

Wilkin County
MINNESOTA

**EMPLOYEE
HANDBOOK**

**JANUARY
2023**

WELCOME

Dear Wilkin County Employee,

Welcome to Wilkin County! We are happy to have you here. Whether you are a new or long-time employee, you are very valuable to Wilkin County. The County recognizes that it is through our employees that our citizens are served, and we want you to become the most effective employee possible. For these reasons, we have prepared this Handbook to help you understand your rights, responsibilities, and benefits as an employee. Please keep it available for easy reference in the event you have questions about a particular issue.

While we have made every attempt to address most issues of concern to our employees, this Handbook is not exhaustive. It does not cover every situation which may arise from day to day. It may be revised and interpreted as needed at the County's discretion, with or without notice. For positions which are subject to an individual employment agreement or a negotiated collective bargaining agreement, the terms of those agreements take precedence if they conflict with the provisions of this Handbook. Employees with questions not addressed in the Handbook should feel free to contact County Administration.

It is our hope that by working together we will continue to maintain and improve the high quality of government in Wilkin County. We wish you a successful career here.

The Wilkin County Board of Commissioners

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Purpose

The purpose of the Handbook is to provide a uniform, comprehensive and efficient system of personnel administration in Wilkin County. The policies and related procedures define the County's terms and conditions of employment. The Policies are not intended as a binding employment contract or an offer of employment conditions other than those of an at-will employee. An employee or the County may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause. These Policies, in whole or in part, are subject to change, revocation, modification or amendment at any time at the County's sole discretion with or without advance notice. The County intends to keep the Personnel Policy Manual current, but there may be times when policies or the law will change before these materials are updated. It is the further purpose of these Personnel Policies to ensure that:

1. This Handbook and the policies herein contain general statements of policy, to be modified and applied by the County at its discretion, and it shall take precedence over all past practices and oral and written representation (s) of regular terms and conditions of employment. The county has the right to change, amend, modify, suspend, interpret, or cancel, in whole or in part, any or all of these guidelines at any time, with or without advance notice. Employees will be notified of such changes as soon as practicable through the normal channels of communication. The rules set out below are as complete as can reasonably be made. However, they are not necessarily all inclusive because circumstances that have not been anticipated may arise. Some circumstances, which are not presently identified, may require or warrant appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. If an employee has questions about these policies or the workplace in general, it is the employee's responsibility to ask his or her Supervisor or to reach out to County Administration.
2. In accordance with these regulations, each Department Head may establish a set of departmental rules. Such rules shall be established for the purpose of handling personnel matters particular to the department concerned, and shall be governed by these regulations. Before departmental rules can be enforced, they shall be filed and reviewed by the County Administrator to assure that there is no conflict with these rules and regulations or any collective bargaining agreements.
3. The County Administrator shall administer these policies. Any employee, or group of employees, has the right to express views, complaints, or opinions on any matter covered in these guidelines by meeting with the Department Head and/or County Administrator.
4. The County acknowledges that equal opportunity for all persons is a fundamental human value; therefore employment opportunities and policies shall be enforced to ensure equal employment opportunity without discrimination, favor or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, veteran or

military status, pregnancy, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, arrest or conviction records or on the basis of any other characteristic protected by law, except in the instance of bona fide occupational qualifications as necessary to effectively perform the job. The County prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the aforementioned factors. The County requires that all applicants and current employees be considered on the basis of individual ability and merit, without discrimination or favor.

5. Employees shall be protected from coercive partisan political practices. Employees are prohibited from using their official authority to interfere with or affect the result of an election or nomination for office.
6. Management practices are based on the recognition of employees as the County's most valued asset. Consistency of management practices enhances the effective and efficient delivery of services, assuring community members receive the highest quality service from this organization.
7. The County complies with state and federal law throughout, and if a conflict should arise between policies and law, the law shall prevail.

Savings Clause

If any of these policies shall be held to be contrary to law by a court or state or federal administrative agency of competent jurisdiction from whose final judgment or decree no appeal has been taken within the time provided, such provision shall be voided and the remainder of these Policies, other than that which has been held invalid, shall not be affected.

Management Rights

The County Board of Commissioners (County Board) has the sole authority to approve, modify, reject, or approve as modified these Policies.

The County Board and County Administrator retain the full and unrestricted right to: operate and manage all staff; facilities and equipment; establish functions and programs; set and amend budgets; determine the utilization of technology; establish and modify the organizational structure; select, direct and determine the number of personnel; establish work schedules; and to perform any inherent managerial function not specifically limited by current collective bargaining agreements, these policies, and County Board resolutions.

Adoption & Amendment

These Personnel Regulations were prepared and recommended by the County Administrator, approved by the County Board at a regular board meeting on 09/12/2023 in accordance with Minnesota Statutes §§ 375.56 – 375.71, and have subsequently been amended as indicated below.

