

# **BUFFALO URBAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (“BUDC”)**

## **WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY**

### **I. Introduction**

- a. **Applicability:** This Whistleblower Policy (“Policy”) shall apply to the Buffalo Urban Development Corporation (“BUDC”), its existing affiliates and any other affiliated entities that may hereafter be established by BUDC (hereinafter collectively referred to as the “Corporation”) upon approval by the Board of Directors of the Corporation.
- b. **Scope:** In accordance with Title 12 of Article 9 of the Public Authorities Law, the Corporation is required to adopt a policy to protect individuals who, in good faith, report violations of the Corporation’s Code of Ethics or other instances of potential wrongdoing within the Corporation.
- c. **Purpose:** This Policy provides directors, officers and employees of the Corporation with a confidential means to report credible allegations of misconduct, wrongdoing, or unethical behavior and to protect those individuals, when acting in good faith, from personal or professional retaliation.

### **II. Definitions**

- a. **“Corporation Employee”:** All directors and officers of the Corporation, and all staff employed by the Corporation, whether employed full-time or part-time, employed pursuant to a contract, employed temporarily, or employed on a probationary basis.
- b. **“Good Faith”:** Information concerning potential Wrongdoing is disclosed in “good faith” when the individual making the disclosure reasonably believes such information to be true and reasonably believes that it constitutes potential Wrongdoing.
- c. **“Personnel Action”:** Any action affecting compensation, appointment, promotion, transfer, assignment, reassignment, reinstatement or evaluation of performance.
- d. **“Whistleblower”:** Any Corporation Employee who in good faith discloses information concerning Wrongdoing by another Corporation Employee, or concerning the business of the Corporation itself.
- e. **“Wrongdoing”:** Any alleged corruption, fraud, criminal or unethical activity, misconduct, waste, conflict of interest, intentional reporting of false or misleading information, or abuse of authority engaged in by a Corporation Employee that relates to the Corporation.

### **III: Reporting Wrongdoing**

All Corporation Employees who discover or have knowledge of potential Wrongdoing concerning directors, officers or employees of the Corporation; or a person having business dealings with the Corporation; or concerning the Corporation itself, shall report such activity in accordance with the following procedures:

- a. The Corporation Employee shall disclose any information concerning Wrongdoing either orally or in a written report to his or her supervisor, or to the Corporation's ethics officer, general counsel, or human resources representative.
- b. A Corporation Employee who discovers or has knowledge of Wrongdoing shall report such Wrongdoing in a prompt and timely manner.
- c. The identity of the Whistleblower and the substance of his or her allegations will be kept confidential to the best extent possible.
- d. The individual to whom the potential Wrongdoing is reported shall investigate and handle the claim in a timely and reasonable manner, which may include referring such information to the Authorities Budget Office or an appropriate law enforcement agency where applicable.
- e. Should a Corporation Employee believe in good faith that disclosing information within the Corporation pursuant to Section III(a) above would likely subject him or her to adverse Personnel Action or be wholly ineffective, the Corporation Employee may instead disclose the information to the Authorities Budget Office or to an appropriate law enforcement agency, if applicable. The Authorities Budget Office's toll free number (1-800-560-1770) should be used in such circumstances.

### **IV: No Retaliation or Interference**

No Corporation Employee shall retaliate against any Whistleblower for the disclosure of potential Wrongdoing, whether through threat, coercion, or abuse of authority; and, no Corporation Employee shall interfere with the right of any other Corporation Employee by any improper means aimed at deterring disclosure of potential Wrongdoing. Any attempts at retaliation or interference are strictly prohibited, and:

- a. No Corporation Employee who, in good faith, discloses potential violations of the Corporation's Code of Ethics or other instances of potential Wrongdoing shall suffer harassment, retaliation or adverse Personnel Action.
- b. All allegations of retaliation against a Whistleblower or interference with an individual seeking to disclose potential Wrongdoing will be investigated by the Corporation.
- c. Any Corporation Employee who retaliates against or attempts to interfere with any individual for having in good faith disclosed potential violations of the Corporation's

Code of Ethics or other instances of potential Wrongdoing is subject to disciplinary action, which may include termination of employment.

- d. Any allegation of retaliation or interference will be taken and treated seriously and, irrespective of the outcome of the initial complaint, will be treated as a separate matter.

#### **V: Other Legal Rights Not Impaired**

This Policy is not intended to limit, diminish or impair any other rights or remedies that an individual may have under the law with respect to disclosing potential wrongdoing free from retaliation or adverse personnel action.

- a. Specifically, this Policy is not intended to limit any rights or remedies that an individual may have under the laws of the State of New York, including but not limited to the following provisions: Civil Service Law §75-b, Labor Law § 740, State Finance Law § 191 (commonly known as the “False Claims Act”), and Executive Law § 55(1).
- b. With respect to any rights or remedies that an individual may have pursuant to Civil Service Law § 75-b or Labor Law § 740, any employee who wishes to preserve such rights shall, prior to disclosing information to a government body, have made a good faith effort to provide the appointing authority or his or her designee the information to be disclosed and shall provide the appointing authority or designee a reasonable time to take appropriate action unless there is imminent and serious danger to public health or safety. (See Civil Service Law § 75-b[2][b]; Labor Law § 740[3]).

#### **VI. Implementation**

This Whistleblower Policy shall be provided to all directors, officers, and employees of the Corporation and shall be reviewed annually by the Corporation’s Governance Committee.

Approved and Adopted: 3/27/2012

Re-adopted: 2/26/2013

Re-adopted: 2/25/2014

Re-adopted: 3/31/2015

Re-adopted: 3/29/2016

Re-adopted: 3/28/2017

Reviewed: 3/5/2018 (Governance Committee of the Board of Directors)