Separate the yellow copy to keep in the home, make sure the follow-up appointment date and time are written on the Participant's home calendar
- Go to the Pharmacy and get meds filled
- Bring Consultant Order to Options **as soon as possible**.
- Call the nurse for instructions or changes to the MAR or new treatments ordered for the participant
- Please send discontinued medications to Options

## Signs of Illness or Injury

### Some Signs to Look for in Illness or Injury:

- Fever of 101 or greater
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Stomach Ache
- Chest Pain
- Cough/ Sniffles
- Congestion
- Any Allergy Reactions  
Rash/ Watery Eyes
- Shortness of Breath/ Wheezing
- Hyperventilating
- Pain in Joints
- Swelling in Any Area
- Soreness/ Tenderness
- Pain When Urinating
- Blood in Urine/ Feces
- Frequent Urination
- No bowel movement for 48 hours
- Bruising – unexplained
- Any Changes in Typical Behavior

### Reporting:

**Any symptoms from the above list should be reported to the nurse and on-call staff immediately.** The symptom and treatment or over-the-counter medications should be documented in the daily log, case notes, or entered on the back of MAR or PRN sheet for that individual.

When an individual complains of or exhibits any of the above symptoms, vital signs (BLOOD PRESSURE, TEMP, PULSE, and RESPIRATION) should be taken and recorded so that this information can be given to the nurse.

**Report all falls to nurse/team leader and/or on-call staff immediately, even if there is no apparent injury.**

Medical issues or signs and symptoms of illness should be brought to nurse's attention immediately. When directions are given to seek medical attention, family member/guardian/authorized representative should be notified. If family member/guardian/authorized representative disagrees with nurse direction, Director of Nursing and CEO should be contacted immediately.

### **If experiencing any of the following, call 9-1-1 immediately**

- Difficulty breathing
- Chest pain
- A fast heartbeat (more than 120-150) at rest
- Someone faints/passes out or someone is unresponsive
- Difficulty speaking, numbness, or weakness of any part of the body
- Sudden dizziness, weakness or mental changes (confusion, odd behavior, difficulty walking)
- Sudden blindness or vision changes
- Heavy bleeding from your mouth, nose, vagina or bottom
- Bleeding from any wound that won't stop with direct pressure
- Broken bones or suspected broken bones
- Drowning
- Choking
- Severe burns
- Extremely hot or cold
- Poisoning or drug overdose
- New severe headache
- Sudden intense severe pain
- Someone is threatening to hurt or kill themselves or someone else
- Some has fallen, and they are unable to get up unassisted
- Someone has hit their head, or you suspect a head, neck or spine injury
- Seizures-depending on the person's seizure protocol

### **Additional Questions to Consider**

- Is the condition life or limb threatening?
- Could the condition worsen quickly on the way to the hospital?
- If you move the victim, will it cause further injury?
- Does the person need skills or equipment that paramedics or EMT's carry right away?
- Would distance or traffic cause a delay in getting the person to the hospital?

If the answer is yes to any of these....**call 9-1-1.**

### **What if I'm not sure?**

If you're not sure about the answer to the above questions, call 9-1-1. It is better to be safe and let the 9-1-1 call taker determine if you need emergent assistance. Always err on the side of caution. **When in doubt, call.**

### **Medication Safety**

- ✓ Always wash your hands before medication administration
- ✓ Always check medication label to MAR **3 times.**
- ✓ Always check for the six medication rights: right dose, right route, right time and date, right individual, right medication, right documentation
- ✓ Have a separate medication cup for each participant.
- ✓ Do not be distracted while preparing medications – do not use your cell phone, turn the TV down or off, only work with one participant's medication at a time, make sure your environment is quiet and calm

Approved by the OPTIONS Board of Directors February 3, 2020



- ✓ Always make sure medication is swallowed by the participant.
- ✓ Give only medications that you have personally set up.
- ✓ Keep 7 days of medication in the home at all times. (Example – if a medication is given (QD) 1x a day order when 7 pills are left in the blister pack, if a medication is given (BID) 2x a day order when 14 pills are left, if a medication is given (TID) 3x a day order when 21 pills are left.
- ✓ Make sure that you understand the purpose, expected result, side effects, and how to administer all medications. Also, make sure to explain to the participant the medications they are receiving.
- ✓ If unclear about any part of medication administration call the nurse.

## Medication Administration

The following information requires adherence in an effort to prevent medication administration errors. It is each staff person's job to pay attention to all aspects of care for any individual they work with; this includes medication administration. **It does not matter whether the employee is a Certified Medication Administration (CMA) attendant, a PRN (as needed) or a regular staff person. If the employee is assigned to a participant, it is his/her job to notify on-call if the medication cannot be given as prescribed or was not given as prescribed.**

1. Medications should be stored properly in a designated area in each home.
2. Only a CMA/RN delegated staff member may administer any medications or treatment.
3. During the administration of medication, only the CMA/RN delegated staff and the participant receiving medications shall be in this designated area.
4. All supplies/equipment (water, gloves, spoons, etc.) shall be obtained before beginning the medication administration or treatment process.
5. The Medication Administration Record (MAR) and the medication/treatments to be administered shall be placed on the table or counter top being used.
6. NOTE: This surface should have been cleaned prior to beginning the medication administration.
7. All CMA/RN delegated staff are expected to review each MAR record for each participant and match each medication with the corresponding consulting order. (Once the doctor completes the consulting order, the yellow copy of the consulting order is to be left in the participant's house.)
8. USING A NEW MEDICATION BLISTER PACK: When the FIRST pill is punched out for use, documentation should be made on the back of the MAR, giving the date, time and a statement made that the new card or medication

was started. The CMA/RN delegated staff should sign this statement. Your initials should be circled on the front of the MAR for the first pill punched out and when the last pill is punched out.

9. The blister pack must be initialed and dated every time a medication is punched out for use. Initials are made in the space above the area from which the pill was removed.
10. The Medication Administration Record must be initialed every time a medication is administered. MAR is to be initialed AFTER medication is administered. Carefully observe the participant during & after medication administration.
11. If the yellow copy of the consulting order is missing, contact the Residential Program Coordinator/Supervised Independent Living (RPC/SIL) on call Team Leader before administering or discontinuing the medication. If the RPC/SIL on call Team Leader cannot produce a copy of a consulting order for that medication, contact the nurse before administering the medication or discontinuing the medication. Each time you do not have the order and need to contact the consulting nurse, you are to document your conversation on a Nurse Contact Sheet in the MAR binder.
12. Clear documentation must be made on medications withheld, refused, and as needed (PRN) medications. Each time a PRN medication is taken, the name of the medication, the dosage, the date, the time taken, and the initials and or signature of the staff person are to be recorded on the PRN medication record. PRN results must also be documented.
13. Overnight/designated staff shall verify each MAR with the corresponding consulting order as part of their duties regardless of whether they administer medications. Overnight/designated staff will ensure that the yellow copy is in the Medication Administration binder and that it matches the MAR and the punch pack. The overnight/designated staff will also ensure that the white copy, and the transmittal reports are signed and then file them in the main file/participant record or sent to the main office for filing.
14. Overnight/designated staff will check medication and if the participant has 8 days or less of medication, they will fill out the appropriate form and call the medication into the pharmacy for refill. There must be 7 days of medication in the home at all times.
15. Medication count must be done on each shift and must be documented on the drug count sheet. Controlled drugs count is maintained on the narcotic count sheet and these drugs must be counted each time the controlled drug is given. Two staff should count controlled drugs together when possible.

- CONTROLLED DRUGS INCLUDE: ANTIANXIETY MEDS, SEIZURE MEDS, CNS STIMULANTS, NARCOTICS, RITALIN, ADDEROL, PHENOBARBITOL, CLONOPIN, VALIUM

16. If a medication is dropped on the floor, the medication is destroyed by flushing it down the commode. This must be indicated on the back of the MAR and signed off by the CMA/RN delegated staff and another staff if they are available. If a medication is punched out from the blister pack and not given for any reason, it cannot be replaced into the blister pack. It must be handled in the same manner as a medication that is dropped on the floor.
17. If new medication is prescribed, the staff who picks up the medication from the pharmacy MUST REQUEST A DRUG INFORMATION SHEET and then put it in the MAR binder.
18. If the MAR is not initialed, THIS IS A MEDICATION ERROR.
19. If a medication is not given, THIS IS A MEDICATION ERROR.
20. If the MAR is initialed and the medication remains in a blister pack, THIS IS A MEDICATION ERROR.
21. A MEDICATION ERROR can have serious consequences to the health and welfare of a participant. A MEDICATION ERROR may be classified as **participant neglect** and may result in disciplinary action including termination.

### **Psychotropic Medication**

When a “psychotropic medication” has been prescribed;

1. Staff must call nurse to inform him/her of the medication change. This includes new and change dose of “psychotropic medication”.
2. Nurse will either give information on the side effects of the medication or will delegate this duty.
3. Written informed consent is obtained from the participant.
4. Verbal consent or email consent will be obtained from parents/guardians who have interdiction papers on any of the participants.
5. Once the participant’s guardian signature of consent has been received, the members of the Behavior Intervention/Human Rights Committee will be contacted for consent before the “psychotropic medication” is administered.
6. In case of emergency administration or “STAT” dose of “psychotropic medication” order is received, steps 2, 3 and 4 will be followed before the medication is given. The Behavior Intervention/Human Rights Committee member’s consent will be obtained at the earliest convenience.

## **Causes of Medication Errors**

- Reading the label incorrectly
- Failure to understand orders or instructions
- Failure to watch for swallowing of the medication
- Failure to document or failure to correctly document
- Medication not in facility (was not ordered or was not picked up)
- Failure to document PRN medications, the reason for administering, and the results of the medication
- Poor lighting

## **Types of Medication Errors**

- Wrong medication
- Wrong individual
- Wrong dosage
- Wrong time
- Wrong route
- Wrong documentation

## **What to Do?**

- Immediately notify the nurse for instructions
- Check vital signs, complete the medication error form
- Observe the individual and follow the instructions of the nurse

## **CMA Criteria**

1. Staff must agree to all CMA requirements
  - a. Training schedule of twice a week 2-4 hours per session
  - b. 40 hours of classroom theory
  - c. 20 hours of practice/medication administration
  - d. Taking exam for certification
  - e. Any other requirement set forth by certification regulations
2. Staff must agree to administer medication and perform CMA duties for any OPTIONS participant when requested.

3. Staff will lose CMA pay if not using or refuse to perform CMA skills.
4. If staff leaves OPTIONS within one year of becoming certified, staff will be required to reimburse OPTIONS for CMA training (\$200).
5. Once a CMA, staff will need to attend 9 hours of training every two years regarding medications thereafter to continue to maintain their certification. OPTIONS will provide the 9 hours of recertification training. CMA must administer medication at some point during the year to qualify to remain CMA or to qualify for recertification.

### **RN Delegated Staff Criteria**

1. 16 hours of classroom training.
2. Pass test and classroom skills check off.
3. Complete individual specific medication administration.
4. Must contact OPTIONS nurse with all medication changes and new medications.
5. Annual and periodic evaluation of medication administration.
6. Can only administer medication to a participant that is in a stable and predictable medical condition.

### ***...POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS***

Positive behavior supports will be the first and primary means by which challenging behaviors are addressed. When positive behavior approaches are recommended, staff members will be trained in their use prior to implementation.

A functional assessment will be completed as the first step in addressing any challenging behaviors.

Anything that restricts a participant's rights will not be allowed until OPTIONS Behavior Intervention/Human Rights Committee gives consent. Exceptions will only be made if the participant is harmful to himself/herself or others.

If restrictions are placed on the rights of participants, procedures must be in the form of a written behavior intervention plan. Informed consent will be obtained prior to implementation of the strategies, and the rights of the individual must be reinstated as soon as possible.

Plans to address challenging behaviors will be based on positive, non-aversive behavior approaches designed to maximize the growth and development of the individual.

A written, individualized plan will be developed to address serious behavioral challenges. Each plan will include provisions to teach the individual to redirect the behavior into adaptive expression, or to replace the behavior with an adaptive one.

Staff responsible for its implementation will receive, from the plan's developer, training in the specifics of the plan prior to its implementation.

Methodology will begin with least restrictive methods. Over time, responses of persons served to each type of intervention will be recorded and reviewed for effectiveness.

For the strategies outlined in the plan to be effective, restrictive methods of intervention will not be considered until all feasible positive behavior strategies have been implemented for a sufficient period of time, as determined by a behavioral specialist. In the event that restrictive methods are deemed necessary, an explanation of the methodology must be communicated to the participant and the family, and signed informed consent must be obtained. The plan will designate who is responsible for monitoring the use of restrictive methods closely, and the rights of the individuals will be reinstated as soon as possible. Informed consent is obtained prior to implementation of rights restrictions. Staff will be trained specifically in the implementation of rights restrictions. Rights will be restored as soon as possible based upon methods contained in program procedures.

The behavior intervention plan will be reviewed with the participant and his/her advocate (if available) prior to implementation.

The following procedures are prohibited in behavior management plans: corporal punishment, chemical restraints, psychological and verbal abuse, seclusion, forced exercise, physical and mechanical restraints, any cruel, severe, unusual, degrading or unnecessary punishment, and denial of food, drink, visits with family or the use of restroom facilities.

### ***...PARTICIPANT FINANCES***

Upon admission, each participant in Supported Independent Living and Community Homes or their designee will complete a financial disclosure and authorization form. This authorization outlines the level of assistance being requested by the participant or family/designee. OPTIONS is available to serve as the Social Security Administration appointed representative payee upon request. OPTIONS complies with all regulations for an Organizational Representative Payee as outlined by the Social Security Administration.

OPTIONS also has a money management program that is designed and authorized on a case by case, person-centered basis for participants requesting assistance but who

are not in need of a Social Security Administration appointed payee. This agreement is documented on a “Money Management Agreement” form. Participants and family determine the level of involvement and the specific duties and responsibilities of the agency are documented on this form.

Procedures for banking, deposits, and expenditures are outlined in the Participant Finance Procedures document for each program.

### **...DOCUMENTATION**

OPTIONS requires all employees to adhere to the following standards for all written and electronic documentation:

- All documentation must be complete and accurate.
- Documentation must be completed as soon as possible, but no more than 24 hours after occurrence.
- Daily progress notes/data sheets etc. are to be completed by the end of each shift.
- Employees shall follow procedures for correcting errors on documentation as outlined by funding sources and other applicable regulations.
- Documentation should never be completed ahead of time.
- Falsification of documentation is grounds for disciplinary action and may include termination.

Written documentation:

- All documentation must be written in ink or typed. Pencil or erasable ink is not acceptable.
- All documentation must be signed and dated.
- Signatures are a unique identifier; therefore signing someone else’s name to a document is not permitted for any reason.

Electronic documentation:

- All electronic documentation should be completed using your personal username and password.
- NEVER share your username or password or allow anyone else to use your login credentials.

Retention of records and confidentiality of written documentation are addressed in other sections of this manual.

### **III. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

OPTIONS encourages responsibility at every level. We are committed to working together as a team with genuine concern and respect for one another.