Revised: September 2023

This revision dated 09/19/2023, specifically supersedes and revokes any earlier policies or regulations.

Administration

These Policies shall be administered by the County Administrator, who is accountable to the County Board. The County Administrator shall develop and provide the necessary forms, procedures, and instruction for the implementation of these Policies.

Copies of these Policies shall be provided to all Department Heads and current employees and are made available on the County's internal intranet site. A copy of these Policies is provided to each new employee as a part of the new employee orientation process. Printed copies of these Policies shall be available for public review upon request to the County Administrator.

Departmental Rules:

Each Department Head may establish rules and procedures for the express administration of personnel matters unique to that Department. Such rules shall be approved by the County Board prior to implementation and shall be filed with the County Administrator and made available to all Department employees.

Indemnification:

In accordance with [Minnesota Statutes Chapter 466](#), the County declares its intent to defend, save harmless and indemnify any of its officers and employees against tort claim or demand, arising out of an alleged act or omission occurring in the performance of a duty, except that of malfeasance in office or willful or wanton neglect of duty.

Application

These Personnel Policies shall apply to all employees paid by Wilkin County except when they are in conflict with law or collective bargaining agreements. The following individuals are not covered under the Dispute Resolution and Personnel Board of Appeals sections:

1. Elected positions;
2. Positions appointed by a district court judge;
3. Positions designated as Department Heads appointed per statute by the County Board;
4. Positions appointed per statute by the County Board;
5. Positions designated by an elected official, per statute as chief deputy.
6. Volunteer positions;
7. Interns with or without pay;
8. Members of appointed boards, commissions, and committees;
9. Vendors or consultants under independent/professional service agreements that provide the County with expert, professional, technical, or any other like service;
10. Seasonal, temporary, on-call, and casual positions;
11. Probationary employees;
12. Or other statutory positions as noted in Minnesota Statutes.

Department Heads:

A department head is an elected or appointed official who is responsible for management of a department as determined by law or the County Board. Department Heads include the following:

- Sheriff
- Auditor-Treasurer
- Recorder
- Attorney
- Assessor
- County Administrator
- IT Director
- Director of Environmental Services and Emergency Management
- Veteran Services Officer
- Health and Human Services Director

- Highway Engineer
- Building Maintenance Supervisor

Unclassified Positions:

The County Board may create positions referred to as unclassified positions, for which the sections of these policies pertaining to selection and termination do not apply. Subject to applicable law, appointment for such positions shall be made by the County Board or an existing Appointing Authority and employment and termination shall be at the will of the Appointing Authority.

Collective Bargaining Agreements:

These policies shall apply to all County employees except as specifically modified by a collective bargaining agreement or by the specific language of these policies. The County retains the full and unrestricted right to perform any managerial function not specifically limited by current collective bargaining agreements, these policies, and County Board resolutions.

Employee Responsibilities:

Employees subject to these Policies shall comply with, and carry out, the provisions of these Policies. Any employee who fails to comply with any of the provisions of these Policies shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Definitions

Unless otherwise indicated, the following terms used in these Personnel Policies shall have the following meaning:

Administrative Leave - Paid time that the employer may require an employee to be away from work, for example, during an investigation.

Appointing Authority - The official, commission, board, county administrator, or other individual(s) empowered to appoint or remove employees in the service of the County.

Appointment - A regular appointment to a paid position within the County service.

Class/Classification - A body of work performed, encompassing a group of jobs or positions, including jobs with a similar level of responsibility, duties, and qualifications. This is described by a classification description.

County - Wilkin County

County Board - The Wilkin County Board of Commissioners

Days - Calendar days unless otherwise noted.

Demotion - A change of an employee's position from one classification to a position in another classification with lesser duties and/or compensation.

Discharge - A permanent separation from County employment as a result of the employee's inability to perform all the requirements of the assigned position and/or unwillingness to comply with County policies and practices.

Dispute - A disagreement as to the interpretation or application of these Policies.

Department - County departments include the following: Administration, Ag, Assessor's Office, Attorney's Office, Auditor/Treasurer Office, Building Maintenance, Environmental, Emergency Management, Health and Human Services, Highway, IT, Recorder, Sheriff's Office, Veterans Services.

Department Head - A department head is an elected or appointed official who is responsible for management of a department as determined by law or the County Board.

Elected Official - Those officials selected by vote of the constituency of the County.

Employee - A person in a paid position within the County service, as defined by Minnesota Statute §179A.

County Administrator Department - The County Administrator and staff responsible for the administration of these Policies and associated processes.

Employment Date - The date a person begins employment with the County in a regular position, or the most recent date hired if the individual is re-hired.

Exempt Employee - An employee excluded from the overtime pay provisions of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

Incompetence - An employee's demonstrating inadequacy or unsuitability to meet job expectations with or without a reasonable accommodation; the inability to perform; ineptitude.

