

WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

Basis for Policy

The general purpose of this policy is to protect any University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) student, employee or other member of the University community (hereinafter "Individuals") who makes a good-faith disclosure of suspected University-related misconduct. This policy supplements the existing Nebraska whistleblower law, the Nebraska State Effectiveness Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. § 81-2701 to § 81-2711, which protects state employees who report wrongdoing to elected State officials. (University of Nebraska Board of Regents Minutes, 75, January 25, 2019, pp. 95 and 101-102)

Reporting Suspected University-Related Misconduct

The University of Nebraska, including UNMC, places a high value on its ability and commitment to conduct its affairs ethically and in compliance with the law. UNMC encourages individuals to make good-faith reports of suspected University-related misconduct. Under this policy, misconduct includes a violation of the law or UNMC policies or procedures and may occur on or off campus. Retaliation in response to such reports is prohibited and is a violation of UNMC policy.

Individuals (including groups) wishing to report suspected University-related misconduct may use the UNMC online reporting system/hotline (hotline). Reports made on the hotline will be directed to a designated University of Nebraska or UNMC official. The University of Nebraska hotline is available for online reporting at <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/52126/index.html> (<https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/52126/>) or by phone at 844-348-9584. Individuals may also report suspected University-related misconduct to a supervisor, the UNMC Ombuds Team Referral Office at 402-559-2491, or the UNMC Compliance Office at 402-559-9576 or 402-559-6767.

Reports of suspected misconduct may be made anonymously. Reports and the related investigations will be kept confidential to the extent possible under law and consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation and take corrective action.

Retaliation Prohibited

No individual shall take retaliatory action against any other individual for reporting suspected University-related misconduct or for assisting in an authorized investigation of alleged University-related misconduct. Retaliation under this policy means an adverse action or threat made against an individual in response to a good-faith report of a known or suspected violation of law or policy. Retaliation, which includes any action that is likely to deter whistleblowing, may result in disciplinary action up to, and including, expulsion, termination of employment or termination of contract.

Individuals who believe they have been subjected to retaliation in violation of this policy should submit a report with UNMC's hotline (1-844-348-9584 or www.nebraska.ethicspoint.com) or file a complaint with the Executive Vice President and Provost or the Associate Vice President for Human Resources.

Exclusions

This policy does not protect an individual who files a report or provides information that the individual knows to be false or has a reckless disregard for or willful ignorance of the report or information's truth or falsity. An individual who is determined to have provided such information may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion, termination of employment or termination of contract. Furthermore, this policy is not intended to prohibit supervisors or management from taking other valid action, including disciplinary action, in the usual scope of their duties.

Other Protections

Rights under the Nebraska State Effectiveness Act

The Nebraska State Effectiveness Act seeks to encourage employee whistleblowing activities by providing some legal protections for state employees who disclose information about wrongdoing in state government to the Nebraska Public Counsel, also referred to as the Ombudsman's Office, or to an elected state official. Employees who believe they have information about any violation of law, gross mismanagement or gross waste of funds, or any situation that creates a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety, may report that information to the Public Counsel or to an elected state official.

Rights under Federal Grants and Contracts

Additionally, employees of contractors, grantees, subcontractors, and subgrantees, when working on Federal grants and contracts in connection with the University of Nebraska, have certain whistleblower rights and remedies afforded by statute, including but not limited to 41 U.S.C. § 4712 (Enhancement of Contractor Protection from Reprisal for Disclosure of Certain Information). Accordingly, all such contractors, grantees, subcontractors, and subgrantees are required to comply with all applicable laws.

Additional Information

- Chief Compliance Officer (sarah.glodencarlson@unmc.edu), 402-559-9576
- UNMC Compliance Office, 402-559-6767
- UNMC Ombuds Team Referral Office, 402-559-2491
- The State Ombudsman's Office (<http://nebraskalegislature.gov/divisions/ombud.php>)
- University of Nebraska: Reporting Fraud:
 - NU EthicsPoint - Reporting Fraud (<https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/52126/>)
- Nebraska State Government Effectiveness Act:
 - <http://nebraskalegislature.gov/divisions/ombud-whistle.php>
 - http://nebraskalegislature.gov/pdf/ombudsman/lb475_rights.pdf

Policy No.: **8018**

Effective Date: **04/11/19**

Revised Date: **04/11/19**

Reviewed Date: **11/19/21**