#### ***...STATEMENT OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY***

OPTIONS has long pursued a policy of Equal Employment Opportunity. We feel very strongly that Equal Employment Opportunity is not only a legal and economic necessity, but also an extension of our earnest desire to fulfill the citizenship role of OPTIONS. For an Affirmative Action Plan to be successful, it requires not only aggressive, ambitious goal setting programs, but also the tangible evidence of measurable results.

It is the policy of OPTIONS that all personnel practices will be administered without regard to age, race, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability or genetic information. These practices include, but are not limited to, recruitment, hiring, training, promotion, compensation, benefits, transfers, dismissals, educational, and recreational programs. Decisions for employment will be based on policies and practices that further the principle of Equal Employment Opportunity. Promotions, transfers, and training opportunities will be afforded to all employees based on their ability to perform as measured by specific and objective criteria. It is our intention that every aspect of employment within OPTIONS shall be free of discrimination or prejudice. All OPTIONS policies are administered in a fair and consistent manner.

When needed, specific accountability will be established for carrying out the Agency's Affirmative Action policy and programs. To further accomplish these goals, OPTIONS is dedicated to take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment, qualified individuals with disabilities and protected veterans. Each director and manager of the organization from the Chief Executive Officer to the middle managers will be held accountable for achieving the goals and timetables set forth for his/her area. Failure to achieve these goals will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal if deemed appropriate.

OPTIONS is committed to take positive action to utilize qualified individuals with disabilities and covered veterans in all levels of job classification. This has been communicated to the entire staff and each director and manager from the Chief Executive Officer to the first line supervisor will be held accountable for upholding this commitment and for carrying out OPTIONS' Affirmative Action Policy and programs.

Discrimination, however unconscious, is a waste of human resources. OPTIONS and its management intend to eliminate this waste and further the principles of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity so that we might achieve full utilization of our minority and female work force.



The continued success of OPTIONS depends on the full and effective utilization of qualified people, regardless of race, religion, gender, age, national origin or physical or mental disability or Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA).

### **...CONFIDENTIALITY**

#### **Individual Records**

OPTIONS has written procedures for the maintenance and security of records specifying who shall supervise the maintenance of records, who shall have custody of records, and to whom records may be released. This includes, but is not limited to, records or documents related to treatment plans, medications, physical or mental conditions, doctors seen by individuals as well as records maintained by OPTIONS on behalf of the individual. Records shall be the property of the agency and the agency, as custodian, shall secure records against loss, tampering, or unauthorized use.

All information contained in each individual's record is considered privileged and confidential. The records for each individual shall only be disclosed to authorized persons. Authorized persons shall include, but are not limited to:

- \* Persons involved with the maintenance of an individual's records
- \* Persons directly involved with implementation of the individual's program
- \* The individual or their guardian. To view their record, the individual or guardian must submit a written request to the appropriate Team Leader.
- \* Those persons authorized by state or federal law

Written consent of the individual, if competent and of the age of majority, or his/her legal guardian shall be required for the release of information to persons not otherwise authorized to receive it.

#### **Individual's Information**

Information/conversations about an individual's behaviors or special needs are to be restricted to private areas. Only employees who interact with that individual should be given the information.

Violation of the Individual Confidentiality Policy shall result in disciplinary action against the employee, which may include termination.

#### **HIPAA**

What is HIPAA? HIPAA is the acronym for Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act of 1996. The policy established standards to protect individuals' medical records and other "PHI" or Protected Health Information.

Under HIPAA guidelines, who are considered "Health Care Providers?" Any provider of medical or other health related services or supplies, who transmits any health

information in electronic form in connection with a transaction for which standard requirements have been adopted.

What types of documentation are considered to be “PHI” or Protected Health Information? Individually identifiable health information that is transmitted or maintained in any form or medium such as electronic, paper, or oral communication. Including data sheets, any type of financial data derived from receiving care (bill from a physician), or individual discharge information, etc.

Who is responsible for maintaining confidentiality of PHI? OPTIONS staff.....We are all responsible as we are in contact with some form of PHI. Each staff member will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement.

Who is our Chief Privacy/Information Officer and what is their main responsibility? Our Chief Privacy/Information Officer is the OPTIONS Human Resources Director. The main responsibility of the Chief Privacy/Information Officer is to set policies and procedures regarding HIPAA compliance and to ensure all policy violations are handled accordingly.

## **Employee Confidentiality Agreement**

It is the policy of OPTIONS (“OPTIONS, Inc.”) that its internal business affairs and other confidential information represent OPTIONS proprietary information that each employee has a continuing obligation to protect. In exchange for continued employment with OPTIONS, employees agree to protect OPTIONS confidential and proprietary information as set forth below:

Employee understands that in the course of his or her employment with OPTIONS, Employee may come into possession, or have access to, OPTIONS “confidential information.” As used in this Confidentiality Agreement, “confidential information” includes, but is not limited to, any information that would constitute a trade secret under applicable law; as well as all medical and personal information concerning OPTIONS individuals and/or employees; information regarding the provision of services or submission of claims; information regarding internal and external staff providers and their credentials or credentialing status; provider allowances; and OPTIONS business plans and/or strategies.

Accordingly, as a condition of employment and in consideration of employee’s access to OPTIONS confidential information, employee agrees as follows:

Employee agrees to hold OPTIONS confidential information in the strictest confidence and not to disclose or otherwise utilize OPTIONS confidential information except as necessary for employee to perform his or her customary and regular job duties. This means, among other things, that:

- Employee will only access confidential information for which employee has a legitimate business and/or clinical need to know;
- Employee will not in any way disclose, divulge, copy, release, sell, loan, review, alter, or destroy any of OPTIONS confidential information except as properly authorized within the scope of employee's employment with OPTIONS; and
- Employee will not otherwise misuse or misappropriate OPTIONS confidential information.
- Employee further agrees to prevent unauthorized use of confidential information and agrees to report any unauthorized use of confidential information to OPTIONS Human Resources Director or Chief Program Officer.
- Employee agrees not to remove any record (including copies), or any other type of confidential information, from the office where it is kept, except in the performance of employee's regular and customary job duties.
- Employee agrees not to remove any original record from OPTIONS property at any time without prior consent of the Human Resources Director and/or the Chief Program Officer.
- Employee agrees not to remove any copies of records from the OPTIONS property at any time without prior consent of employee's immediate supervisor.
- Employee agrees not to divulge his or her network password to anyone else, or allow anyone else to access or alter information. Employee's Identity Evaluation, Plans for Job Improvement, drug testing, investigations, and salary information are considered confidential and should not be discussed with co-workers.
- Discussion is grounds for reprimand leading to suspension or termination for repeated abuse of confidentiality.
- All information contained in each employee record is considered privileged and confidential.
- Employee acknowledges that failure to comply with the obligations contained in this Confidentiality Agreement will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
- Employee agrees that the obligations contained in this Confidentiality Agreement will continue after termination of employment, whether employee's employment is terminated voluntarily or involuntarily.
- Employees are not permitted to take pictures of participants, OPTIONS property, or documents with personal cell phones, tablets, cameras or any other device. Exceptions to this may be granted in writing by the division director for a specific work related purpose. The authorization must include a plan to ensure removal of the files from the device.
- Employees are not permitted to post any job related information, including photos of participants on social media sites. Posts may only be made by OPTIONS staff who are authorized to do so and a valid media consent must be verified every time information is shared with media outlets, including social media.

## **...EMPLOYEE EXPECTATIONS**

As an OPTIONS Employee, the following are expected from our staff:

- Attend work regularly, punctually, and demonstrate flexibility.
- Carry out your responsibilities efficiently and thoroughly.
- Take initiative in communicating with all parties involved.
- Work as a team player with everyone.
- Accept opportunities for growth.
- Exhibit listening skills and be approachable.
- Serve the needs of others and be willing to assist co-workers.
- Do the right thing, not the easiest thing.
- Make work fun.
- Be responsible for company property - keep it in good condition at all times.
- Evaluate the consequences before you act.
- Take care of yourself so you can take care of others.
- Be honest in communication, documentation, and actions.
- Employee conduct shall always be both directly and indirectly loyal, non-disruptive, and non-damaging to the agency.
- Be alert! Be careful! Be aware of your surroundings! Always think safety & report any unsafe condition to your supervisor.
- At all times, treat everyone with dignity & respect.
- Use good judgment.
- Display fair and consistent treatment to all.
- Be a model citizen for the participants.
- Approach each situation by getting as much information as possible.
- Comply with 16 hour rule.
- Comply with training requirements and all rules and regulations.

As an OPTIONS employee, performing the following may lead to disciplinary action such as counseling, suspension, or termination:

1. OPTIONS policy and licensing regulations prohibits a DSW from working more than 16 hours in a 24-hour period. All hours on the clock count: regular shifts, training, meetings, and CMA time. It is your responsibility to keep up with your hours and not go over 16.

Approved by the OPTIONS Board of Directors February 3, 2020

2. Failure to report to work as scheduled is considered to be a "voluntary resignation" by the employee. Texting will not be accepted as notification of absence. Employee must speak to Supervisor or On-call Supervisor. Medical excuses may be requested by the Supervisor and must be provided by the employee prior to reinstatement to scheduled work. Failure to provide a valid medical excuse when requested is grounds for immediate termination.
3. Not obtaining permission from supervisor to leave your job during hours you are scheduled.
4. Inefficiency, inability, and/or gross or repeated negligence in performing assigned duties and responsibilities.
5. Failure to respond to illness/injury immediately and appropriately as trained.
6. Violation of Participants' Bill of Rights.
7. Misuse of participant finances.
8. Theft or destruction of any property belonging to company or participant.
9. Unauthorized use of company or participants' property for personal use.
10. Disobedient, defiant, or insubordinate actions towards coworkers, supervisors, participants, or families.
11. Deliberately interfering/obstructing performance/duties of another employee.
12. Arguing/fighting.
13. Threats of any nature.
14. Having visitors while on duty without authorization from the supervisor.
15. Reporting for, or attempting to work while under the influence of alcohol, drugs, narcotics; or in a physical condition making it unsafe or unsatisfactory to continue employment.
16. Unauthorized possession of firearms or other weapons on facility property.
17. Performing personal work on company time without the express permission of the supervisor.
18. Altering, falsifying, or making willful misstatement of the facts on any company document.
19. Any intentional act of neglect or abuse involving a participant, and/or failure to report an intentional act of neglect or abuse involving a participant. This includes physical, mental, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse of any form. Employees accused of any form of abuse or neglect will be removed from direct care until a complete and thorough investigation can be conducted by Administration. State agencies and law enforcement offices will be notified in accordance with existing regulations.
20. Staff are not to post any privileged information or pictures involving any participant or co-worker on any social media site. This is a violation of Federal Law and subject to criminal prosecution.
21. Failure to abide by any policy indicated in the Employee Handbook, such as HIPPA, Code of Conduct, Drug Free Workplace, etc.

## **PRODEDURES FOR CALL-OUTS OR NO CALL/NO SHOW**

### **No call/No Show**

1<sup>st</sup> No Call/No Show – automatic Plan for Job Improvement to be completed by supervisor

2<sup>nd</sup> No Call/No Show – automatic termination will occur, unless staff was deathly ill and can show documentation – supervisor must complete paperwork for termination to be processed

### **Calling Out of Shift – 2 levels (sub or no sub)**

1 – Employee calls out, but gets a sub – there is no consequence. However, supervisor still must approve overtime. If staff consistently calls out with sub, supervisor will need to re-evaluate situation and determine if specified schedule/position is a fit for the employee.

2 – If a staff calls out of shift and does not get a sub, disciplinary action will depend upon previous offenses and reason for call-out. Supervisor and on-call must communicate situation and initiate appropriate action, such as retraining or plan for job improvement.

## ***...PERFORMANCE REVIEWS – Annual & Incentive Pay***

OPTIONS has designated the first one year of your employment as a probationary period. This is to give both you and OPTIONS a chance to get acquainted and determine whether or not we meet each other's expectations regarding employment.

All full and part-time employees will receive performance reviews. These reviews are intended to give you and your supervisor the opportunity to discuss your performance and future goals.

### **Annual Performance Review Philosophy & Purpose**

OPTIONS has always been committed to quality in all of our actions, our services, and our people. One of the most significant ways to improve quality is to clarify expectations, identify our goals/focus areas, and measure our progress toward those goals. Identification of goals along with self-evaluation and feedback leads to success. Measurement focuses attention on what is important and tells employees how they are doing. Continuous tracking and measurement of goals will result in continuous feedback and support for the employee. During this process the quality of services also continues to grow.

The Performance Evaluation is completed annually with your supervisor and has focus areas such as attendance, attitude, health & safety, documentation and program specific responsibilities. The meeting is done face-to-face with your supervisor in a confidential setting. Although the meeting is collaborative, the rating for each area is at the discretion of the supervisor. Our focus will be on providing employees with the opportunity to succeed while at the same time steadily improving the quality of our services. To accomplish this, we will start with tracking of the basic goals/focus areas then gradually adjust the goals to increase quality.

Additional reviews may be scheduled as deemed necessary by management.

### **Incentive Pay Program**

**\*\*As of 2017, this program has been suspended. OPTIONS intends to reinstate the program when funds are available.\*\***

OPTIONS has developed a program designed to recognize and reward quality work. The Incentive Pay Program is designed to be fair and attainable. It is also structured to improve the quality of our services while recognizing those who have for so long provided the best quality of service and inspiring those who have yet to reach a quality level of performance.

Criteria is strictly compliance based and designed to be simple, attainable, immediate, constant, and measurable. Staff meeting all criteria for the each designated period will receive a cash incentive.

When the Incentive Pay Evaluation is completed and it has been determined that the employee has not achieved the minimum performance and compliance standards, the supervisor must immediately counsel the employee on what must be done to meet the minimum standards for the next designated time period and the Achievement Plan must be completed and attached to the assessment. The Achievement Plan details the employee's plan to meet the minimum standards for the designated time period and contains an acknowledgement that if the minimum standards are not met for the next designated time period, the following actions will be taken:

New hires/rehires still in the probation period may be terminated. (Termination may occur once the new hire has not met minimum standards for two complete consecutive assessments.)

Employees who are beyond the probation period will be placed on probation and may be terminated if the minimum standards are not achieved on the third assessment.

New employees must have completed orientation, on-the-job training, have all paperwork complete, and work one full quarter to qualify for the program.

The schedule for monetary incentive checks for employees who continue to meet standards will be based on the OPTIONS budget.

### **Direct Care & Hourly Staff Criteria:**

**Any one of the following criteria will exclude employee from incentive pay.**

- **Missed Electronic Punches** – more than 5 missed electronic punches in one quarter.
- **16 Hour Rule** – DHH regulates that an employee cannot work more than 16 hours in a 24-hour period. This includes all hours an employee is being paid for including scheduled shift, trainings, meetings, and CMA time.
- **Property Compliance** – includes expired auto insurance, window sticker, and drivers' license (plan for job improvement should be written to catch this).
- **Trainings** – must attend all annual and general staff trainings.
- **Team Trainings** – as Manager requires.
- **PRN Status** – must work at least 30 hours per pay period.
- **Safety** –
  - Unreported traffic violations
  - At fault auto accidents on the job
  - At fault on the job injury
- **Leave of Absences** –Leave of Absence is more than 10 working days. Only months worked will be given credit to and prorated.
- **Employee Performance** - Plan for job improvement written during quarter.