Insubordination - An employee's willful disregard and/or defiance of established authority and/or a supervisor's direct orders. Inappropriate language may also constitute insubordination.

Job Analysis - The systematic process of examining jobs to clarify the activities, duties, methods, responsibilities, context, and requirements necessary to perform in the job. Information may be gathered by questionnaire, interview, and/or observation.

Job - A position or set of positions performing similar work that are grouped in a broader classification.

Job Description - The written document that identifies the purpose, duties, responsibilities, requirements, and accountability of a job; and the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to perform the job; as well as any required credentials. Job descriptions may contain more detail and/or information specific to a particular job, as compared to a classification description.

Job Elimination - The removal of a position from the organizational structure.

Job Evaluation - The process of comparing and classifying the relative value of jobs in the County for the purpose of determining salary levels and ranges, and compliance with pay equity statutes and rules.

Layoff - A separation from employment due to lack of work, lack of funds, or other reason not attributable to employee performance or conduct.

Layoff List - A list of employees laid-off and eligible for recall.

Leave of Absence - An approved, temporary separation from active employment duties, which may be with, or without, compensation.

Misconduct - An employee's intentional, negligent, or indifferent conduct, on the job or off the job, that displays clearly:

1. a serious violation of the standards of behavior the employer has the right to reasonably expect of the employee; or
2. a substantial lack of concern for employment.

Non-exempt Employee - An employee covered by the overtime pay and minimum wage provisions of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

Overtime - All hours worked by non-exempt employees in excess of 40 hours in a week or in excess of another standard defined by the FLSA and adopted by the County. Actual hours worked does not include any time that employee is not physically working (i.e., Holiday, Vacation, Sick, Compensatory Time).

Personnel Board of Appeals - A non-employee review board appointed by the County Board to hear appeals and disputes concerning the interpretation or application of these Policies.

Position - A set of duties and responsibilities assigned to an individual role requiring the part-time or full-time employment of at least one person.

Post-Employment Pay- Payout of remaining vacation accruals to regular employees leaving County employment in good standing.

Probationary Period - The first twelve (12) month period following an employee's initial hiring or re-hiring when they are in active service in a position. The probationary period is designed to be an extended selection period to determine if regular status should be granted. Under certain circumstances, the probationary period may be extended.

Promotion - A change in an employee's status from a position in one class to a position in another class with more responsible duties and/or a higher salary range.

Reclassification - A change in the designated salary range level of a position as a result of approved changes in job duties which modify the responsibilities or decision making authority by raising it to a higher grade/classification or reducing to a lower grade/classification, based on a retrospective review of how the position has evolved.

Reemployment - Appointment of a former employee to a position with the County.

Reinstatement - Appointment of a former County employee to a position to which the employee was assigned prior to their termination or separation of employment, and within a specified duration of time from that separation.

Reorganization - A planned, prospective change in the jobs, reporting structure, or other significant factors regarding one or more positions and/or vacancies.

Resignation - Voluntary separation of employment from County service.

Seniority - The duration of continuous employment from the employee's most recent date of hire.

Regular Full-Time - An employee in a position that is budgeted to work a 40-hour workweek on the basis of 52 weeks a year, and who has successfully completed a probationary period.

Regular Part-Time - An employee in a position that is budgeted to work less than the 40-hour workweek on the basis of 52 weeks a year, but more than the lesser of 14 hours per week, and who has successfully completed a probationary period. They must have a regular set schedule.

Seasonal - An individual hired by the County during a specific time of year to perform duties that are required during that period of time, for no more than 67 days in a calendar year. These individuals are not eligible for County benefits except as mandated by state and federal law.

Temporary - An employee, working full-time or part-time, in a job of limited duration, such as a specific project or other time-defined work, for no more than 67 days in a calendar year. Temporary employees are not eligible for County benefits except as mandated by state and federal law.

On-Call or Non-Regular Part-Time Employees - An individual called to work from an established County list, composed of individuals interested in working on an intermittent or occasional basis. These individuals may work during peak periods in a department, when a regular employee is on a leave of absence, or while a position is vacant following a separation from regular employment and prior to a new hire beginning work. They may also work as needed depending on the department's work demand. On-call and non-regular part-time employees are not eligible for County benefits except as mandated by state and federal law.

Casual - An individual who is hired to perform assignments on an occasional and sporadic basis as needed, with no guarantee of hours of work or future employment. Casual employees are not eligible for County benefits except as mandated by state and federal law.

Intern - An individual in a formal educational or training program, performing limited duties for the County, which may be paid or unpaid. Interns are not eligible for County benefits except as mandated by state and federal law.

