



## ICF Chapter Dispute Resolution Process

### Introduction to and elements of ICF'S Chapter Dispute Process:

Out of its commitment to high standards, the International Coach Federation (ICF) has developed Chapter Leader Guidelines for ICF Chapter Leaders, hereinafter known as "Guidelines." The purpose of the Guidelines is to ensure the highest standards of behavior for all ICF Chapters and their leadership in order to support excellence in the coaching industry as a whole and to appropriately represent the ICF Global goals of integrity and relevance.

ICF is committed to providing a recommended protocol for all chapters through which members can bring alleged breaches of the Guidelines to the chapter's attention and resolve them internally in an amicable manner. In partnering with Chapter Leaders, ICF has established a set of recommended procedures that provide for review, investigation and resolution of alleged violations or behavior deviating from the established Guidelines. This process is intended to serve as a "model of excellence" for the fair review of complaints regarding internal chapter governance and leadership disputes.

The resolution process applies to governance and leadership disputes in which the Guidelines are in question. By virtue of their ICF affiliations, all ICF Chapter Leaders have agreed to participate in the process. The process includes steps for investigation and resolution of the allegations that will be solely handled and internally implemented by said ICF Chapter.

This process is between ICF Chapters and their respective leadership. ICF Chapters do not have the authority of a court of law and cannot administer monetary damages or issue injunctions against any person. *It is advised that any complaint be dealt with quickly before the issue becomes unmanageable.*

### Suggested Elements of the Chapter Resolution Process

If it is believed that the ICF Chapter Leader Guidelines are not being adhered to, the following steps are recommended in order to ensure a formal resolution.

#### 1) **Task Force:**

- a) The initial step in the Chapter Resolution Process is to appoint an ad hoc task force; the chapter's ethics committee members are best suited for this temporary committee.
- b) If no such committee exists, an independent group within the chapter leadership will be appointed by the chapter's board of directors.
- c) If clear conflict of interest exists with a member, he or she must resign from the task force immediately.
- d) Once a task force has been appointed, an investigation into the complaint may proceed.
- e) This process must be autonomous in nature and committee members bear full responsibility to ensure an appropriate resolution is recommended to the chapter's board of directors.

#### 2) **Investigation & Documentation:**

- a) Once the above has been met, a preliminary conversation (investigation) will ensue; the potentially offending party will be contacted to determine their knowledge of the Guidelines and if inappropriate action was taken.
- b) The committee will thoroughly conduct a balanced investigation by collecting relevant evidence, incorporating contextual elements and considering mitigating circumstances to ensure a comprehensive analysis of the situation.
- c) Throughout all steps of this process, documentation is required. This formal documentation should be based on an objective assessment of the issue and its impact on the chapter and its functions as a whole.



d) The investigation committee will determine the nature of the complaint and issue a report of its findings.

**3) Education:**

- a) Once a finding has been established, the committee will hold a conversation with the appropriate parties to ensure full understanding of an agreement on acceptable and unacceptable behavior for chapter leaders.
- b) At this point, the issue may be resolved if no gross negligence is found and the resolution is a matter of educating the parties involved on proper chapter etiquette.
- c) If the suggested resolution is accepted by both/all parties, the issue will be considered resolved and passed on to the board, and the task force will be disbanded.
- d) However, if the gross negligence is found and remedial action is deemed appropriate the following steps should be taken.

**4) Remedial Action:**

- a) If an amicable solution has not been reached at this point, the task force may recommend remedial action to the board (e.g., pursuant to the chapter bylaws, a chapter leader may relinquish his or her leadership position and assist in the subsequent transition).
- b) At this point, the board can adhere to the committee's recommendation or generate an appropriate alternative based on the committee's investigation and chapter bylaws.
- c) If the board decides to pursue either recommendation, it will reference the chapter bylaws regarding voting protocol. If no procedure is present, a 2/3 vote by the chapter board will establish the final outcome.
- d) If the request is acceptable by the alleged parties and adheres to the chapter bylaws, the findings will be documented, the task force will disband, and the issue will be considered resolved.
- e) If the request is not acceptable by the alleged parties and the chapter bylaws are not able to provide an internal resolution, the investigation and all relevant information are to be collated (as outlined in the steps above), in English, by the task force and sent to the ICF Global offices to the attention of the Standards and Compliance Manager and/or Director of Chapter Development.
- f) For the process to move forward, the collated documents must express that all previous phases (as outlined in the steps above) were strictly adhered to and all diplomatic solutions have been exhausted.

**5) ICF Global:**

- a) When chapter leadership believes it has exhausted its local options to effectively resolve the issue, the chapter may request assistance from ICF Global.
- b) At this point, the case will be turned over to ICF Global and the task force will be disbanded. ICF Global will objectively assess all facets of the issue and take appropriate action to find a resolution up to and including actions as outlined in the ICF Chapter Agreement.
- c) In addition, if the case is determined to be a clear violation of the ICF Code of Ethics and/or ICF Code of Conduct, the appropriate steps to file a formal complaint will be explored.

*\*ICF Global offers storage for Chapter Dispute Resolution Process materials, in order to document learnings and ongoing concerns that chapters face in order to (determine trends and) better serve our volunteers.*