### ***...INCIDENT SPECIFIC RETRAINING***

When a job expectation is not being met or an incident occurs, the supervisor will decide if the incident requires a retraining or a plan for job improvement. The incident specific retraining reviews an incident or job duty to make expectations clear to employees. Incident specific retraining may not affect the employee performance evaluation. If the same incident occurs, the next action taken may be a written plan for job improvement, suspension, or possible termination.

### ***...PLANS FOR JOB IMPROVEMENT***

OPTIONS' approach to most situations in which an employee is not meeting job expectations is to ask the employee to evaluate his actions and determine what he/she should do. OPTIONS does not believe in judging, blaming, or criticizing. OPTIONS IS ABOUT MAKING IT RIGHT. Usually the employee will choose to develop a PLAN FOR JOB IMPROVEMENT. The goal is to develop a plan so that the employee clearly understands the job expectations.



Here is how it works.

### **WDEP**

**W** = What do you Want?

**D** = What are you Doing?

**E** = Self-Evaluate – is it working?

**P** = What is your Plan?

**Wants** The first step is to understand - what do you want? What does OPTIONS want?

**Doing** Here we look at the four components of behavior: Thinking, Acting, Feeling, and Physiology.

**Evaluation – Is it working?** (3R's) Is it Right or wrong? Is it against the rules? Is it Responsible or irresponsible? What is the Reality of the situation? What is in your control? Do you need more information about the situation or the possible outcome of your action? Was your behavior helpful or hurtful? What kind of a person do you want to be?

**Plan** Here your Supervisor and you develop a Plan For Job Improvement.

Each plan will be an action plan. Each plan will have these basic characteristics.

The Plan for Job Improvement will include what, when, where, and how. The agreed upon consequences will be written in the Plan. It will also include a schedule of follow-ups to ensure it is working. This Plan will be signed by the employee and supervisor. It will be submitted to and approved by the Human Resources Director.

The employee's supervisor will monitor the Plan for Job Improvement. If appropriate, follow-up reports will be submitted to the Human Resources Director.

A written Plan for Job Improvement may not be the choice for all situations. OPTIONS reserves the right to take other disciplinary action including, but not limited to, suspension or termination when deemed appropriate or if the safety or well-being of an individual or employee is in jeopardy.

OPTIONS IS ABOUT QUALITY; MAKING IT BETTER; MAKING IT RIGHT.

### ***...POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT***

OPTIONS wants to provide a warm and friendly work environment. To achieve this, OPTIONS opposes any form of discrimination, including sexual harassment. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome or unsolicited verbal, physical, or sexual conduct that is made a term or condition of employment, is used as a basis for employment or advancement decisions, or has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the work or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Report any incident of discrimination or harassment to the Human Resources Director or Chief Executive Officer immediately. It is OPTIONS policy to handle all reports in a confidential manner and assure there is no reprisal to the claiming party. The Problem Solving Procedures time frames will be used in these investigations. Any employee who is in violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary action that may include suspension or termination from employment.

### ***...DOMESTIC VIOLENCE***

OPTIONS is committed to creating a supportive workplace environment in which employees feel comfortable discussing domestic violence and seeking assistance for domestic violence concerns. Management is encouraged to maintain a non-judgmental and supportive environment for the employees. For additional information, please see the Human Resources Director.

### ***...SOLICITATION***

In efforts to provide OPTIONS employees with a stress free work environment, the Leadership Team must approve all external or internal fundraising activities (i.e., items sold by schools, churches, etc.). This is to ensure that employees do not feel pressured to participate and are not solicited regularly.

### ***...DRESS CODE***

Remember you represent OPTIONS. Employees are expected at all times to present a professional, businesslike image to customers and the public. Cleanliness, neatness, moderation, and good taste in your dress and manner contribute much to the impression you make. Be well groomed and appropriately dressed for a specific job and position. Look your best at all times by presenting a professional appearance. You benefit from a good appearance – it boosts your poise and self-confidence.

All employees are expected to report to work clean and dressed in a manner appropriate for the job they are performing at OPTIONS. This means clothing that reflects favorably upon the agency, as well as clothing that does not present a safety hazard for individuals or employee.

- Employees should not wear suggestive attire. In general, clothes should be in good condition, clean, loose fitting, and conservative.
- Tops should have sleeves and a modest neckline.
- Hair should be clean, combed, and neatly groomed or arranged including no hair wraps or curlers. Shaggy, unkempt hair is not permissible regardless of length.
- Sideburns, moustaches, and beards should be neatly trimmed.
- Fingernails are to be kept no more than 1/8 inch beyond the tip of your fingers. Dangling charms and decals are not permitted.
- Due to safety issues, large earrings and/or earrings that hang more than 1 inch are not permitted.
- Employees should change clothes before reporting to OPTIONS if they are coming from a Health Care Agency, Hospital, Nursing Home, Home, SIL Provider, or if coming from a food processing facility such as Sanderson Farms. This is necessary for health care reasons.

All guidelines should be followed when visiting the main office. This includes attending meetings, trainings, or other company functions.

#### 1. Administrative Staff

Office staff are expected to wear business casual attire.

- a. All pants should be loose fitting and in good condition. Jeans and capri pants are permitted. Capri pants must be at least 2 inches below the knee in length. Athletic clothing is not allowed.
- b. Tennis shoes and beach-style thong “flip-flops” are not permitted.
- c. Skirts and dresses should be no more than 2 inches above the knee.
- d. Administrative staff may wear an OPTIONS polo shirt which has a collar.
- e. OPTIONS T-shirts are allowed as long as they are loose fitting and in good condition.

#### 2. Direct Service Worker (DSW)

- a. All pants should be loose fitting and in good condition. Shorts are allowed, but must be at least knee length. Jeans are also allowed.
- b. Shoes should be in good condition. Shoes should be closed-toe and closed heel. Tennis shoes are permitted.
- c. Skirts and dresses should be no more than 2 inches above the knee.
- d. An extra set of clothes should be kept in your vehicle in the event anything occurs on the job that would require you to change clothes.

#### 3. Work Crews

- a. Uniforms are required for cleaning and yard crew managers. OPTIONS shirts will be provided and should be worn with pants or long skirts. Upon separation,

- all OPTIONS shirts must be returned to the Vocational Program Specialist. Failure to do so will result in a payroll deduction for the cost of the shirts issued.
- b. Closed-toe shoes are required for all vocational team members (OSHA Requirement!). Tennis shoes or any rubber soled shoes that cover the entire foot are allowed.
  - c. All other vocational staff should follow DSW dress code.

OPTIONS dress code varies according to the type of work/activity. If you are taking an individual to church, you should dress for church.

Employees working directly with individuals are encouraged to wear durable and washable attire and should not wear expensive clothing or jewelry. OPTIONS is not responsible for damage to clothing/jewelry that may occur in the normal course of work.

### ***...CHILDREN IN THE WORKPLACE***

OPTIONS strives to create a workplace that is accommodating and supportive of our employees who are also parents or guardians of minor children. We recognize that emergencies with childcare arrangements and school closures are a fact of life for parents and can be very stressful. However, our work supporting people with disabilities is not conducive to allowing employees to bring their children to work. Employees should have a clearly defined back-up plan for child care and should not bring children to work.

On rare occasions, in an emergency, exceptions can be approved on a case-by-case basis with prior approval from the Human Resources Director, Chief Program Officer, and/or Chief Executive Officer.

Under no circumstances will it be permissible for an employee who has direct care responsibilities to bring children to work.

### ***...COMMUNICATION***

The objectives of all communication are:

- To empower people to communicate their needs and appreciate the needs of others.
- To empower people to act appropriately to meet their needs and the needs of others.

OPTIONS believes that the key ingredient to positive communications is:  
**LISTEN AND ASK QUESTIONS TO GET MORE INFORMATION.**

Newsletters are mailed to employees once a month. Please take time to read this newsletter so you can be aware of important dates, meetings, and general information.

Approved by the OPTIONS Board of Directors February 3, 2020

## **...PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCEDURES**

### **Staff**

As part of OPTIONS commitment to quality, OPTIONS has a comprehensive Quality Enhancement Plan and a Quality Council that meets regularly to review goals and objectives. The plan addresses customer satisfaction and monitors critical incidents and complaints/grievances.

We know that if you are satisfied, you will be more productive and of more value to OPTIONS, your co-workers, people we serve, and yourself. We want to provide you with an effective and acceptable means of bringing your concerns to our attention, therefore, we have established a grievance procedure.

The purpose of this grievance procedure is to help you work out a complaint or problem that you might have to the satisfaction of both you and anyone else affected. This problem-solving procedure has the following purposes:

- To resolve problems in a just and equitable manner
- To ensure prompt handling of employee issues
- To resolve employee problems without reprisal against the employee using these procedures
- To create and encourage a conducive work environment
- To ensure proper administration of employee benefits and conditions of employment such as scheduling, vacation, benefits, promotions, performance reviews, salary, or seniority

### **Staff Grievance Procedure**

An employee who thinks that he/she has a grievance must proceed as follows:

Step One - Employee must file a grievance in writing with his/her supervisor within five working days using a grievance form. If the grievance involves a supervisor, it is permissible to proceed to Step Two. The supervisor is to investigate the grievance, attempt to resolve it, and give a decision within five working days. The supervisor should prepare a written and dated summary and proposed resolution.

Step Two - An employee may appeal the decision to the appropriate supervisor or manager. The employee may initiate the procedure with the Chief Program Officer if the grievance involves their supervisor. This appeal or initial complaint must be made within five working days using a written form provided for this purpose. This form is available in the Human Resources Department. The supervisor's version of the grievance will then be submitted using a written form. The Chief Program Officer will

confer with the employee, supervisor, and any other members of management considered appropriate. The employee, at this time, may provide statements from any witnesses that the employee deems appropriate to the grievance. The Chief Program Officer will communicate a decision in writing within five days to all parties involved.

Step Three - The employee may appeal an unsatisfactory decision of the Chief Program Officer to the Human Resources Director. The timeliness requirements and procedures are the same as those in Step Two (five days from receipt of the Chief Program Officer's decision).

Step Four - The employee may appeal an unsatisfactory decision to the Chief Executive Officer. The timeliness requirements and procedures are the same as those in Step Two (five days from receipt of Chief Program Officer's decision). The Chief Executive Officer will review and issue a written final decision.

For more information, please contact the Human Resources Director at (985) 345-6269 x161.

### **Participant Grievance Procedures**

Complaints and grievances will be tracked for resolution and findings reported through the Quality Council.

The purpose of this grievance procedure is to help participants work out any complaint or problem they might have to the satisfaction of both themselves and anyone else affected. This problem solving procedure has the following purpose:

- To resolve participants' problems in a fair manner
- To ensure prompt handling of issues
- To resolve participant issues without retaliation against the vocational participant using these procedures
- To create and encourage a helpful work environment
- To ensure proper administration of vocational participant benefits and conditions of employment policy: participants, parents, or representatives are permitted and encouraged to express any grievance, complaint, or recommendation. Anyone exercising this right is free from intimidation.

Procedure: Any participant who has a grievance should proceed as follows:

Step One – Participant/parent/guardian must promptly bring the grievance to the attention of the Team Leader/Program Coordinator/Supervisor. He/she will investigate the grievance, attempt to resolve it, and give a decision within five working days. He/she will prepare a written and dated summary and a proposed resolution.

Step Two – The participant/parent/guardian may appeal the decision to the Program Director, if not satisfied with Team Leader/Program Coordinator/Supervisor’s decision. This appeal or initial complaint must be made within five working days. The Chief Program Officer will confer with the participant, team leader, family members, and other individuals considered appropriate. The participant/parent/guardian at this time may provide statements from any witnesses that the participant deems appropriate to the grievance. The Chief Program Officer will communicate a decision in writing within five days to all parties involved.

Step Three – The participant/parent/guardian may appeal an unsatisfactory decision to the Chief Executive Officer. The procedures and time requirements are similar to those in Step Two (appeal must be made within five days of receiving the Program Director’s decision). The Chief Executive Officer will review and issue a written final decision.

Step Four – If a participant/parent/guardian is not satisfied with the decision, they may present their grievance to the Florida Parishes Human Services Authority.

All written reports and actions taken will be filed in the Human Resources Director’s office. A cover sheet will be filed in the individual’s file giving information about the incident.

If an appeal to the admissions committee decision to deny admissions or terminate services is sought, the participant should notify the Chief Executive Officer within 60 days. The appeal procedure will begin step 3.

For more information, please contact the Human Resources Director at (985) 345-6269, x161.

### **...ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE**

As part of OPTIONS commitment to safeguarding the quality care it provides to its individuals, OPTIONS retains the right to use video surveillance or other forms of electronic monitoring in its facilities. The purpose of this monitoring is to observe employees in the course of providing care and performing their job functions. OPTIONS will remotely monitor live video surveillance and archived footage randomly and/or in conjunction with investigations.

It is a policy of OPTIONS that all employees acknowledge that they may work in an area where surveillance cameras have been installed. The employee further acknowledges that OPTIONS has the right to investigate any conduct, whether it learns of said conduct through surveillance videotapes or other forms of electronic monitoring, reports, or

complaints. In response to any investigation, OPTIONS will take any steps it deems appropriate, consistent with its policies and practices.

All employees further acknowledge that they may be subject to disciplinary action should the video surveillance equipment be inoperative without acceptable documentation. All video surveillance equipment must be in operable condition. Staff should properly document any inoperative equipment. Failure to report and document will result in disciplinary action.

### **...CODE OF CONDUCT**

#### **Message from the Chief Executive Officer**

The Internal Revenue Service, Congressional Legislation, and the AICPA rules require that all nonprofit organizations, such as OPTIONS, adopt a Code of Conduct covering all employees. The following is OPTIONS Code of Conduct:

There is a simple idea that stands behind everything that we do at OPTIONS. We pursue our business objectives with integrity and in full compliance with all laws. This is the right thing to do, and it also makes good business sense. By acting with integrity, we earn the trust of our consumers and their families, business partners, board members, coworkers, suppliers, and the communities where we live and work – those whose trust we must have to be successful.

OPTIONS has a compliance officer, the Human Resources Director, who is responsible for overseeing the implementation of our compliance and integrity program.

This Code of Conduct is an additional key resource in our commitment to integrity. Today's laws and standards of business conduct can seem complex. The Code explains in a practical, easy to understand way, many of the basic rules that apply to our businesses. It also explains the personal responsibilities each of us bears as a part of OPTIONS – such as speaking up if we ever see something that doesn't seem right. The Code is posted at OPTIONS website and is available in hard copy from the human resources office. The Human Resources Department can be contacted at 985-345-6269, x161.

Review the Code of Conduct carefully. This will help you ensure that your actions never fall short of our commitment to do the right thing.