Supervisor - Any employee or official having the authority to perform the majority of the following functions in the interest of the County: to hire, transfer, suspend, lay off, recall,

promote, discharge, assign, reward, discipline, adjust grievances or effectively recommend such action, if the foregoing exercise of such authority is not merely clerical or routine in nature, but requires the use of independent judgment.

Suspension - A temporary separation from active duties, with or without compensation.

Transfer - The movement of an employee from one position to another position within the same grade or salary range.

Trial Period - The first six (6) month period of service after an employee is transferred or promoted to a different position within County service, which serves as an extended selection period.

Unauthorized Leave - Any absence from normal duties not authorized by a specific grant of a leave of absence under the provisions of these Policies.

Unit - An organizational sub-entity located within a department.

Veteran - An individual defined as a Veteran by Minnesota Statutes §197.447

Voluntary Termination - All separations initiated by the employee.

Personnel Policy Manual

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Purpose

Wilkin County embraces equal employment opportunity and is committed to compliance with all applicable federal and state laws, rules, regulations, executive orders and administrative policies regarding same.

Policy

The Personnel Policies have been established and will be enforced without regard to race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, veteran or military status, status with regard to public assistance, pregnancy, familial status, local Human Rights Commission Activity, arrest or conviction records, or on the basis of any other characteristic protected by law, except in the instance of a bona fide occupational qualification necessary for proper and efficient government operations. In all instances, proper regard shall be provided for applicants' and employees' privacy and constitutional rights as citizens under federal and state law. This extends to all recruitment and selection, hiring, promotion, transfer, demotion, layoff, discipline, termination, recall, placement, compensation, benefits, training, and all other conditions of privileges associated with employment.

Wilkin County prohibits any form of unlawful discrimination or harassment of any employee or job applicant on the basis of their protected class status. Any employee of the County who does not comply with the policies and procedures set forth in this policy and plan may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Any employee with questions or concerns regarding equal employment opportunity is encouraged without fear of reprisal to contact the County Administration Department.

All managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy within the scope of their duties. Reports of alleged violations of this policy should be submitted to the County Administrator. The County Administrator will review all allegations of violation of this policy. The County Administrator will determine if the complaint requires further investigation, and if so, will oversee the investigation to its conclusion.

The County forbids retaliation against anyone who makes a good faith complaint of a suspected violation of this policy, and against anyone who serves as a witness or participates in an investigation. Acts of retaliation should be reported immediately and may be subject to additional investigation.

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Recruitment and Selection Process

Policy

The County seeks to select individuals presenting the best match of education and experience to meet job-related knowledge, skills, and abilities requirements, consistent with Equal Employment Opportunity, to fill vacant positions.

In order to provide the best possible services to the residents of the County, the County Administration Department shall administer the recruitment process and assist departments in selecting qualified individuals to fill employment vacancies as they occur.

Procedure

The County Administration Department provides the forms and systems to identify vacant positions, advertise vacant positions, collect and screen applications, assist in employment testing and interview development, design scoring systems based on job qualifications and duties, make and confirm job offers, and coordinate the pre-placement processes.

During the screening process, all applicant information is considered private. The screening/interview process should not be discussed with members not part of the interview team.

Discussions that occur during the interview process should be considered confidential.

Filling Budgeted Positions:

Department Heads or their designees shall notify the County Administrator Department of their desire to fill a vacant position for final approval of the filling of budgeted vacancies.

Vacancies:

A vacancy shall be defined as any unfilled position approved in the budget process or subsequent Board action. Vacancies may be filled by reemployment, reinstatement, promotion, transfer, demotion or new hire.

Recruitment:

The County Administration Department shall prepare and publish a notice of the vacancy using internal and/or external sources deemed necessary to attract sufficient numbers of qualified applicants. The notice shall specify the position's title, salary range and/or hiring range, a summary description of the duties and responsibilities, minimum qualifications, the application procedure and other pertinent information. Such announcements shall allow a reasonable period of time for interested parties to apply.

Application and Screening and Selection Processes:

An applicant for a vacancy shall complete an employment application form and other required forms or reports to provide information describing their skills, education, experience, licenses, etc.

The County Administration Department shall receive and track applications. County Administrative Staff will screen applications for minimum qualifications. Incomplete or illegible applications may be considered as not meeting the minimum qualifications.

To comply with the Veterans Preference Act, a 100-point test must be applied prior to interviewing.

The County Administration Office shall be responsible for posting a copy of the “position vacancy” form on the county website for a minimum of five (5) calendar days or at the discretion of the department head. The position vacancy will be posted on the county website, and Indeed at a minimum. The position vacancy form shall remain posted until the vacancy closing date listed on the notice.

