

2023 Justice Center Code of Conduct Recognition Award: Dedication, Respect and Protection from Harm

Call for Nominations

Presented by the NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs

Each year, the NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs (Justice Center) recognizes the dedicated staff who provide support to people with special needs throughout New York State with the Code of Conduct Recognition Award. The Justice Center is seeking nominations for the 2023 Awards. The Code of Conduct for Custodians of People with Special Needs provides a framework for assisting people with special needs “live self-directed, meaningful lives in their communities, free from abuse and neglect, and protected from harm.” This award recognizes people who demonstrate a strong commitment to the provisions of the Code of Conduct.

Who can be nominated?

Anyone who signs the Code of Conduct is eligible. People who sign the Code of Conduct are individuals who are employed by, or volunteer at, state operated, licensed or certified facilities or agencies under the Justice Center’s jurisdiction. Consultants, volunteers or contractors of organizations or companies that contract with facilities and agencies, under the Justice Center’s jurisdiction, sign the Code of Conduct if they have regular and substantial contact with people receiving services.

Who can submit a nomination?

Anyone.

How will award winners be selected?

Members of the Justice Center’s Advisory Council will review nominations and select award winners who have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the Code of Conduct throughout the year. The criteria used in the award process come directly from the ten provisions outlined in the Code of Conduct. Each nominee must have clear examples of the provisions to be considered for this award.

What is the deadline for submitting a nomination?

The deadline for submission is Friday, June 30, 2023.

When will the winners be announced?

Winners will be invited to an online award ceremony that will be posted on the Justice Center Website in October.

Where can I find the nomination form?

Please click [here](#) to submit a nomination form for the 2023 Justice Center Code of Conduct Recognition Award.

New this year! The Justice Center is accepting video nominations.
More information is available on the nomination form.

Questions about the award or completion of the application should be directed to the Office of Outreach, Prevention and Support at prevention@justicecenter.ny.gov.

What are the Justice Center's Code of Conduct provisions?

1. Person-Centered Approach

My primary duty is to the people who receive supports and services from this organization. I acknowledge that each person of suitable age must have the opportunity to direct his or her own life, honoring, where consistent with agency policy, their right to assume risk in a safe manner, and recognizing each person's potential for lifelong learning and growth. I understand that my job will require flexibility, creativity and commitment. Whenever consistent with agency policy, I will work to support the individual's preferences and interests.

2. Physical, Emotional and Personal Well-being

I will promote the physical, emotional, and personal well-being of any person who receives services and supports from this organization, including their protection from abuse and neglect and reducing their risk of harm to others and themselves.

3. Respect, Dignity and Choice

I will respect the dignity and individuality of any person who receives services and supports from this organization and honor their choices and preferences whenever possible and consistent with agency policy. I will help people receiving supports and services use the opportunities and resources available to all in the community, whenever possible and consistent with agency policy.

4. Self-Determination

I will help people receiving supports and services realize their rights and responsibilities, and, as consistent with agency policy, make informed decisions and understand their options related to their physical health and emotional well-being.

5. Relationships

I will help people who receive services and supports from this organization maintain or develop healthy relationships with family and friends. I will support them in making informed choices about safely expressing their sexuality and other preferences, whenever possible and consistent with agency policy.

6. Advocacy

I will advocate for justice, inclusion, and community participation with, or on behalf of, any person who receives services and supports from this organization, as consistent with agency policy. I will promote justice, fairness, and equality, and respect their human, civil and legal rights.

7. Personal Health Information and Confidentiality

I understand that persons served by my organization have the right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to their personal health information and I will protect this information from unauthorized use or disclosure, except as required or permitted by law.

8. Non-Discrimination

I will not discriminate against people receiving services and supports or colleagues based on race, religion, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, economic condition, disability, or any other protected class under the law.

9. Integrity, Responsibility and Professional Competency

I will reinforce the values of this organization when it does not compromise the well-being of any person who receives services and supports. I will maintain my skills and competency through continued learning, including all training provided by this organization. I will actively seek advice and guidance of others whenever I am uncertain about an appropriate course of action. I will not misrepresent my professional qualifications or affiliations. I will demonstrate model behavior to all, including persons receiving services and supports.

10. Reporting Requirements

As a mandated reporter, I acknowledge my legal obligation under Social Services Law § 491, as may be amended from time to time or superseded, to report all allegations of reportable incidents immediately upon discovery to the Justice Center's Vulnerable Persons' Central Register by calling 1-855-373-2122.

2022 Code of Conduct Winners

Tammy Anderson, Office of People with Developmental Disabilities

Tammy Anderson has worked in direct care for more than 20 years. She is known for using the phrase “teamwork makes the dream work.” Ms. Anderson is credited for her creativity in using engaging activities to work on life skills. She created a walking club to help people learn about health and wellness. She uses cheers for a local football team to do speech exercises. And she created a holiday ball to introduce different music and cultures to the individuals in her program. These opportunities allow residents to build confidence in themselves.

Zalil Bacchus, Ohel

Zalil Bacchus spent the last two decades working with individuals with special needs. His dedication was most evident during Hurricane Sandy when he decided to move into the residential facility because he was concerned there would be staffing issues. Bacchus works to reduce the number of physical interventions needed and helps people in his care address emotional needs before they escalate. He emphasizes conflict resolution rather than intervention.

Connie Erdmann, Office of Mental Health

Connie Erdmann’s nomination described her as an exemplary employee who emphasizes treating everyone with respect, dignity, and compassion. She continually advocates for all the people in her care, listens thoughtfully to patients and family members, and addresses each situation that is presented to her. She is also known for securing the resources needed by patients being discharged to help them be successful in their transition to the community.

Beverley Walker, Camelot Counseling

Beverley Walker has dedicated more than 20 years of her life to helping children and families whose lives have been affected by alcohol and substance use. She saw a need years ago to help people transition out of care so she started Camelot Shelter Services, first running it out of a trailer. Today that program serves more than 230 people. It helps with family reunification efforts and provides services and supports to vulnerable families. She firmly believes that how a person is perceived and treated by others influences how they behave so she thanks her clients for allowing her to be part of their wellness journey.

Shonda Williamson, Heritage Christian Services

Shonda Williamson’s nomination was submitted by the mother of a person in her care. She describes Williamson as “a wonderful role model, exhibiting humor, calmness, and compassion”. Williamson is said to be a stable influence for the people she supports. She encourages them to be independent and learn the skills they will need to make good choices in the years ahead. She also risked her own health by nursing people with COVID back to health.