COMPREHENSIVE POLICY ON PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Program: YW Tech Lab
Organization: YWCA Northwestern Illinois
Location: 4990 E. State Street, Rockford, IL 61108
Effective Date: October 2026

1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE & SCOPE

YWCA Northwestern Illinois and the YW Tech Lab are committed to providing an educational, training, and working environment free from sex discrimination, sexual misconduct, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Illinois Preventing Sexual Violence in Higher Education Act (110 ILCS 155), and applicable federal and state non-discrimination laws, this policy ensures equal access to educational programs and career training for all enrolled students, staff, and instructors.

Jurisdiction

This policy covers conduct that occurs:

- On YWCA Northwestern Illinois premises (4990 E. State Street, Rockford, IL).
- At off-site program activities, including partner internship placements, site visits, and community events.
- In online, virtual, or digital learning platforms used by YW Tech Lab (including program email, Slack/Teams/Discord channels, and virtual classrooms).
- Off-premises conduct when the Title IX / Program Coordinator determines that the behavior creates a hostile environment for any student within the cohort setting.

2. STATUTORY DEFINITIONS (110 ILCS 155/10)

Consent:

A freely given, clear, and affirmative agreement to engage in sexual activity.

- Consent cannot be inferred from silence, passivity, or lack of physical or verbal resistance.
- A person's manner of dress or past sexual relationship/consent does not constitute consent.
- Consent can be withdrawn at any time, at which point all sexual activity must immediately cease.

Incapacitation / Inability to Consent:

Circumstances where an individual lacks the capacity to give informed consent due to the influence of drugs or alcohol, being asleep or unconscious, being under the legal age of consent, or having a physical or mental disability that impairs judgment or communication.

Sexual Assault:

Any non-consensual sexual act proscribed by federal, state, or local law, including when the victim lacks capacity to consent.

Domestic Violence:

Violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner, a person with whom the victim shares a child, or a person cohabitating with or who has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner.

Dating Violence:

Violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim.

Stalking:

Engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for their safety or the safety of others, or to suffer substantial emotional distress.

Retaliation:

Any adverse action, threat, intimidation, harassment, or coercion taken against a person because they reported misconduct, filed a complaint, or participated in an investigation under this policy.

3. REPORTING OPTIONS & PATHWAYS

YW Tech Lab provides multiple confidential and administrative reporting pathways so students can choose the response level that best fits their needs.

Program & Institutional Contact

- **Primary Policy Official:** Kris L. Machajewski, YW Tech Lab
- **Address:** 4990 E. State Street, Rockford, IL 61108
- **Phone:** (815) 968-9681 ext. 307
- **Email:** Kris.machajewski@ywcanwil.org

Reporting Options

1. **Administrative Reporting:** Direct reporting to the YW Tech Lab Staff or YWCA President/CEO.
2. **Electronic / Web Reporting:** Reports can be submitted via email or through the YW Tech Lab student complaint & reporting portal online**.**
3. **Anonymous Reporting:** Reports may be filed anonymously via written notice or online submission without identifying the reporter. *(Note: Anonymous reports will be reviewed, but inability to identify parties may limit formal disciplinary action)*.
4. **Confidential Advisor:** Disclosures may be made confidentially to our designated partner, Rockford Sexual Assault Counseling (RSAC), at (815) 636-9811. Disclosures to RSAC do not trigger an administrative investigation or police report without explicit student consent. (See Section 4 for full details).
5. **Law Enforcement:** Reports may be filed directly with local law enforcement:
    - **Rockford Police Department:** (815) 966-2900
    - **Winnebago County Sheriff's Department:** (815) 319-6000
    - **Emergency:** 911

Response Window

Under Illinois law, YW Tech Lab administration will acknowledge and initiate response protocols for all electronic or written complaints within **12 hours** of receipt.

4. CONFIDENTIAL RESOURCES & ADVOCACY

Disclosures made to a **Confidential Resource** do not constitute formal notice to YWCA Northwestern Illinois and will **not** automatically trigger an administrative investigation or law enforcement report without the student's explicit request.