County Administration designs a selection process which includes, at a minimum, an objective screening tool to evaluate applications for job-related experience and training. County Administration staff shall assist in developing supplemental application questions to ascertain an applicant’s minimum and preferred qualifications for a vacant position. The scores on the screening tool are used to determine which applicants will move forward in the selection process. The selection process may include competitive examinations, experience and training ratings, physical abilities assessments, oral interviews, and/or other valid selection techniques. Based on the applicant scores on the final element of the selection process (interviews, tests, etc.) the appointing authority may select any one of the top three candidates for the position without any further scoring or justification for that selection. The appointing authority is the applicable Department Head and County Administrator for all non-classified positions at the county. All other employees that are included in the interview process do not have decision making authority however their input is considered when making a hiring decision. After interviews are concluded, the interview team will discuss the applicants, if there is a discrepancy on the final decision of who to hire, there will be a second round of interviews conducted. Department Heads and the County Administrator will make the final decision.

The County Administration Department shall check a minimum of two (2) employment references on the selected candidate. The County may also require a background check including criminal history, credit checks, driver’s license checks, license and academic verifications. Some positions also require Minnesota Statutes Chapter 604 verifications.

The County Administration Department shall extend a formal employment offer to the selected candidate including the starting date, salary, benefits, employment status, length of probationary or trial period, and other conditions of employment. In the unusual circumstance that it is necessary to appoint a selected candidate to a position before all required information is gathered, the employment offer shall be conditional upon the satisfactory results from the final

information gathering processes. In such cases, the selected candidate shall be required to sign a statement accepting a conditional appointment.

The salary for new employees will be commensurate with their knowledge and skill. County Administration will, with consultation with the Department Head, place employees within the appropriate level on the salary scale for each employee's position upon hire.

The County Administration Department shall promptly notify those applicants not selected for a position, addressing the specific requirements of collective bargaining agreements and veterans' preference.

Upon arrival, the new employee shall attend an orientation to County employment.

Medical Examinations:

Applicants may be required to pass a physical examination before starting employment if the position applied for contains a legal requirement for such physical examination, or if the County determines an examination, which must test only for essential job-related abilities, is in the public interest. Examinations must be done by a licensed physician and will be reimbursed by the County.

Reinstatement:

Former employees may receive consideration for reinstatement to their former position, upon the agreement of the Department Head and the County Administrator. Reinstated employees may receive, in the county's sole discretion, consideration for previous employment for the purposes of pay, accruals, and probationary period for up to one (1) year after termination.

Extraordinary Circumstances:

In situations where it is very difficult to recruit and attract qualified candidates for a particular position, the Department Head and the County Administrator may agree to offer a candidate with any work incentive the Department Head and the County Administrator deem appropriate and allowable under any collective bargaining agreement that may cover the position the candidate may be hired into, which may include, but is not limited to, credit for prior public work experience in a directly related position for purposes of determining benefits accrual and banked vacation/sick leave hours.

NEPOTISM POLICY AND DRESS CODE

Purpose

The County requires consistent practices in the areas of Nepotism and Conflict of Interest in Reporting Relationships.

Policy

Consistent with applicable law, the County does not restrict the employment of relatives of County employees. However, relatives are prohibited from working in situations where one will exercise supervisory authority over the other or directly influence the recruitment, employment, salary, fees, performance reviews or other employment actions of another relative.

The County will not give preference in hiring to immediate and extended family members of current County employees or to an applicant where the applicant will be the supervisor or subordinate of another employee with whom the applicant has a personal relationship, where the existence of such a relationship is highly likely to impair the organizational integrity of the work unit to which the applicant would be assigned, and/or the existence of which is highly likely to impair the job performance of the applicant or the employee. The employment of family members or persons with a pertinent personal relationship can raise questions of favoritism, conflicts of interest, difficulties with assignments, supervision and employee management.

For the purposes of this policy, “relatives” are defined as one of the following: domestic partner, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, any other person whom the employee has been declared legal guardian, step-relatives in the above categories, any of the above relatives of the employee’s domestic partner, or domestic partner of any of the above. For purposes of these definitions, “domestic partner”, is generally defined as a committed relationship between two individuals who are sharing a home or living arrangement, such as relationships by marriage (spouse, defined by state law), fiances, and co-habiting couples or significant others.

Current employees who marry each other or become involved in a domestic partnership will be permitted to continue employment with Wilkin County, provided they do not work in a direct supervisory relationship with each other or pose other difficulties covered by this policy. If employees who marry or live together do work in a direct Supervisory relationship with each other, Wilkin County will attempt to reassign or transfer one of the employees to another position for which he or she is qualified if such a position is available. County Administration shall be notified in writing at least 30 days in advance of a marriage or cohabitation in order to arrange a reassignment or transfer of duties. An employee shall be transferred in accordance with terms of the appropriate collective

bargaining agreement, if any. If no such position is available, one of the employees may be required to leave employment with Wilkin County.