Nothing is more important than our commitment to integrity – not meeting a profit goal, winning a competition for business, or pleasing a boss. **Our commitment to integrity must always come first.**

Together, by following the letter and spirit of this Code of Conduct, we can help ensure great pride in working at OPTIONS.



## **The Organization's Code of Conduct and Compliance & Integrity Program**

All board members, management staff, employees, and others who work or act for OPTIONS, should adhere to the standards contained in this Code of Conduct and should consult the Code of Conduct for guidance when acting on behalf of OPTIONS.

This Code of Conduct represents a commitment to doing what is right. By working for OPTIONS, you are agreeing to uphold this commitment. Understand the standards of the Code of Conduct that apply to your job – and always follow them. Those who fail to follow these standards put themselves, their coworkers, and OPTIONS at risk.

The OPTIONS Code of Conduct is more than just a description of our standards. It is the centerpiece of a compliance and integrity program supported by our board of directors and senior management. This program helps assure that all of us know and follow the laws that apply to us and conduct business with integrity. OPTIONS may amend the Code of Conduct from time to time as it deems necessary. A copy of the Code of Conduct can be requested from the OPTIONS human resources office.

Administration of the compliance program is provided by the OPTIONS Compliance Officer/Human Resources Director.

In the unusual case where a provision of this Code should be waived, this may only be done through specific procedures. Any waivers of the Code for members of the board of directors or senior management must be approved by the board of directors and disclosed in the minutes of the board, along with the reasons for the waiver. All other waivers must have the written approval of the compliance officer.

### **Honest and Ethical Conduct – Conflicts of Interest**

OPTIONS is committed to honest and ethical conduct, including the ethical handling of actual or apparent conflicts of interest between personal and professional relationships. We recognize that the public is harmed when the real or apparent private interest of a board member, management staff, or employee is in conflict with the interests of OPTIONS. This occurs, for example, when someone receives improper personal benefits as a result of his or her position with OPTIONS, or has other duties, responsibilities, or obligations that run counter to his or her duty to OPTIONS.

Our board of directors, management staff and employees do have many activities in their lives outside OPTIONS. A "conflict of interest" arises when a board member's, management staff's, or employee's personal, social, financial, or political activities have the potential of interfering with their loyalty and objectivity to OPTIONS. Actual conflicts must be avoided, but even the appearance of a conflict of interest can be harmful, too.

Described below are common ways that conflicts of interest can arise:

A second job with, performing services for, or serving as, a director or consultant for an

organization that is a competitor, customer, business partner, or supplier of goods or services, raises an actual or possible conflict of interest. Some arrangements of this kind are *always* impermissible – for example, working for or providing services to anyone you deal with as part of your job. You should review all outside affiliations with competitors, customers, business partners, or suppliers with the Human Resources Director.

The work activities of close relatives can create conflicts of interest, too. If you learn that a "close relative" works or performs services for any competitor, consumers and their families, business partner, or suppliers, promptly notify the Human Resources Director. You and the Human Resources Director can then consult with the Chief Executive Officer.

You may be asked at some time to serve on the board of directors of another organization and this can, in some cases, raise a conflict of interest or even a legal issue. Before accepting a position as a board member, always review this with the compliance officer/Human Resources Director.

Employees and management staff may not use OPTIONS property or information, or their positions with OPTIONS, for personal gain. You should never take for yourself business opportunities that you learn about through your work at OPTIONS. You should also never engage in any business activities that compete with OPTIONS.

### **Honest and Ethical Conduct – Gifts and Entertainment**

Relationships with suppliers and consumers and their families must be based entirely on sound business decisions and fair dealing. Business gifts and entertainment can build goodwill, but they can also make it harder to be objective about the person providing them. In short, gifts and entertainment can create their own "conflicts of interest."

Gifts and entertainment are anything of value, including: discounts, loans, cash, and favorable terms on any product or service, services, prizes, transportation, use of another organization's vehicles, home improvements, tickets, and gift certificates. The potential list is endless – these are just examples.

Gifts and entertainment offered to employees and their close relatives fall into two categories:

1. Usually okay.  
This category includes promotional items of nominal value, such as pens, calendars, and coffee mugs, which are given to customers in general. You do not need to obtain review or approval before accepting these kinds of items.
  - Employees may accept a gift on your birthday or Christmas. Gifts cannot exceed a value of more than \$25.00.
2. Always wrong.

Some types of gifts and entertainment are never permissible – no one can approve these. You may never:

- Accept any gift or entertainment that would be illegal or result in any violation of law
- It is prohibited for any employee to borrow money from individuals, asking individuals to buy something for you, accept or request anything as a "quid pro quo" – in other words, as part of an agreement to do anything in return for the gift or entertainment
- Participate in any activity that you know would cause the person giving the gift or entertainment to violate his or her own employer's standards

### **Full, Fair, Accurate, Timely and Understandable Disclosure**

OPTIONS must always strive to retain the trust of the public. The disclosures we make to the public in accordance with Financial Accounting Standards and the Internal Revenue Service regulations and our public are the essential source of information about OPTIONS for regulators and the public. In any reports and documents that OPTIONS files with, or submits to, the Internal Revenue Service, or any other governmental agency, and in our other public communications, our disclosures will always be full, fair, accurate, timely, and understandable.

OPTIONS credibility is judged in many ways – and one very important way is the integrity of its books, records, and accounting. In addition to our own commitment to accurately report financial performance, OPTIONS is required by the state of Louisiana and federal regulations to report in accordance with “Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.”

Every board member, management staff, and employee of OPTIONS must help ensure that reporting of business information – computerized, paper, or otherwise – is accurate, complete, and timely. This includes accurately recording costs, sales, timesheets, vouchers, bills, payroll and benefits records, regulatory data, and other essential OPTIONS information.

All employees must:

- Follow all laws, external accounting requirements, internal accounting controls and disclosure controls, and any other OPTIONS procedures for reporting financial information
- Never deliberately make a false or misleading entry in a report or record
- Never alter or destroy OPTIONS records except as authorized by established policies and procedures
- Never sell, transfer, or dispose of OPTIONS assets without proper

documentation and authorization

- Cooperate with our internal and external auditors
- Contact the Accounting Department with any questions about the proper recording of financial transactions

## Document Retention Requirements

- |  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| • Accounting payroll records               | 7 years                       |
| • Accounts payable ledger                  | 7 years                       |
| • Accounts receivable ledger               | 7 years                       |
| • Audit reports of accountants             | Permanently                   |
| • Bank statements                          | 7 years                       |
| • Capital stock and bond records           | Permanently                   |
| • Charts of accounts                       | Permanently                   |
| • Contracts and leases                     | Permanently                   |
| • Correspondence (legal)                   | Permanently                   |
| • Deeds, mortgages, bill of sale           | Permanently                   |
| • Depreciation Schedules                   | Permanently                   |
| • Employee payroll records                 | 7 years past termination date |
| • Employment applications and job openings | 3 years                       |
| • Inventories of products                  | 7 years                       |
| • Insurance records                        | Permanently                   |
| • Invoices to customers                    | 5 years                       |
| • Invoices from vendors                    | 5 years                       |
| • Minute books, bylaws and charter         | Permanently                   |
| • Patents                                  | Permanently                   |
| • Personnel files (terminated employees)   | 7 years                       |
| • Purchase orders                          | 5 years                       |
| • Retirement and pension records           | Permanently                   |
| • Safety records                           | 6 years                       |
| • Tax returns and worksheets               | Permanently                   |
| • Time cards and daily reports             | 7 years                       |
| • Trademark registrations and copyrights   | Permanently                   |
| • Training manuals                         | Permanently                   |
| • Withholding tax statements               | 7 years                       |

The goal of accurate accounting and financial reporting requires compliance with rules from the Financial Accounting Standards Board, the Internal Revenue Service, and other regulatory options. If you have questions about accounting and financial reporting standards, contact your Financial Director.

## Document Destruction and Retention

In order to strengthen its existing policies and procedures, maintain and exemplify “best practices,” and comply with applicable law and regulations, OPTIONS enforces the following:

1. It is a crime to destroy, alter, cover up, or falsify any document (or persuade anyone else to do so) to prevent its use in an official proceeding (for example, litigation or administrative proceeding, governmental investigation, or bankruptcy proceeding).
2. If an official investigation is underway or even suspected, management must stop any document purging in order to avoid criminal obstruction charges.
3. Similarly, if litigation is reasonably anticipated, document purging must be stopped.
4. OPTIONS will adopt and maintain a written, mandatory document retention and periodic destruction policy (the “Document Retention Schedule”) to help limit accidental or innocent document destruction.
5. OPTIONS will monitor, justify, and carefully administer the document destruction process.
6. OPTIONS will maintain appropriate records about its operations and will regularly dispose of unnecessary and outdated documents in accordance with the Document Retention Schedule.
7. OPTIONS will manage, store, preserve and archive documents, including e-mail and other electronic data, in accordance with the Document Retention Schedule.
8. The Executive Administrative Assistant has responsibility for oversight of compliance with this Policy.

## Compliance with Laws, Rules and Regulations

OPTIONS is committed to compliance with all applicable governmental laws, rules, and regulations. No one is authorized to direct you to break the law. If you have any questions regarding the legality of an action, consult your supervisor, who may consult with the compliance officer/Human Resources Director.

## Prompt Internal Reporting of your Concerns

No organization can live up to its commitment to act with integrity if we, as individuals, do not speak up when we should. That is why, in addition to knowing the legal and ethical responsibilities that apply to your job, **you should speak up** if:

- You are ever unsure about the proper course of action and need advice
- You believe that someone acting on behalf of OPTIONS is doing – or planning to do – something that violates the law or OPTIONS Code of Conduct

If you have a concern about a legal or business conduct issue, please call OPTIONS

Approved by the OPTIONS Board of Directors February 3, 2020

Human Resources Director or the Chief Executive Officer.

If you wish to raise concerns about accounting or auditing matters on an anonymous basis, you can drop your concern in the suggestion box. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent consistent with the law, our need to investigate, and our OPTIONS commitment to cooperate with law enforcement.

Any employee who, in good faith, seeks advice, raises a concern, or reports misconduct is following this Code of Conduct – and doing the right thing. OPTIONS will not allow retaliation against that person. Individuals engaging in retaliatory conduct will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include termination. If you suspect that you or someone you know has been retaliated against for raising a compliance or integrity issue, immediately contact the compliance officer/Human Resources Director.

We take claims of retaliation seriously. Retaliation against anyone reporting a violation in good faith is strictly prohibited and subject to discipline.

All management staff, employees, and others who perform work for OPTIONS will be held accountable for complying with the law and this Code of Conduct.

Violations of the law or this Code of Conduct are subject to discipline, up to and including, termination of employment by OPTIONS. Illegal action will be dealt with swiftly and the violators reported to the authorities, as appropriate. Enforcement will be prompt and consistent, applying appropriate standards and processes as determined by the compliance officer.

### ***...MANDATORY REPORTING***

#### **A. Abuse/Neglect**

OPTIONS firmly believes that all employees and participants should be treated with dignity and respect to ensure a safe environment. All employees directly working with participants will be required to attend mandatory training for identification, reporting, and prevention of abuse and neglect. It is mandatory, and the responsibility of the employee, that all potentially dangerous situations be reported immediately to a supervisor, who will confer with the Human Resources Director. The appropriate governmental agencies will be contacted as required by state licensing requirements.

Failure to immediately report the abuse/neglect of a participant is a serious matter and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal.

#### **B. Reporting Fraud**

Both state and federal law provides that it is against the law for an agency or provider to file a false or fraudulent claim involving any federally funded contract or program including Medicare or Medicaid reimbursement. In specifics, the

Federal False Claims Act, 31 USCA 3729, provides that it is a violation if any person or entity:

1. knowingly presents, or causes to be presented, to an officer or employee of the United States Government or a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, a false or fraudulent claim for payment or approval;
2. knowingly makes, uses, or causes to be made or used, a false record or statement to get a false or fraudulent claim paid or approved by the Government;
3. conspires to defraud the Government by getting a false or fraudulent claim allowed or paid;
4. has possession, custody, or control of property or money used, or to be used, by the Government and, intending to defraud the Government or willfully to conceal the property, delivers, or causes to be delivered, less property than the amount for which the person receives a certificate or receipt;
5. authorized to make or deliver a document certifying receipt of property used, or to be used, by the Government and, intending to defraud the Government, makes or delivers the receipt without completely knowing that the information on the receipt is true;
6. knowingly buys, or receives as a pledge of an obligation or debt, public property from an officer or employee of the Government, or a member of the Armed Forces, who lawfully may not sell or pledge the property; or
7. knowingly makes, uses, or causes to be made or used, a false record or statement to conceal, avoid, or decrease an obligation to pay or transmit money or property to the Government.

In Louisiana the Louisiana Medical Assistance Programs Integrity Law (MAPIL), La. R.S. 46:437.1-440.3 makes it illegal for a person or entity to:

1. submit or cause to be submitted, false or fraudulent claims for reimbursement;
2. submit bills for services not rendered;
3. conspire to defraud the medical assistance program;
4. submit claims for goods, services or supplies which were of substandard quantity or quality or for medically unnecessary services; or
5. pay kickbacks or participate in kickback schemes.

Under the False Claims Act or under MAPIL, a lawsuit can be brought against violators by the government or by private persons. If a lawsuit is brought by a private person, and the lawsuit is successful, the private person can share in a percentage of a government recovery in a False Claims Act action or settlement if they bring an action on behalf of the United States as a “qui tam relator”.

However, if the court finds the allegations were frivolous, were without merit or were brought to harass, the private person will be liable for reasonable attorneys' fees and costs. The details for filing and pursuing such claims are set forth in 31 USCA 3730. There are additional remedies which may also be applicable under 31 USCA 3806 or 42 USCA 1320a-7a.

The civil penalty for violating the False Claims Act is three times the dollar amount that the Government is defrauded and civil penalties of \$5,500 to \$11,000 for each offense.

In essence, the False Claims Act and the other laws mentioned encourage reporting of fraudulent billing or fraudulent practices designed to defraud the government. If you are aware of such activity you should report it to the Human Resources Director or to government officials. An individual can share in a percentage of a government recovery in a False Claims Act action or settlement if they bring an action on behalf of the United States as a "qui tam relator".

### **C. Protection for Reporting Abuse/Neglect or Fraud**

The agency mechanisms for reporting abuse, neglect or fraud under either the False Claims Act or MAPIL are set forth below under the Whistleblower Policy. This policy also sets forth the protections for the individual who makes the complaint or files the report.

## **Whistleblower Policy**

### **A. Statement of Policy/Reporting Mechanism**

OPTIONS at all times seeks to conduct its business ethically and in compliance with the law. If you become aware that an OPTIONS employee is engaged in illegal, dishonest, or fraudulent activities, this policy provides an internal procedure for reporting such activity so it can be promptly investigated and remedial action taken. If you become aware that an OPTIONS employee, on behalf of OPTIONS, is engaged in illegal, dishonest, or fraudulent activities, you should report the matter immediately to the Human Resources Director. While all incidents of alleged illegal, dishonest, or fraudulent activities should be reported, a listing of items considered as violating the False Claims Act is set forth above under Reporting Fraud. The Human Resources Department shall promptly investigate all reports of alleged illegal, dishonest, or fraudulent activities and determine the appropriate remedy if illegal, dishonest, or fraudulent activity is found.