Primary Community Partner

- **Rockford Sexual Assault Counseling (RSAC)**
  24-Hour Crisis Line: (815) 636-9811

Community Shelter & Domestic Violence Partner

- **Remedies Renewing Lives**
  *24-Hour Crisis Line***:** (815) 962-6102

5. SURVIVOR RIGHTS & EVIDENCE PRESERVATION

Upon receiving a report of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking, YW Tech Lab administration will immediately provide the student with a plain-language written summary of their rights.

Medical Attention & Forensic Evidence

- Students are encouraged to seek immediate medical attention at a local emergency room:
  - **OSF St. Anthony Medical Center:** (815) 395-4505
  - **UW Health:** (815) 968-2500
  - **Javon Bea Hospital (Mercyhealth):** (815) 971-7000
- **Forensic Exams:** Under Illinois law, medical forensic evidence kits are completed at no out-of-pocket cost. Victims may choose whether to report to police immediately; evidence kits are held by law enforcement for up to 10 years.
- **Evidence Preservation:** Preserve digital records (texts, emails, screenshots, logs). If physical assault occurred within the last 96 hours, avoid bathing, douching, or changing clothes prior to examination.

6. INTERIM ACCOMMODATIONS & PROTECTIVE MEASURES

YW Tech Lab provides reasonable, confidential accommodation(s) upon request, regardless of whether law enforcement or formal disciplinary reports are filed. Options tailored for our cohort model include:

- **Academic & Program:** Reassigning lab seats, adjusting group roles, extending deadlines, or deferring enrollment to a future cohort session if available.
- **Safety & Legal:** Issuing internal administrative No-Contact Directives and enforcing court-issued Orders of Protection or No-Contact Orders on program grounds.

7. COMPLAINT RESOLUTION & GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

When a formal complaint is filed, YW Tech Lab ensures an equitable, prompt, and impartial resolution process:

1. **Notice:** Both complainant and respondent will receive concurrent written notice of allegations, investigation steps, and scheduled meetings.
2. **Right to an Advisor:** Both parties have the right to be accompanied by an advisor or support person of their choice (including an advocate, attorney, or trusted representative) at any proceeding or meeting.
3. **Investigation:** The YWCA Northwestern Illinois HR Manager, serving as a trained and neutral investigator, will conduct interviews and gather relevant evidence. Both parties will have an equal opportunity to present witnesses and evidence.
4. **Standard of Evidence:** Findings will be evaluated using the **preponderance of the evidence** standard (i.e., whether it is more likely than not that the misconduct occurred).
5. **Written Determination:** Both parties will simultaneously receive a written notice of the investigation outcome, rationale, and any resulting sanctions.

8. SANCTIONS & DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Students or staff found in violation of this policy are subject to disciplinary measures proportional to the violation:

- **Student Sanctions:** Formal written reprimand, mandatory education/counseling referral, lab/classroom seat reassignment, loss of paid IT internship placement eligibility, program suspension, or permanent dismissal from YW Tech Lab.
- **Employee/Instructor Sanctions:** Performance warning, re-assignment of instructional duties, administrative leave, or immediate termination of employment.

9. AMNESTY PROVISION

YW Tech Lab prioritizes the health, safety, and reporting of sexual misconduct above minor rule enforcement.

Students who make a good-faith report of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking, or who participate as witnesses in an investigation, will **not** be subject to disciplinary action under the YW Tech Lab Student Code of Conduct for minor infractions (such as minor drug/alcohol policy violations or attendance policy technicalities) that occurred at or near the time of the incident.

10. NON-RETALIATION STATEMENT

YWCA Northwestern Illinois strictly prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports sexual misconduct, assists someone in reporting, or participates in an investigation or disciplinary process.

Acts of retaliation—including intimidation, harassment, digital abuse, or threats—will be treated as separate, severe violations of policy and will result in immediate disciplinary action up to dismissal.

11. ANNUAL TRAINING & POLICY DISTRIBUTION

Student Orientation: Every incoming YW Tech Lab cohort will receive this policy and a plain-language summary of survivor rights during program onboarding. RSAC will provide specialized awareness training and educational programming on sexual violence prevention, consent, and survivor support for students.

Staff Training: All YW Tech Lab instructors, case managers, and administrative personnel will complete annual trauma-informed training provided in partnership with RSAC on handling disclosures, reporting obligations, and supporting survivors.

Annual Reporting: YWCA Northwestern Illinois will maintain records of reports and training completion to fulfill annual reporting requirements under 110 ILCS 155.