Conflicts of interest should be avoided. A conflict of interest exists when an existing employee has authority or decision-making ability over hiring or recommending an immediate or extended family member or a person with whom there is a pertinent personal relationship for: employment, promoting, assigning tasks or work, disciplining or evaluating the performance of an applicant, employee, or candidate for promotion. This policy is not intended to discourage otherwise qualified individuals from applying for employment with the County or from seeking employment opportunities.

No Supervisor or Department Head will participate in any final decision or recommendation relating to the appointment, promotion, transfer, or demotion of that person's immediate or extended family member or individual with whom there is a pertinent personal relationship. Employees must disclose all apparent conflicts of interest at the time of occurrence or as soon thereafter as possible. Identified conflicts will be evaluated by the County Administrator.

Dress Code

County employees are expected to dress in attire appropriate to their position. Attire appropriate for each position shall be determined by the Department Head's discretion.

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BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION

Purpose

To protect the County, community, and its assets, Wilkin County conducts background investigations to minimize potential risks.

Policy

It is the policy of Wilkin County to conform with [Minnesota Statutes Chapter 364](#) relating to criminal offenders and rehabilitation, and state & federal regulations governing the process for background investigations, confidentiality of information gathered, and the protection of privacy of individuals undergoing background investigations.

The County Administration Department in consultation with the County's hiring managers shall determine the appropriate level of background investigation for each classification.

Procedure

Background investigations shall be initiated after a conditional offer of employment and shall be completed prior to hiring an employee through a firm specializing in background investigation and pre-employment screening services, by the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, and/or by the County Sheriff's Department in accordance with the law.

Background investigations on current employees shall be completed prior to the effective date of a transfer, promotion, or demotion.

Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) Security Policy background investigations shall be conducted for all personnel who have authorized access to FBI CJIS systems. This includes employees who have direct responsibility to configure and maintain computer systems and networks with direct access to FBI CJIS systems.

Authority

The County Administration Department is responsible for initiating background investigations. The Sheriff's Department is responsible for initiating all Sheriff's Office background investigations.

The County Administration Department in consultation with the County Attorney's Office shall determine the job relatedness of any criminal conviction.

1. Responsibility to Notify Employer of a Criminal Conviction

Employees shall notify the County Administration Department of any criminal charge(s) or conviction(s). The charge(s) must be reported within three (3) business days after it is officially entered into court records. Convictions must be reported to the County Administration Department within five (5) calendar days. Failure to notify the County Administration Department may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

For purposes of this policy, conviction includes any which has not been expunged and for which a jail sentence could be imposed.

2. Retention and Accessibility of Background Investigation Records

The County Administration Department has the authority to maintain, store, use and disseminate records in accordance with County Retention Policies, Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, and applicable federal and state laws.

The Sheriff's Office conducts extensive background investigations based on statutory obligations.

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INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERS

Purpose

In order to allow interns (students or individuals who are nearing completion of a training program) and County Supervisors the opportunity to arrange meaningful internships where the intern learns professional skills and the County receives the benefit of the work, the County Administration Department shall establish a process for such arrangements.

Policy

The County may employ interns from educational institutions in various capacities throughout the organization. Internships provide a partnership between the County and the individual. Through the extra staffing, the County gains increased effectiveness in the workplace while the intern gains through opportunities to enhance their knowledge base and work experience.

To be a paid intern, the individual must occupy a position that is temporary or seasonal in character under Minnesota law, and not work more than 67 working days in any calendar year or not work more than 100 working days in any calendar year if, the individual is under age 22 and a full-time student enrolled in a nonprofit or public educational institution prior to being hired and has indicated, either in an application for employment or by being enrolled at an educational institution for the next academic year or term, an intention to continue as a student after the individual's temporary employment.

The County may utilize unpaid volunteers at its discretion.

Procedure

A paid internship is part of a formal school program. A voluntary internship may be part of a formal school program, or an arrangement between a Supervisor and an individual who recently completed a training program.

The Supervisor who is either creating the internship or agreeing to participate in a school affiliated program shall prepare and submit the necessary internship information, including the program expectations, background checks, wages, duration of the internship and internship evaluation process, and provide that information to the County Administration Department.

Interns shall complete the County employment application form, [Minnesota Statutes Chapter 604](#) forms if applicable, and any other forms requested by the County Department hosting the internship. Interns shall attend orientation to County employment and complete necessary training.

The Department Head or Supervisor shall select the intern for a given program.

The Department Head or Supervisor shall prepare an offer letter for the intern's signature indicating the program specifics, including wages (if any), duration (limited in part by law), benefit status, and other pertinent information and file with County Administration.

County Departments that have an internship program shall provide the program information to the County Administration Department.

Internships from schools shall provide a point of contact and specific information regarding liability insurance coverage to the County prior to the first date of employment. School based internships generally provide liability coverage and may provide workers' compensation coverage for the student during the internship.