### **B. Confidentiality**

As far as practical, OPTIONS shall keep the identity of the person reporting the illegal or dishonest activity confidential. However, identity may have to be disclosed in order to conduct a thorough investigation, to comply with the law or to provide accused individuals their legal rights of defense.



### **C. No Retaliation**

Neither OPTIONS nor its employees will retaliate against a person reporting illegal, dishonest, or fraudulent activity. Under both state and federal law, individuals who report illegal, dishonest, or fraudulent activity are protected against reprisal or retaliation. It is the premise of these laws that such protection against retaliation or reprisal shall encourage employees to report all instances of illegal, dishonest, or fraudulent activities. Any employee who engages in any form of retaliation against another employee who reports abuse, neglect, or fraud will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including, termination.

The right against retaliation does not include immunity for any personal wrongdoing of the person reporting the activity. An employee who knowingly files a false report will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **D. Agency Procedures for Detecting and Preventing Fraud, Waste, and Abuse**

If you have any suspicions regarding possible fraud, waste, or abuse, please call OPTIONS Human Resources Director or the Chief Executive Officer. If you wish to remain anonymous, you can drop your concern in the suggestion box. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent consistent with the law, our need to investigate, and our OPTIONS commitment to cooperate with law enforcement.

## **IV. ABOUT WORK**

### ***....PAYROLL PROCEDURES***

Federal and state record keeping requirements necessitate that OPTIONS maintain accurate records and enforce certain regulations.

OPTIONS requires that all employees use direct deposit. If you do not have a bank account to use for direct deposit, a debit card will be set up.

### **Time Keeping**

New employees will receive a paper time sheet at the beginning of orientation. For most employees, this SHOULD BE the only paper time sheet you will use. Please fill out, sign, and return to your supervisor immediately on completion of orientation.

After the completion of orientation, employees will receive an employee number. At this time, each employee will be entered into OPTIONS' time keeping system. Depending upon the department in which you are working, you will be utilizing either electronic phone-in or hand-punch clocks. You will be given specific information as to which system you will be using.

Any errors or missed “punches” or “call-ins” will be addressed through re-training. Continued errors will result in disciplinary action.

### **Workweek**

OPTIONS workweek begins Thursday morning at 12:01 am and ends on Wednesday at midnight. Your particular work schedule will depend upon your job and the shift to which you are assigned.

### **Pay Period**

Pay periods (the time during which your hours worked are counted for payroll purposes) consist of two consecutive workweeks.

### **Payday**

You will be paid every other Friday and your paycheck will cover a 14-day pay period. There is a lapse of 8 days between the end of the pay period and payday.

### **Overtime (over 40 hours in a work week)**

It is the policy of OPTIONS to pay time and a half to all employees paid by the hour after 40 hours worked in each workweek. Each workweek will stand alone. Overtime must be authorized. Working unauthorized overtime may result in disciplinary action.

### ***...GARNISHMENT***

A garnishment is a court order to an employer to withhold a sum of money from an employee's wages or salary. A federal levy, which takes precedence over all other garnishments, can take 100 percent of all money due to an employee as of that date. It is quite common, however, for the employee to be allowed to work out an arrangement for paying in installments.

The Human Resources Department will notify the employee in the event that OPTIONS receives a court order to garnish an employee's wages.

### ***...EMPLOYMENT OF PARTICIPANT'S RELATIVES***

OPTIONS policy is to hire, promote, and transfer employees based on individual merit and to avoid any hint of favoritism or discrimination in making such decisions. No worker may be assigned to, or work with, a participant that is their family member.

## ***...RE-EMPLOYMENT OF FORMER EMPLOYEES***

### **Within 6 Months**

If an employee leaves OPTIONS and he/she wishes to return within 6 months of his/her resignation, he/she is eligible to be considered for re-hire based on work history and availability of positions. The former employee will be required to have a drug & alcohol screening as well as a DMV records check. The former employee will not need to participate in another orientation. However, the employee will be required to participate in job- required training that may have expired since previous employment (i.e. TB test, CPR, etc.), or any new training that may be a requirement that the employee has not had.

### **After 6 Months**

If an employee leaves OPTIONS and he/she wishes to return after 6 months of his/her resignation, he/she is eligible to be considered for re-hire based on work history and availability of positions. The former employee will need to complete a new application and be processed as a new hire.

## ***...VOLUNTARY SEPARATION***

We request all resignations be presented to your supervisor in writing. A resignation form is available from the human resources team. When you resign, a two-week notice is expected. Your final direct deposit will be issued on the next scheduled payday.

## ***...REDUCTION IN FORCE***

It is OPTIONS policy to notify an employee before any necessary layoffs occur.

However, if a situation occurs which makes it necessary to cut back our work force, decisions will be made based on funding sources, qualifications, past performance, positions available, and length of service of each employee.

## ***...EXIT INTERVIEW***

Every employee leaving OPTIONS may be extended the courtesy of a final exit interview with the Human Resources Director or Chief Executive Officer.

## ***...EMPLOYMENT AT WILL***

In accepting employment with OPTIONS, the employee agrees to the following:

- (1) The salary as shown on the Payroll Status Form, paid biweekly
- (2) The starting date of work as shown on the Payroll Status Form
- (3) The job title as shown on the Payroll Status Form

(4) To follow the employee handbook

The employee understands that the policies and benefits in the handbook are communicated to the employee in any fashion are subject to interpretation, review, and change by management at any time without notice.

The employee further agrees that neither this document, nor other communications, create an employment contract or term of employment, and that employment may be terminated by the employee or OPTIONS with or without notice at any time or any reason applicable by law. The employee further agrees that if employment is terminated by OPTIONS, it can be done without liability for wages or salary, except for what may have been earned at the time of termination, or may be due by virtue of then-applicable law.

A representative of OPTIONS has the authority to enter into any agreement for employment for any specified period of time or to assure any other personnel action, or to assure any benefits or terms or conditions of employment, or make any agreements contrary to the foregoing. The employee also agrees that the employment at will agreement may not be modified orally.

### ***...EMPLOYEE LOYALTY***

Employees agree that during their employment by OPTIONS, they will not directly or indirectly, on their own behalf or the behalf of others, solicit, provide services, or divert individuals, customers, or employees to a competing agency.

### ***...PROPERTY ACCESS/OWNERSHIP***

During the course of your employment you may be called upon to create various materials including, but not limited to manuals, promotional information, etc. and to use OPTIONS equipment, resources, or property. All OPTIONS equipment, resources, property and any items you create are owned by OPTIONS and are to be used for agency purposes only. No OPTIONS equipment, resource, or property is to be used for personal purposes.

This policy applies to all OPTIONS equipment, including computers, tablets, and cell phones. In reference to e-mail and internet access, only employees with authorization to use e-mail or the internet are allowed to use OPTIONS computers for that purpose. OPTIONS has the right, at any time, to review employee e-mail or Internet use to assure that such resources are being used only for agency purposes.

In reference to other agency property, such as file cabinets and desks, it may become necessary, on occasion, for other employees to look into such areas to retrieve documents or other items. As a result, do not keep any personal items in your desk or file cabinets that you would not want a co-worker to see if they happen to open a file cabinet or desk drawer.

If a violation of this policy concerning the use of OPTIONS equipment or resources occurs, it will result in disciplinary action.

### **...ACCESS TO PERSONNEL FILES**

The personnel files are the exclusive property of OPTIONS. All records pertaining to employment are maintained in the Human Resources Department. Any personnel information is handled in a confidential manner. The only information that can be released is dates of employment and job title. Written consent of the employee is required to release any other information.

All information contained in each employee record is considered privileged and confidential. The records for each employee shall only be disclosed to authorized persons. Authorized persons shall include, but are not limited, to:

- Management staff involved with supervision of that employee
- Persons involved with the maintenance of employee records.
- The employee may review his/her own personnel file. To view their file, the employee needs to contact the Human Resources Department. For a copy of any information from the file, the employee will submit a written request to the Human Resources Department.
- Those persons authorized by state or federal law such as financial auditor, licensing agencies, etc.

Additions – Employees are asked to report, in writing, additions or corrections such as their home address, telephone number, W-4, etc. to the Human Resources Team.

Evaluations, Plans for Job Improvement, Drug Testing, Investigations, and Salary information are considered confidential and should not be discussed with co-workers. Discussion is grounds for reprimand leading to suspension and/or termination.

## **...PROMOTIONS AND TRANSFERS**

OPTIONS seeks to hire or promote the individual best qualified for the position. To achieve that goal, the following procedures have been adopted:

- Employees will only have ONE supervisor. The Human Resources Director must approve any exception in writing on an approval form.
- Employees that are part-time are expected to stay in their current position for at least 2 months prior to being considered for transfer. If the employee is in a full-time position, he/she must remain in the position 6 months before being considered for transfer.

Employees can add hours or an additional position as long as the hours and position are under the same supervisor. Exceptions must be submitted in writing to the Human Resources Director and approved by the Review Team.

- Job openings will be posted for current employees for a period of one week on the Human Resources Bulletin Boards. An Internal Application for open position can be obtained from the Human Resources Team.
- Human Resources Team will notify the prospective supervisor of any employee who is interested in a posted position. The current supervisor must sign all transfer requests.
- Interviews will be scheduled with the supervisor/management staff and internal applicant. Internal applications must be signed off by both the current supervisor and new division directors for approval prior to any interviews being held. If the internal application is of the same division, then only the current director will need to sign off for the approval. Interviewers will use the same questions and rating sheet for all candidates. The Interviewer must complete the internal interview packet and return it to the Human Resources Team. Supervisors will review transfer requests and confer with the Human Resources before making a decision regarding transfers and/or promotions.
- To transfer to PRN from a regular shift, the employee must meet with their current supervisor. Considerations for job transfer will be determined by flexibility, work availability, and job performance. If the employee has no unresolved work related incidents (i.e. Missed General Staff Meetings), the transfer may be approved. Employee transfers to PRN will be processed with the approval of their supervisor and the Human Resources Director.

PRN Staff are expected to:

- Be willing to work with every participant.

- Must work at least 30 hours per pay period.
- Maintain and stay current on all required trainings, General Staff and Team Meetings, and human resource compliances.
- Be available according to availability commitment.

### **...WORK GUIDELINES**

In keeping with OPTIONS' focus on *Quality*, the following guidelines are to be used regarding participant activities.

#### **Participant Activities**

In order to ensure that each participant gets 100% of the staff person's time and energy, employees cannot bring participants to their homes nor can employees have a family member or friends with them or visit them while they are working. Activities should be planned that focus on the participant's interest not the staff's interest. For example, arrangements should be made for each participant to attend church of their choice. In this way the participant can make friends and become a member of a particular church community.

Employees are not allowed to take participants home with them, even when they are not working. Efforts should be made to help participants make friends with people in the community who would be willing to invite them to their homes for special occasions.

Regardless of what type of work an employee is doing, work time begins when you arrive at the first job site. The first job site may be a participant's home, hospital, or meeting. If you are traveling a long distance, the work time will be calculated as if you were leaving from the main office or a community home

OPTIONS believes that everyone needs to have balance in their life (time to have fun and freedom from work); therefore, employees are expected to complete their paper work at OPTIONS and not to take work home.

### **...ON-CALL PROCEDURES**

The purpose of on-call procedures is to ensure quality care to participants on a 24-hour basis. Program Coordinators, Team Leaders, Chief Program Officer, Business Operations Director, Transportation Director, Residential Program Director, and the Chief Executive Officer all carry phones to enable them to address any issue and provide direction for the Direct Care staff when needed.

<b>Community Homes</b>	<b>SIL, Family Support</b>	<b>Vocational</b>
Residential Program Director	Team Leader On-Call	Vocational Team Leader On-Call
Residential Team Leader	Chief Program Officer	Director of Business Operations
CEO	CEO	Chief Program Officer
		CEO

On-call staff will be available within a one hour range of Hammond when on call. Each of the above management staff has a cell phone.

On-call staff should be notified immediately for any of the following issues:

- allegations of abuse/ neglect
- individual behavior that is disruptive or is harmful to self or others
- medical issues (residential call nurse first)
- medication issues (residential call nurse first)
- fire (call fire department first)
- burglary (call police department first)
- vehicle accident involving staff/ participants (call police department first)
- staff/participant accidents
- staff failure to work assigned schedule
- family issues
- staff issues
- activities out of Tangipahoa Parish/unapproved activities
- activity changes, individual leave changes/emergency schedule changes
- house maintenance/damage to OPTIONS property

The on-call person is responsible for immediately notifying the Human Resources Director and the Chief Executive Officer in cases of abuse and neglect, participant accident, or hospitalization.

### **Personal Calls / Errands / Visitors**

As stated in OPTIONS mission, our focus is on providing training and support, which enables each person to live and work in the community. To accomplish this, there should be no personal phone calls unless it is an emergency; this includes OPTIONS

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phones, OPTIONS cell phones, as well as personal cell phones, texting, and email. Headphones/earbuds are not permitted at any time while on the job.

We want OPTIONS to be a warm and friendly place for everyone. Please communicate with your supervisor when an emergency situation arises so we can be supportive of you.

Employees should not have visitors at any OPTIONS facility, job site, or participant's residence, including the parking lots, unless it is cleared with your supervisor. Visitors coming to the main office must enter by the front office door and sign the HIPAA visitor log.

Staff is paid for the entire time they are at OPTIONS. It is *expected* that residential staff eat with the participants and eat the same food that is prepared for the participants in the community home. Vocational and SIL staff should provide their own food and also eat with the participants. Outings (restaurants, movies, banking, shopping, church, etc.) should center on the participants needs and activities outlined in the plan of care. At no time should staff be running personal errands while working with participants.

### ***...OPTIONS LIBRARY***

The OPTIONS Library is available to you for your research and interests. In order to make the Library material accessible to everyone, you may check out material for a two (2) week period. If necessary, you may renew material for another (2) week period.

It is a privilege and a responsibility to use the OPTIONS Library. All library materials should be treated with care. The employee who checks out the items assumes the cost of any books and materials that are lost or damaged.

### ***...IN-SERVICE TRAINING***

Licensing requires OPTIONS employees (including PRN staff) to have specific in-service training annually. The Human Resources Department plans General Staff Meetings on topics that all employees are required to have, such as OSHA and Behavior Management. Program staff is responsible for scheduling training to meet specific program needs.

Staff Meetings are a way we can share information with one another. When a group as large as OPTIONS has the opportunity to come together, it is important that we all be there. That is teamwork! The purpose and importance of all staff meetings is in sharing information.