The hosting Department shall assign a Supervisor to provide oversight, coordination, direction, and control of the intern while employed by the County. The supervisor shall complete all necessary forms for the school and the intern.

Intern financing is through the hosting County Department's budget.

Personnel Policy Manual

PROBATIONARY & TRIAL PERIODS

Purpose

In order to ensure that newly hired, rehired, transferred, reclassified, demoted or promoted employees are able and willing to meet the performance and conduct expectations of the position, such employees shall serve a probationary or trial period.

Policy

Newly hired, rehired, transferred, demoted, and promoted employees shall continue the selection process through a probationary period or trial period designed to assess their ability to meet the performance and conduct requirements of the position. For newly hired employees the appointing authority shall determine whether regular employment status is to be granted or denied. Such a determination is final.

Procedure

The probationary or trial period shall begin when the employee reports for duty, and shall normally continue for twelve (12) months of active service. For certain statutory and Sheriff's Office positions, the probationary period is also defined as twelve (12) months. Employees shall be notified of the length of their probationary or trial period as a part of the employment offer.

The employee's Supervisor shall define the expectations during the probationary or trial period, explain them to the employee, provide orientation and learning opportunities for the employee, monitor performance, provide periodic feedback and complete performance evaluations during the probationary or trial period, normally at the mid-term of the period and three-months prior to the end of the period. Such evaluations shall indicate areas of successful work, performance deficiencies, if any, and recommendations for improvement.

The Department Head shall determine whether or not the employee's performance and conduct are satisfactory to grant regular employment status at the conclusion of the probationary period. If the employee does not exhibit the necessary job skills, or the required work habits, the Department Head may terminate the employee at any time during the probation period. In this case, the Department Head shall notify the employee of the termination in writing.

In some instances, the newly hired employee may not meet all of the required performance and conduct expectations during the probationary period. The Department Head, in consultation with the County Administration Department, may extend the probationary period for up to six (6) months, with the agreement of the probationary employee. In these cases, the Department Head and County Administration Department shall prepare a written statement for the employee's signature indicating the specific expectations required for successful completion of the extended probationary period. If the probationary employee does not agree to the extension of probation in these cases, the employee shall be terminated.

Any employee being transferred or promoted to a new position will serve a three-month promotional probationary period. During this probationary period, employees may be transferred back to their prior position, if, in the Employer's sole discretion, they do not meet the required work standards of the new position, or, in the employee's sole discretion, their work performance is not satisfactory.

Newly hired employees promoted while serving a new hire probationary period shall complete a full probationary period in the new position before being granted regular status.

Demoted or transferred employees may have the trial period waived upon the agreement of the Department Head and County Administration Department.

Vacation benefits will be accrued by the probationary employee, but these benefits cannot be used until after three months of the probationary period. Sick leave will be accrued and may be used during this period up to the amount accrued.

Benefits During Probation:

Probationary employees who are eligible for County-paid insurance benefits must first meet the eligibility and/or the waiting period requirements for these benefits.

Personnel Policy Manual

SEPARATION FROM EMPLOYMENT

Purpose

The County and the employee have certain obligations when an employee ceases to work for the County. The purpose of this policy is to define those obligations and provide consistent methods for addressing them.

Policy

An employee may end their County employment by either voluntary or involuntary means. The employee shall provide adequate notice of a voluntary resignation. The County shall provide the employee with adequate notice in the case of an involuntary termination.

Procedure

Voluntary Resignation:

Employees who wish to resign in good standing shall provide written notice to their immediate supervisor of their intent to resign. Depending on the situation, an employee may be required to complete certain forms at the time of their resignation.

A non-supervisory employee is expected to provide a ten (10) working day notice of their intent to resign, exclusive of time off, prior to the intended resignation date. A supervisory employee is expected to provide a twenty (20) working day notice, exclusive of any time off, prior to the intended resignation date.

Vacation can be used during the resignation period, but only if approved by the County Administrator.

The employee's Supervisor shall notify the County Administration Department of the acceptance of the employee's resignation notice as submitted and provide written notification of acceptance to the employee. In some situations, the Supervisor may assess that it is in the best interest of the County to allow a shorter notice period. In these cases, the Supervisor shall discuss a waiver of the expected notice period with the County Administration Department.

An employee who does not submit a resignation in compliance with the requirements of this policy may be considered as having not resigned in good standing. An employee who does not resign in good standing shall: 1) Not be considered eligible for reinstatement; 2) not be eligible for post-employment pay; and 3) have the fact recorded in the employee's personnel record.

Involuntary Termination:

An employee may be involuntarily terminated consistent with the Employee Discipline and Discharge Policy. If an employee is involuntarily terminated they would not be eligible for post-employment pay.

Under no circumstances shall an employee be discharged without having the County Administrator review the action.