### **OPTIONS Meetings/Trainings Objectives**

- Assist OPTIONS employees in their constant striving for improvement to ensure quality individual care

- Provide information to each employee, helping the employee see what is expected of him/her
- Ensure OPTIONS is a place of open communication, especially listening
- Meet licensing standards and requirements

All Direct Service Workers are required to attend all General Staff and Team/House meetings. If attendance is impossible, the employee should notify his/her supervisor as soon as possible to make arrangements for make-up. Advance notice of absence is required.

### **Safety Training**

Safety training will be provided in a variety of meeting settings (i.e. General Staff Meetings, House Meetings, etc.) numerous times a year. At the time of orientation, all direct care staff will receive safety training in areas such as: CPR, First Aid, Introduction to Individual Medications, Positive Behavioral Supports, and Seizure Management.

### **Program (Individual) Related Mileage and Meal Reimbursement**

Personal Car – Employees using their personal cars will be reimbursed at the current rate for miles traveled on OPTIONS business. In addition, all tolls and parking charges will be reimbursed for OPTIONS-related business matters. Mileage is always calculated from the first work site, (home visit, hospital, meeting, etc.).

Meals – The cost of meals is paid only if an employee spends the night away from a job site. This reimbursement must be pre-approved by the employee's supervisor. OPTIONS reimbursement is based on State Travel Regulations guidelines and budget constraints.

OPTIONS Vehicles are defined as any vehicle owned or rented by OPTIONS. OPTIONS vehicles are to be used exclusively for company business. In no case is a company vehicle to pick up a staff person from his or her home nor is it to be used to run personal errands for staff. Any exception must be approved by management staff.

### ***...PURCHASING***

OPTIONS operates on a centralized purchasing system. The process is initiated by completing a purchase authorization form and submitting it to your supervisor for approval.

### ***...MEDIA RELATIONS***

In order to ensure individual rights and that OPTIONS legalities are addressed, all media interviews shall be discussed with the Development Director and the Chief Executive Officer prior to releasing any information.

## V. NEEDS AND WANTS

One of the greatest assets of any company is its employees and their efforts and cooperation. In recognition of this, together with our interest in the welfare of each employee, certain benefit programs have been established. \* All the benefits, salary adjustments, and merit adjustments are contingent on budget constraints.

TYPE OF BENEFIT	ELIGIBILITY DATE	STATUS
HOLIDAYS	After completion of 90 consecutive days of Employment ***Administrative/Management	All
HEALTH INSURANCE	First of the month, after completion of 60 consecutive days of employment	At least 30 hr/wk 130 hr/month
IRS 125 FLEXIBLE BENEFIT	After completion of 90 consecutive days of employment at next enrollment date	Full time*
403 (b) RETIREMENT PLAN	Immediately	20 hours/week or hours/year
403 (b) RETIREMENT PLAN	Employer Match after 1 year	20 hours/week or hours/year
Paid Time Off (PTO)	After completion of 90 consecutive days of Employment ***Administrative/Management	Full time*
FUNERAL LEAVE	After completion of 90 consecutive days of employment	Full time*
LEAVE OF ABSENCE	After completion of one year of service	Full time*
THE FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT	Eligibility based upon FMLA Act of 1993 Guidelines	Worked for 1 yr. And 1250 hrs. in Previous 12 mo.
MILITARY LEAVE	Approval required for all lengths of service	All
JURY DUTY	Approval required for all lengths of service	All
COUNSELING	Immediately – 6 visits	All

\* FULL TIME IS DEFINED AS 35 OR MORE SCHEDULED HOURS PER WEEK. All new employees and employees changing positions must be scheduled to work 35 hours each week (not including meetings) to earn full time benefits. If a fulltime employee works below 35 hours a week, consistently, you will be subject to forfeit your benefits.

\*\* Individuals working consistently full-time for OPTIONS through a temp agency on a temp-to-hire plan may count their time at OPTIONS toward their 90-day waiting period for benefits.

\*\*\* Administrative/Management staff should see Human Resources for information on Holiday and PTO benefits.

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### **...HOLIDAYS**

It is OPTIONS policy to recognize certain designated days throughout the year as paid holidays. OPTIONS will post the holidays annually in the form of a calendar.

Holiday pay shall be at the employee's regular straight-time rate times 8 hours and all employees will be eligible regardless of status if employee has worked at least 100 hours within the 2 pay periods prior to the pay period where the holiday falls.

### **...HEALTH INSURANCE**

OPTIONS complies with Affordable Care Act (ACA) regulations. For more information, please see Human Resources Director.

### **...FLEXIBLE BENEFIT PLAN**

This plan is defined by the IRS Code Section 125 as a flexible spending account arrangement for the benefit of employees. OPTIONS cafeteria plan allows salary reductions for eligible employees, which can be used for medical and dental reimbursement, dependent care, and term life insurance.

Eligible employees are those employees who have full-time status (work at least 35 regularly scheduled hours per week). To become eligible, an employee must be employed with OPTIONS for at least 90 consecutive days.

### **...403 (b) RETIREMENT PLAN**

The purpose of a 403(b) Plan is to allow eligible employees to save for their retirement by allowing salary reduction elections subject to a company match. A 403(b) Saving Plan is an IRS approved plan for retirement for non-profit agencies. The Plan document is maintained by Human Resources.

An employee is eligible to make salary deferrals immediately upon hire if the employee works at least 20 hours per week or 1000 hours per year. An employee who makes salary deferrals is eligible to receive the matching contribution once the employee has been employed for 12 months of continuous service.

Enrollment periods for employee match are on the employee's first anniversary and during open enrollment thereafter.

### **...FUNERAL LEAVE**

The employee will be granted time off with pay, if scheduled to work, up to a maximum of two (2) work days for funeral leave after 90 consecutive days of employment. For purposes of this policy, "Immediate Family" is defined as:

The employees' parent, step-parent, child, step-child, brother, step-brother, sister, step-sister, spouse, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandparent, or grandchild;

If requesting funeral leave, the employee's supervisor should be notified immediately.

Upon the employee's return to work, he/she shall follow leave form procedures. A copy of the obituary must be provided to be paid funeral leave.

### **...PAID TIME OFF (PTO)**

OPTIONS believes that each employee should have a time of rest and relaxation. The purpose of PTO is to provide employees with flexible paid time off from work that can be used for such needs as vacation, personal or family illness, doctor appointments, and other activities of the employee's choice.

Eligibility to accrue PTO is contingent on the employee either working or utilizing accrued PTO for the entire bi-weekly pay period. PTO accrual will be based on the chart below:

**PTO Schedule**

	40 hour Accrual Rate	35-39 hour Accrual Rate
0 -90 days	No leave earned	No leave earned
90 days - 12 Months	2.00 hrs. / pay period	1.75 hrs. / pay period
13 Months - 60 Months	3.07 hrs./ pay period	2.68 hrs./ pay period
Over 60 Months	4.60 hrs./ pay period	4.03 hrs./ pay period

The following are guidelines for PTO:

- Employees are required to arrange for a substitute before requesting PTO. If the position does not require a substitute, arrangements are to be made to ensure job responsibilities will be handled while the employee is on PTO. Your supervisor must approve all arrangements.
- Requests for PTO shall be signed by the substitute (the PRN staff) and approved by your supervisor. Once your supervisor signs off on the leave request, you

must hand carry the request to the payroll specialist by noon on Friday prior to pay day.

- Three (3) working days' notice/approval is required when taking PTO for 3 days or less.
- Ten (10) working days' notice/approval is required when requesting more than 3 days of PTO.
- If adequate PTO is not available to cover the absence, the employee may be subject to the loss of their Incentive Pay per the Incentive Pay Guidelines.
- If an employee is absent from their job for 3 consecutive days without prior approval, a physician's statement will be required before they can return to work. The statement should be turned in to their supervisor and then forwarded to the Human Resources Director.
- Upon resignation/termination, an employee will be paid for the balance of PTO time earned. The balance will be paid on the employee's FINAL paycheck. The FINAL paycheck will be issued on the next regular scheduled pay date.
- Although an employee may carry over unused PTO from year to year, there is a cap on the amount of PTO time an employee can accumulate. This encourages employees to use their PTO and allows the company to manage its financial obligations responsibly. Once an employee reaches their cap, they will not accumulate any more PTO until they use some of the time in their account and drop below the cap. After the employee's balance goes below the cap, they will begin accruing PTO again. However, they will not receive retroactive credit for time worked while they were at the cap limit. PTO accrual is capped at 120 hours.
- There will be no buy-out of unused PTO hours.

### ***...LEAVE WITHOUT PAY***

- If the employee is not eligible for PTO (i.e. part-time and new employees), Leave Without Pay may be used with prior approval.
- For special circumstances, such as vacations, family emergencies, or employee does not have leave available (i.e. part-time and new employees), the employee may make arrangements for leave without pay with prior approval. A leave without pay is used when an employee needs an extended period of time from their job duties and has no earned leave.
- An employee anticipating a need for a leave without pay must apply for the leave in writing.
- All leaves without pay less than 10 days require the approval of their supervisor.

- All leaves must have a specific duration and a return to work date determined at the time leave is granted. If the employee does not return to work on the expected workday, it will be considered as an employee resignation.
- The employee shall contact the Human Resources Director regarding benefits while on extended leave.
- Request for 10 days or more leave without pay also requires the approval the Human Resources Director.
- Request for 6 weeks or more leave without pay requires the approval of the Chief Executive Officer

### ***...LEAVE DONATION POLICY***

OPTIONS recognizes that employees may have a family emergency or a personal crisis that causes a severe impact to them resulting in a need for additional time off in excess of their available PTO. To address this need, all eligible employees will be allowed to donate PTO from their unused balance to their co-workers in need in accordance with the policy outlined below. This policy is strictly voluntary.

#### **Eligibility**

Employees who donate or receive PTO must meet all criteria outlined below. Employees who donate or receive PTO must be classified as full-time and eligible to earn PTO.

#### **Guidelines**

Employees who would like to make a request to receive donated PTO from their co-workers must have a situation that meets the following criteria:

**Family Health Related Emergency-** Critical or catastrophic illness or injury of the employee or an immediate family member that poses a threat to life and/or requires inpatient or hospice health care. Immediate family member is defined as spouse, domestic partner, child, parent, or other relationship in which the employee is the legal guardian or sole caretaker.

**Other Personal Crisis-** A personal crisis of a severe nature that directly impacts the employee. This may include a natural disaster impacting the employee's primary residence such as a fire or severe storm.

Employees who receive donated PTO may not receive more than 120 hours (3 weeks) within a rolling 12 month period.

Employees who donate PTO from their unused balance must adhere to the following requirements:

Donation minimum- 4 hours

Donation maximum- 40 hours.

**Note:** Employees who donate time must have sufficient time in their balance and will not be permitted to exhaust their balances due to the fact that they may experience their own personal need for time off. Employees who donate time must retain a balance of at least 40 hours PTO after the donation. Employees cannot borrow against future PTO to donate.

Employees who are currently on leave of absence cannot donate PTO.

### **Procedure**

Employees who would like to make a request to receive donated PTO are required to complete a Donation of PTO Request Form which includes authorization to present their request to the employees of OPTIONS for the sole purpose of soliciting donations.

***Employees MAY NOT directly solicit donations from co-workers.***

Employees who wish to donate PTO to a co-worker in need must complete a Donation of PTO Form.

All forms should be returned to the Human Resources Director.

### **Approval**

Requests for donations of PTO must be approved by the employee's Program Director, the Human Resources Director, and CEO.

If the recipient employee has available PTO in their balance, this time will be used prior to any donated PTO. Donated PTO may only be used for time off related to the approved request. PTO donated that is in excess of the time off needed will be returned to the donor.

### ***...THE FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT***

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) gives "eligible" employees the right to take unpaid leave, or paid leave if it has been earned, for a period of up to twelve (12) workweeks in "any twelve (12) month period" because of the birth of a child and to care for the newborn child within one year of the birth, the placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care and to care for the newly placed child within one year of the placement, to care for a family member (child, spouse, or parent) with a serious health condition, due to the employee's own serious health condition makes the employee unable to do his or her job, or any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a covered military member on



“covered active duty”. Twenty-six work weeks of leave during a single 12-month period to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness who is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin to the employee (military caregiver leave).

**Qualifying exigencies include:**

Issues arising from a covered military member’s short notice deployment (i.e., deployment on seven or less days of notice) for a period of **seven** days from the date of notification;

Military events and related activities, such as official ceremonies, programs, or events sponsored by the military or family support or assistance programs and informational briefings sponsored or promoted by the military, military service organizations, or the American Red Cross that are related to the active duty or call to active duty status of a covered military member;

Certain childcare and related activities arising from the active duty or call to active duty status of a covered military member, such as arranging for alternative childcare, providing childcare on a non-routine, urgent, immediate need basis, enrolling or transferring a child in a new school or day care facility, and attending certain meetings at a school or a day care facility if they are necessary due to circumstances arising from the active duty or call to active duty of the covered military member;

Making or updating financial and legal arrangements to address a covered military member’s absence;

Attending counseling provided by someone other than a health care provider for oneself, the covered military member, or the child of the covered military member, the need for which arises from the active duty or call to active duty status of the covered military member;

Taking up to five days of leave to spend time with a covered military member who is on short-term temporary, rest and recuperation leave during deployment;

Attending to certain post-deployment activities, including attending arrival ceremonies, reintegration briefings and events, and other official ceremonies or programs sponsored by the military for a period of 90 days following the termination of the covered military member’s active duty status, and addressing issues arising from the death of a covered military member;

Any other event that the employee and employer agree is a qualifying exigency. A covered employer also must grant an eligible employee who is a spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, with a serious injury or illness up to a total of 26 workweeks of unpaid leave during a “single 12-month period” to care for the service member..”

Spouses employed by the same employer are limited in the amount of family leave they may take for the birth and care of a newborn child, placement of a child for adoption or foster care, or to care for a parent who has a serious health condition to a combined total of 12 workweeks (or 26 workweeks if leave to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness is also used). Leave for birth and care, or placement for adoption or foster care, must conclude within 12 months of the birth or placement.

A covered employer is required to maintain group health insurance coverage for an employee on FMLA leave whenever such insurance was provided before the leave was taken and on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work. If applicable, arrangements will need to be made for employees to pay their share of health insurance premiums while on leave. In some instances, the employer may recover premiums it paid to maintain health coverage for an employee who fails to return to work from FMLA leave.

Under some circumstances, employees may take FMLA leave intermittently – taking leave in separate blocks of time for a single qualifying reason – or on a reduced leave schedule – reducing the employee’s usual weekly or daily work schedule. When leave is needed for planned medical treatment, the employee must make a reasonable effort to schedule treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the employer’s operation.

Upon return from FMLA leave, an employee must be restored to the employee’s original job, or to an equivalent job with equivalent pay, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment. However, if the position has been eliminated or the schedule altered because of business necessity, the employee will be assigned to a similar position as appropriate. An employee’s use of FMLA leave cannot result in the loss of any employment benefit that the employee earned or was entitled to before using FMLA leave, nor be counted against the employee under a “no fault” attendance policy. If a bonus or other payment, however, is based on the achievement of a specified goal such as hours worked, products sold, or perfect attendance, and the employee has not met the goal due to FMLA leave, payment may be denied unless it is paid to an employee on equivalent leave status for a reason that does not qualify as FMLA leave.

An employee has no greater right to restoration or to other benefits and conditions of employment than if the employee had been continuously employed.

Where practicable, the employee must notify the employer by giving thirty (30) days advance notice of leave. In addition, an employee may be required to submit certification from a health care provider to substantiate that the leave is due to the serious health condition of the employee or the employee’s immediate family member. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in the denial of FMLA leave. A certification of fitness to return to work must be submitted when the absence was caused by the employee’s serious health condition. Restoration to employment may be denied without such certificate relating to the health condition that caused the employee’s absence.

OPTIONS requires that all paid leave run concurrent with FMLA leave. If the FMLA leave exceeds accrued paid leave, the balance of the leave will be unpaid.

Procedure:

1. An employee will be considered on FMLA if the employee is out on sick leave for five (5) consecutive days. The leave will be counted toward the twelve (12) workweeks in "any twelve (12) month period" when it is determined that such absence is as a result of a serious health condition or other situation covered by the terms of FMLA.

2. An employee requesting leave under FMLA shall complete a "Certification of Physician or Practitioner" (FMLA) form and submit it to their supervisor & the Human Resource Director 30 days prior to the requested starting date if the need for FMLA is foreseeable. If the need is not foreseeable, the form should be completed as soon as possible. Verbal notice will satisfy the FMLA notice requirement but the employee must comply with the Agency's usual rules for requesting leave.

3. Medical certification will be required. (A second opinion may be required at the Agency's expense.) If the opinions of the first and second health care provider differ, the Agency may require a third opinion, again at the Agency's expense, from a health care provider mutually agreed upon by the employee and the Agency. The third opinion shall be final and binding. The employee may be required to submit subsequent re-certification to support continuing FMLA medical leave "on a reasonable basis."

4. If an employee fails to provide timely certification within 15 days of being asked to do so, and the need for the leave was foreseeable, the Agency will deny the employee leave until the required certification is provided. If the need for leave is not foreseeable, the employee must still attempt to provide the certification within 15 days of the Agency's request, or as soon thereafter as practicable under the circumstances. Failure of an employee to provide the requested certification, an incomplete or unclear certification, or to provide requested completion or clarification, or any other lawfully required form, may result in delay or denial of FMLA leave and/or denial of any pay which the employee might otherwise be eligible for during FMLA leave. Failure to timely return the requested forms and any clarifications or completions can result in absences not being protected by the FMLA and otherwise subject the employee to discipline, up to and including discharge.

5. Once the review is complete, the employee will be notified of the status and given an explanation of current accrued paid leave and the remaining unpaid FMLA leave.

6. Requests for FMLA leave will be held in strict confidentiality and filed as a medical information record.

7. Under certain circumstances, the Agency may require periodic reports from an employee on FMLA leave regarding the employee's status and intent to return to work.

If notice of intent not to return to work is given, the Agency's obligations to the employee under FMLA leave end.

8. The Agency may deny the taking of FMLA leave or reinstatement to eligible employees if:

- (a) The employee fails to give timely advance notice when the need is foreseeable, until 30 days after the date the employee provides notice.
- (b) The employee fails to provide a requested medical certification to substantiate the need for FMLA leave due to a serious health condition, until such certificate is submitted.
- (c) The employee fails to provide a requested fitness-for-duty certification to return to work, an employee may be denied restoration until such certificate is submitted.
- (d) The employee has no greater right to reinstatement or to other benefits and conditions of employment than if the employee had been continuously employed during the FMLA leave period. The Agency must be able to show, when an employee requests reinstatement, that the employee would not otherwise have been employed if leave had not been taken in order to deny restoration to employment.
- (e) If the employee unequivocally advised the employer that the employee does not intend to return to work, the employment relationship is deemed terminated.
- (f) An employee who fraudulently obtains FMLA leave is not protected by FMLA.
- (g) If the Agency's has a uniformly applied policy governing outside or supplemental employment, such a policy may continue to apply to an employee while on FMLA leave.
- (h) A "key employee" may be denied restoration when "restoration of the employee to employment will cause substantial and grievous economic injury to the operations of the employer."
- (i) An employee who does not return to work at the conclusion of their twelve (12) weeks of FMLA is not guaranteed any reinstatement rights to employment.

DISCLAIMER: Agency will abide by all regulations stated in the Family Medical Leave Act of 1993, which can be found on the Department of Labor website.

### **...MILITARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Employees faced with the possibility of military service, National Guard, or Reserve Training must advise the Human Resource Director of the leave.

The employee will not receive any type of salary nor will the employee accrue benefits such as PTO or holiday pay for the time away from work for military leave. If employee is enrolled in a medical plan and must serve military duty for more than 30 days,

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employee may choose to continue benefits under COBRA, where the employee is responsible for payment.

Upon receipt of the military service notice, the employee shall attach the request for Military Leave to the completed "Request for Leave" form and follow leave procedures. The employee must contact the Human Resource Director to coordinate a plan for returning to work.

OPTIONS shall abide by all employer requirements stated in **The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994**, which is found on the Department of Labor website.

Definitions:

*Eligible employee* means those employees who have worked for at least one year, and for 1,250 hours over the previous twelve (12) months.

*Parent* means the biological parent of an employee or an individual who stands or stood in loco parentis to an employee when the employee was a child. This term does not include parents "in law."

*Child* means a biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child of a person standing in loco parentis, who is under 18 years of age or 18 years of age or older and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability.

*Spouse* means a husband or wife as defined or recognized under State law for purposes of marriage, including common law marriage in states where it is recognized.

*Serious health condition* means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves:

- (1) inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility or;
- (2) continuing treatment by a health care provider.

*Twelve-month period* means 12 months measured forward from the first date leave is used.

*Key Employee* is defined as one who is paid on a salary basis and is among the highest paid ten (10%) percent of all employees (salaried and hourly) who are employed within a 75 mile radius of the workplace in question.

*Workweek* means the normal seven (7) day workweek for that employee.

*Agency* refers to OPTIONS.

### **...JURY DUTY/SUBPOENAED WITNESS**

OPTIONS supports each person's civic duty to serve government. If subpoenaed for jury duty or as a witness for the agency, the employee will not suffer lost income from OPTIONS.

Upon receipt of subpoena, the employee shall attach a copy of the subpoena to a completed "Request for Leave" form and follow leave procedures.

Time will be paid for only actual time away from employment related to the jury services request. If you are notified of jury service, and you need to find a replacement for your position, explain to the PRN staff they may be needed for a couple of hours or longer. If you are required to phone in the night before, at this time you can notify the PRN staff of your status. If you are required to call the morning of jury services, then explain to the PRN staff you will let them know of your status as soon as possible. If you are available and able to work, you are required to report to work as soon as possible. If your PRN staff is not able to leave the participant, (i.e. the participant had to go on an outing), you will be expected to call your supervisor for reassignment.

### **...COUNSELING SESSIONS**

It is the intent of the Agency to provide meaningful assistance for employees with personal problems that may affect job performance. OPTIONS contracts with a private counselor to provide employee assistance and support for personal issues.

Each employee is allowed six (6) counseling sessions at no charge to the employee. Additional sessions must be requested and need to be approved by the Chief Executive Officer or Human Resources Director.

The employee should contact Human Resources Director to set up a confidential appointment. The process is handled in a manner that keeps the employee's anonymity.

## **VI. SAFETY AT THE WORK PLACE**

For more information, refer to *OPTIONS Safety and Disaster Preparedness Handbook*.

Safety and security are everyone's responsibility and cannot be stressed enough. The goal of OPTIONS is to keep personnel free from occupational injuries and diseases.

OPTIONS maintains a safety program which embodies the positive attitudes toward injury and disease prevention on the part of both supervisors and employees and which complies with all applicable local, state, and federal safety requirements. This requires cooperation in all safety matters, not only between supervisor and employee, but also between employees. Only through such efforts can the best safety record be established and preserved. OPTIONS goal is ZERO accidents and injuries.

## **...SAFETY RULES**

Employees must observe the following guidelines:

- Be alert! Be careful! Be aware of your surroundings! Always ...think safety.
- Immediately report all injuries to your supervisor and to the Human Resources Director, even if it appears only slight at the time.
- Know the location of fire and emergency exits. Follow all emergency procedures in case of fire or emergency situations.
- Ensure that fire extinguishers, fire alarms, and exit doors are kept clear of obstacles.
- Pick up or wipe spilled objects/ food immediately to prevent an accident.
- Be sure all tools and equipment are maintained in a good state of repair.
- Ensure that all poisonous, toxic, and flammable materials are safely stored in appropriate containers labeled as to contents.
- Walk, do not run. No horseplay.
- Report any and all safety hazards immediately to your supervisor.
- Keep arms and back as straight as possible when lifting from the floor. Bend the knees and then lift with leg muscles. Obtain or lend assistance when needed to lift or move heavy objects.
- Use a ladder, step stool, or work stand to reach high places. Never climb on machinery, crates, boxes, shelves, or chairs.
- Wear all required safety equipment.
- Use caution when lifting, physically assisting, or repositioning individuals. If possible, never get in an awkward position.
- Smoking is prohibited in all OPTIONS facilities and all OPTIONS vehicles.
- Fingernails are to be kept no more than 1/8 inch beyond the tip of your fingers.
- All regulations set forth in the CMA course must be followed in accordance with OPTIONS policy and procedure.
- All incidents/accidents must be reported verbally immediately and written within 24 hours. Failure to report may result in disciplinary action and/or a disallowed claim.

## **...JOB SAFETY**

OPTIONS provides everyone with a safe and secure work environment. Here are a few safety tips.

- Be alert to your environment at all times. Expect the unexpected. Individuals have been known to show initiative in trying something new when you least expect it.
- Keep all medication cabinets locked unless you are standing directly in front of them.
- Keep all knives and sharp objects in a safe place.
- Keep all keys (yours and OPTIONS) on your person while you are at work.
- Keep all personal valuables at home. OPTIONS does not assume any responsibility for lost, stolen, or damaged personal property.
- Keys must not be left in vehicles. Vehicles are not to be left running if driver is not present.
- Lifting Property:
  - To reduce risk exposure when lifting, use mechanical equipment/aids to move items.
  - If you can, reduce the weight of the items to be lifted.
  - Always seek assistance from your fellow employees to move heavy or bulky items.
- Lifting People:
  - To reduce risk exposure when lifting people use mechanical equipment/aids to move the individual.
  - Always seek assistance from your fellow employee to help lift the individual.
  - If all else fails, call 911 for help.
- **Never use equipment on which you are not trained. You are expected to seek training on equipment prior to use.**



### ***...SAFETY INSPECTIONS***

A safety inspection is an essential tool to identify and control unsafe acts and conditions. Inspections should be a continuous part of all operations, which allow everyone to identify hazards.

### ***...SAFETY COMMITTEE AND TRAINING***

#### **Safety Committee**

The Safety Committee is comprised of no less than six people defined as follows: one (1) Human Resources Director, two (2) supervisors, one (1) hourly staff and two (2) concerned citizens.

#### **Orientation Safety Training**

At the time of orientation and annually, all new Direct Service Workers receive safety training in the following areas: CPR, First Aid, Med Administration, Seizure Management, Vital Signs/ Signs of Illness, Health Management / OSHA Training, Behavior Management, Fire Safety, Driver Training, and Drug Free Awareness Program.

### ***...ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES***

#### **Action to be Taken with Accidents and Injuries**

The first action when an accident or injury occurs is to provide prompt medical attention, ideally with the company-selected physician or clinic. Staff must:

- Call 911 (emergency number) if situation warrants.
- Administer appropriate first aid.
- Immediately contact your supervisor or the on-call person if main office is closed. Supervisor, on-call staff, or other designated personnel will contact the family of the participants involved.
- Complete the written accident report within 24 hours.
- Contact the police and get a police report if the accident involves a vehicle. The police report is required regardless of how minor the accident is.
- All employees involved in any accident are required to take a post-accident drug test immediately following accident.

## **Accident and Injury Reports**

**All employees** are required to submit information on work-related injuries and accidents to the Human Resources Director within 24 hours. This includes any incidents involving personal injury to an employee or damage to agency property. See Safety and Disaster Handbook for complete details.

### **...SMOKING POLICY**

OPTIONS is a smoke free agency. Employees are not permitted to smoke on or near any OPTIONS property, contract location, vehicle, or agency sponsored event. In addition, employees are not permitted to smoke during work hours, regardless of location. This includes participants' homes and personal vehicles while transporting participants. Smoke breaks for employees are not allowed and may be considered neglect when working with participants. This policy includes the use of e-cigarettes and vapor cigarettes in addition to traditional cigarettes, cigars, and pipes.”

### **...DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE**

It is the purpose of this plan to establish OPTIONS as a DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE in compliance with *The Drug Free Work Place Act of 1988*. It is the policy of this agency that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance or illegal drug of any type in or near agency property or job sites, is strictly prohibited. The use of alcohol or illegal substances is prohibited within 8 hours of the beginning of your work shift.

The use of alcohol or illegal substances on any agency property, including agency vehicles or at any job site, is also strictly prohibited. Any employee who is in violation of this policy is subject to termination from employment.

OPTIONS recognizes drug/alcohol dependency as an illness and a major health problem. OPTIONS also recognizes drug/alcohol abuse as a potential safety and security problem.

The above provisions apply to employees, contractors, contract, or leased personnel when they are on agency premises; employees traveling to and from a company facility, or conducting business away from the agency.

## **Drug/Alcohol Testing**

Analytical urine drug testing and breath testing for alcohol may be conducted when circumstances warrant. All employees shall be subject to testing for pre-employment, for reasonable suspicion, post-accident, and on a random basis.

Testing shall be conducted in a manner to assure a high degree of accuracy and reliability and using techniques, equipment and laboratory facilities, which have been

approved by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and in compliance with NIDA and SAMHSA.

Tests for breath alcohol concentration will be conducted using an approved evidential breath-testing device (EBT) operated by a trained technician.

An employee's consent to submit to the above testing is required as a condition of employment and the employee's refusal to consent will result in termination.

A Medical Review Officer (MRO) will review all drug testing results. Any employee that has a confirmed positive drug or alcohol test is subject to termination, informed of educational and rehabilitation programs available, and referred to a Substance Abuse Professional.

### **Post-Accident Drug & Alcohol Testing**

The drug and alcohol testing policy applies to all OPTIONS employees. The word "Employee" means employees who drive OPTIONS vehicles who are subject to commercial (CDL) employee's license requirements, any other OPTIONS motor vehicle that require chauffer's license, or the employees who may drive their own motor vehicle while on duty.

Testing of personnel must occur as soon as possible after an accident. If testing does not occur immediately, the supervisor responding to the scene must document the reason why testing did not occur in a timely manner.

Under the following conditions, an employee may be given an opportunity to do non-driving work at OPTIONS while waiting for the results of the drug & alcohol test to return:

- No suspicion of drug or alcohol use – no smell of alcohol or suspicious behavior
- No evidence of negligence
- No tickets or citations were issued
- No one is hospitalized
- No deaths as a result of the accident
- Human Resources Director must approve the re-assignment

If any of the above situations exist, the employee will be suspended pending a full investigation. If the drug & alcohol test come back positive, the employee will be terminated. Rehabilitation will be required for the employee to be eligible for re-hire.

The following circumstances in which an employee will be tested are; Pre-Employment, Post-Accident, Random Testing, Reasonable Suspicion, Return-to-Duty, and Follow-Up.

**For additional information see *OPTIONS Alcohol and Control Substance Policy*.**

## **...DRIVING POLICY**

The safe operation of all motorized equipment is extremely important to OPTIONS. The agency wants to ensure the safety of its staff and individuals. In order to accomplish this and comply with motor vehicle insurance guidelines, the following has been developed.

- Vocational employees must have a valid state chauffeur's license or CDL license dependent upon the type of vehicle they drive.
- Employees/ participants only in vehicle.
- Employees must have a minimum of 3 years driving experience.
- Employees must be trained and demonstrate safe operation of the vehicle to be utilized.
- A Motor Vehicle Records check shall be run on all drivers upon hire and annually.
- Employees must report any incidents (tickets) or accidents in OPTIONS vehicles to the on-call person immediately. Before the end of the workday, an accident report must be completed. Employees must also contact the Human Resources Director.
- Employees must report all non-work related incidents to Human Resources Director that fall into the following:
  - a. All automobile accidents in your personal vehicle whether you are at fault are not.
  - b. All moving violations (speeding tickets, seatbelts, etc.) in your personal vehicle.

## **OPTIONS Cell Phone Policy**

OPTIONS recognizes the business and safety benefits of cell phones. While cell phones expedite business communications and provide some safety benefits such as accident reporting, road hazard reporting, and assistance with directions, cell phone use may contribute to serious or fatal vehicle accidents.

The physical operation of a cell phone and cognitive requirement of the conversation while driving create distractions that may be dangerous. Some studies indicate the risk of accident while using cell phones is four times greater than normal. Other studies indicate that the distraction is equivalent to driving while intoxicated.

OPTIONS policies on safe use of cell phones apply at all times when driving a company vehicle, when using a company provided or personal cell phone, when driving a personal vehicle for company business, and when placing a business related call.

OPTIONS has adopted the following guidelines for business driving and business use of cell phones.

Approved by the OPTIONS Board of Directors February 3, 2020

### **All employees must:**

1. Ensure the safety of other drivers, pedestrians, passengers, and themselves through responsible thinking and actions.
2. Obey all traffic laws and regulations governing driver use of cell phones.
3. Identify and practice all the features on a new cell phone before you need to use it.
4. If traveling with a passenger, delegate the passenger to phone duty to receive calls, make notes, and place calls.

### **When Driving on Company Time:**

1. All employees carrying cell phones (whether company or personal cell phones) are expected to let the call go to voice mail.
2. Cell phones used by route drivers should be checked for messages at each pick-up/drop off stop. All other employees should find a safe place to pull off the road and check for messages. If the roadway shoulder must be used, remember to turn on the emergency flashers. Drivers should not use the shoulder of the interstate to check messages except in an emergency situation only.
3. If a hands free phone is authorized in writing, employees may answer the phone while driving provided they:
  - Minimize phone usage by informing the caller you are driving and call back after you have parked safely.
  - Do not answer phone when in heavy traffic, poor weather, unfamiliar area, construction zones or during other hazardous conditions.
4. It is prohibited to use all features of a cell phone while driving on company time, including texting, emailing, web browsing, etc.

### **Management Will:**

1. Purchase phones that include message and missed call features.
2. Not expect an answer when the employee may be driving.

### **Unacceptable Driving Violations**

The following guidelines indicate those drivers who would be deemed *unacceptable* to drive an agency vehicle or to drive a personal vehicle on agency business:

◆ One or More Type A Violation. Type A Violations include the following:

- DWI/DUI – Drug alcohol
- Refusing to take a substance test
- Driving with an open container (alcohol)
- Negligent homicide using a motor vehicle
- Driving while license is suspended or revoked
- Reckless driving
- Fleeing or evading police
- Resisting arrest
- Racing
- Hit and Run

- Operating a motor vehicle for the commission of a felony
- Aggravated assault with a motor vehicle
- Other violations considered serious by state law
- Failure to report an accident
- Permitting an unlicensed person to drive

◆ Any three or more Type B violations in the past three (3) years. Type B violations include the following:

- Suspended license related to moving violation including speeding
- Improper lane change
- Failure to yield
- Failure to obey traffic signal or sign
- Careless driving
- Accidents at fault
- Speeding
- Seatbelt
- Texting

These guidelines are very important since most of the positions at OPTIONS require driving. There are penalties established by OPTIONS insurance carrier, which may affect your employment. For more information, contact the Human Resources Director. Each employee is required to carry insurance on his/her vehicle. OPTIONS does not assume any liability for staff's property.

### **...BLOOD-BORNE PATHOGENS**

EXPOSURE CONTROL PLAN – For additional information see *OPTIONS Medical Health and Wellness Policies and Procedures*, which is maintained in the Human Resources Director's office.

OPTIONS has a written *OSHA Compliance Manual* with an "Exposure Control Plan" to promote safe work practices and reduce the potential for occupational exposure associated with contaminated body fluids. Also, treatment and counseling will be addressed in the event of an exposure. Training on risks and guidelines will be followed by all employees to ensure the success of the "Exposure Control Plan."

### **...EMERGENCY SITUATIONS, WEATHER RELATED CONDITIONS & THREATS**

For additional information see *OPTIONS Safety and Disaster Preparedness Manual*.

The first priority in case of emergency, disaster, or threat for the staff is the safety of individuals, employees, and himself or herself. All staff will be expected to provide support to the 24-hour care individuals by working as needed during an emergency. You will need to be in contact with your supervisor or someone in

charge of staffing for your work assignment. If you do not work, you will not be paid. There may be work available in other areas.

Administer first aid if indicated.

Notify the appropriate emergency authorities. To reach the Fire Department, Police Department or Ambulance call 911.

Contact the on-call person for assistance in handling any emergency. For further assistance, the Chief Executive Officer will be contacted.

## **Tornado**

Since the threat of an actual tornado is possible in this area, it is important that everyone become fully acquainted with the procedures outlined. It is important that tornado drills be conducted annually by each program in order to acquaint the individuals with the procedures to be followed:

The staff shall monitor radio or television for tornado warnings during a tornado watch.

If a tornado is spotted, a warning alarm (different from fire alarm) shall be sounded immediately. (Whistle, etc.)

Upon sounding of the tornado alarm, the following actions are to be taken:

Individuals shall go into the hall where all shall either sit down with knees up, head down with hands over head or kneel with hands over head and face the interior walls.

Shelter areas shall be selected in interior corridors on the first floor facing north or east, if at all possible. Ninety per cent (90%) of the tornadoes hit from the south-southeast.

If possible, the bus driver shall drive to a known building that would have a safe interior wall.

If a bus is caught in the open when a tornado is approaching the following procedures should be followed:

- Stop and evacuate the passengers. Do not attempt to “out run” the tornado. Do not remain on the bus.
- Seek safety in a below ground level area, such as a ditch or depression, in a location that is away from the bus and power lines, utility poles, trees, etc (when possible).
- Do not use above ground locations for shelter (ex. road or bridge overpass).
- Instruct passengers to lie flat, face first and to protect their head by using a jacket, other clothing, or their hands and arms. Advise passengers to not “sneak a peek” at the tornado.

## **Hurricanes**

OPTIONS enters each hurricane season prepared. Every June through November, the agency rechecks its supply of window protection, tools, batteries, non-perishable foods, and the other equipment it will need if a hurricane strikes our area.

The Chief Executive Officer will determine when and if an evacuation is needed. The intensity and location of the hurricane will be considered to determine an evacuation strategy. The evacuation plan will be to use two (2) community homes and Safe Haven. In a minor storm/hurricane, individuals living in their own homes will be encouraged to group together to maximize resources and coordination of staff support. In the unlikely event of a mandatory evacuation, community homes and individuals living in their own homes may be evacuated outside the Hammond area.

## **Train Derailment**

Fortenberry House & Alpha House and some individuals living in their own homes/apartments are located near train tracks and should be prepared to evacuate in the event of a train derailment. Due to emergency need for quick action, direct care staff should proceed to Safe Haven or another community home. Direct care staff should contact on-call to notify them where they are going. On-call will notify the management team.

If there are health questions, direct care will contact the OPTIONS nurse.

If emergency medical care is needed, Public Health or Red Cross service should be utilized.

## **Chemical Spills / Gas Leaks / Unusual External Odors**

If you smell gas or any other chemical scent outside, go inside, close all doors and windows. Call 911 for assistance. If evacuation is needed, go to Safe Haven or a community home that is out of the hazardous area. If Safe Haven or a community home is not available, go to the designated community shelter. Direct care staff should notify on-call where they are taking program participants. On-call will notify the management team of the emergency.

If Safe Haven or a community home cannot be accessed, the direct care staff shall take individuals to whatever community shelter is recommended. Direct care staff shall contact on-call. On-call will contact the management team. If there are health questions, direct care will contact OPTIONS nurse.

If emergency medical care is needed, Public Health or Red Cross service should be utilized.



## **Fire Prevention**

Our fire prevention policy is designed to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to preserve life and property from exposure to fire hazards. The requirements listed here identify the basic elements of our fire prevention program.

All facilities are inspected by the State Fire Marshal's office. Plans for new construction will have prior approval of the State Fire Marshal.

### **General Fire Prevention Rules**

Post the 911 phone number and the emergency procedure for summoning assistance in strategic locations.

A monthly safety inspection is conducted to identify and correct recognizable fire hazards.

Each facility has an alarm system. Fire drills are carried out monthly in accordance with fire marshal requirements.

Inspections of fire extinguishers and sprinkler systems, if applicable, will be conducted to identify and correct recognizable fire hazards.

Exit doors, approved hardware and lock devices, exit signs, passageways, and means of emergency exit shall be inspected annually to ensure they are in working condition and have unobstructed access. Padlocking of a designated fire exit door is prohibited.

Emergency lighting is inspected and tested at periodic intervals to assure quality operating condition.

Procedures outlined by State Fire Marshal's office are followed to control the receipt, storage, handling, and use of flammable liquids. The use of safety cans for handling separate storage of flammable, minimizing concentrations, and proper identification of containers are typical procedures that are enforced.

### **Fire Drills and Emergency Evacuation Procedures**

It is the responsibility of every supervisor and Department Manager at OPTIONS to ensure that the employees/ individuals under their supervision know how to get out of the building in the event of a fire emergency. An orderly evacuation depends on an early warning and employee/individual awareness of the proper procedures to follow.

## **...CDL PHYSICAL EXAMINATION**

### **Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Physical**

A physical is a requirement of the Department of Motor Vehicles in order to obtain a (CDL) Commercial Driver's License. All employees who are required to have a CDL for their job description will be required to take this physical upon hire and submit the completed paperwork to the Department of Motor Vehicles when they acquire their license. The Human Resources Director is responsible for scheduling new employees for this physical with a consultant physician.

## **...TB SKIN TESTS**

A TB Skin Test may be required upon hire as stipulated in Chapter 2 Section 2.022 of the Louisiana Sanitation Code and Federal Guidelines 483.460 (a)(3)(IV). Thereafter, employees testing negative will complete a questionnaire yearly. The test is given and read by North Oaks Occupational Health and the employee will be given an authorization form to take with them to the clinic. The Human Resources Team will coordinate the questionnaire being completed annually in conjunction with General Staff Training. Those employees missing this yearly testing (if required) will be required to have and pay for the test on their own. Those employees missing the questionnaire may be subject to disciplinary action.

The tests are to be read by North Oaks 48-72 hours after application on the initial skin test.

Employees who have a positive reaction or a history of a positive reaction will be required to have a chest x-ray at the discretion of their own physician, at the employee's expense.

An employee who tests positive for TB and requires treatment must have clearance from their physician before returning to work. Employees who have had a positive reaction will be required to continue treatment as prescribed by their physician in order to remain at OPTIONS.

If a Positive TB results in a finding of active T. B. on x-ray, an employee would not be allowed to return to work until their physician has documented that they are being treated and are clinically non-infectious. The employee will be required to provide documentation from their physician that they have completed a course of treatment and are inactive at the completion of therapy. The individual shall not be denied access to work solely on the basis of being infected with tuberculosis, provided the infection is not communicable.

## **VII. CLOSING**

This handbook is a summary of OPTIONS values and philosophy. It provides the framework for the agency and its employees to work together to accomplish OPTIONS' MISSION. It is designed to establish standards and to explain how the agency approaches various work situations. It recognizes that when we work with people it is difficult to anticipate every situation that may arise; therefore, this handbook is a general guide.

This handbook may be revised from time to time in order to make OPTIONS a better place to work and to comply with regulations.

The management staff at OPTIONS is here to work with employees to ensure OPTIONS provides a positive work environment and quality services. We believe that our people are our greatest asset.

**...RESOLUTION**

# OPTIONS

PREMIER SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

19362 West Shelton Road, Hammond, LA 70401  
Phone: (985) 345-6269 Fax: (985) 345-0297  
Web Address: [www.Options4u.org](http://www.Options4u.org)

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## RESOLUTION

### Employee Handbook

At a meeting of the OPTIONS Board of Directors on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 the following resolution was approved.

BE IT RESOLVED: that the OPTIONS Board of Directors and the OPTIONS Advisory Board have reviewed and approved the attached Employee Handbook: OPTIONS AND YOU AT WORK.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Sylvia Bush, President/Chief Executive Officer is authorized to make minor revisions as needed to these policies. However, any substantive changes that would significantly alter these policies will be brought to the Board on a case-by-case basis.



Patrick Coudrain, Chair



Date

Resolution # 8 (19-20)

## VIII. APPENDIX

### ***...EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT***

In accepting employment with OPTIONS, I agree to the following:

- (1) the salary as shown on the Payroll Status Form, paid biweekly
- (2) the starting date of work as shown on the Payroll Status Form
- (3) the job title as shown on the Payroll Status Form
- (4) to follow the employee handbook

All other rules, written or oral, provided to me are intended for informational purposes only. Neither the payroll status form, the employee handbook, agency practices or other communications create an employment contract or term.

I understand that the policies and benefits in the handbook or communicated to me in any fashion are subject to interpretation, review and change by management at any time without notice.

I further agree that neither this document nor other communications create an employment contract and that OPTIONS or I may terminate employment without notice at any time. I further agree that if I am terminated by OPTIONS, it can be done without liability for wages or salary, except for what may have been earned at the time of termination, or may be due by virtue of then-applicable law.

I understand that no representative of OPTIONS has any authority to enter into any agreement for employment for any specified period of time or to assure any other personnel action, or to assure any benefits or terms or conditions of employment, or make any agreements contrary to the foregoing. I also understand and agree that the employment at will agreement may not be modified orally, and that the Chief Executive Officer of OPTIONS may make a commitment for employment and that if such an agreement is made, it must be in writing and signed by the Chief Executive Officer.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date