Resignation by Failure to Report to Work:

An employee who is absent from work for a period of three (3) days or more without notifying their immediate Supervisor of the reasons for the absence and receiving permission to remain away from work, shall be considered as having resigned without notice and not in good standing. This rule shall also apply to an employee who fails to return within three (3) days of the expiration of an authorized leave. If the failure to contact the Supervisor was caused by unavoidable circumstances, the Supervisor may waive this provision.

Personnel Policy Manual

Layoffs

Purpose

When a reduction of the workforce is necessary, the County intends to follow consistent methods and inform employees regarding the process. The purpose of this policy is to define consistent methods and process in the event of a layoff.

Policy

The County may determine that workforce adjustments in terms of numbers and skills of employees are needed to meet the service requirements and fiscal responsibilities of the organization.

Procedure

Order of Layoff:

If it becomes necessary to reduce the workforce, the County shall implement a layoff by classification within a department, in inverse order of classification seniority. Part-time seniority lists shall be exhausted prior to full-time seniority lists. Where it is determined that two or more persons in the classification have equal seniority, the employee with the lowest rating on the most recent performance appraisal shall be placed on the layoff list first.

Layoff Notice:

Whenever possible the County will provide affected employees a notice of reduction in workforce at least five (5) working days in advance of the effective date of the layoff.

Demotion or Transfer in Lieu of a Layoff:

A regular employee about to be laid off may request to demote or transfer to replace an employee with less seniority in the same or lower classification, provided the affected employee has previously worked in that classification. Such request shall be submitted to the Department Head in writing. The request will be evaluated by the Department Head and the County Administrator to determine eligibility and appropriate action. Any employee who requests and receives a demotion or transfer to avoid a layoff shall be placed in the salary range of the new job classification into which they have demoted or transferred. In no case shall a part-time employee replace a full-time employee.

Recall List:

For a period of one (1) year, an employee affected by a layoff will be placed on a

recall list for the classification most recently held. An employee exercising their right to demote or transfer to avoid a layoff shall be placed on the appropriate recall list related to the position from which they demoted or transferred, for a period of one (1) year.

Seniority:

Employees will retain the seniority they had accrued prior to layoff, but shall not accrue additional seniority during the time they are on layoff status.

Recall from Layoff:

Recall from layoff shall be by classification, in inverse order of layoff. When an individual accepts a recall, their name shall be removed from the recall list. Upon recall from layoff, the employee's seniority and leave accrual rate shall be reinstated to those in place immediately prior to the layoff. Upon recall from layoff, the employee's available leave balances shall be restored to the level(s) immediately prior to the layoff, reduced by any severance payout resulting from the layoff.

Failure to Report to Work following Recall:

If an employee does not return to work upon recall, on the scheduled date as directed by the County, or an extended date mutually acceptable to the employee and the County, the employee shall automatically have terminated their employment.

Personnel Policy Manual

Grievance and Dispute Resolution

Purpose

The County wishes to establish a consistent and fair process for employees to raise and seek resolution of disputes regarding in appropriate application of County policies.

Policy

The County recognizes that open and effective communication is an essential ingredient for employee satisfaction and productivity. It is the policy of the County to encourage communication between employees and management. Beyond that open communication, the County shall establish an employee dispute resolution procedure which employees may use to resolve personnel actions which they believe adversely impact the terms, conditions, or status of their employment, without fear of reprisal. Individuals not covered under the Dispute Resolution and Personnel Board of Appeals Rules for termination proceeding are identified in the introduction to these policies.

Dispute Resolution Objectives:

1. To ensure that employees receive equitable treatment.
2. To provide employees with a prompt and accessible procedure for expressing dissatisfaction in regard to work related matters.
3. To foster sound employee relations through communication and resolution of work-related problems.

Guidelines:

1. Dispute resolution meetings shall be scheduled at mutually satisfactory times.
2. Employees and supervisors may request the assistance of the County Administration Department at any time.
3. Information will be treated with discretion by all persons involved.
4. It is not the intention of the County Board, by establishment of this procedure, to grant an employee a second opportunity to litigate an issue which has already been litigated in any other administrative or judicial proceeding.

Procedure

Step 1- An employee with a dispute shall discuss the concern within seven (7) calendar days of its occurrence, with the manager or supervisor with whom they have a dispute. The employee may be accompanied by the counsel of his/her choice. The supervisor shall investigate the complaint, discuss the dispute with the employee, and provide an oral response to the employee within seven (7) calendar days from the date the dispute was presented. Where the organizational structure²⁹ does not provide a level of supervision

between the Department Head and the employee, a dispute may be presented directly to the Department Head as set forth in Step 2. The supervisor or Department Head, in consultation with the County Administrator, will explain the next appeal step if the problem is not solved.

Step 2 – If the employee is not satisfied with the supervisor's response, the employee may present the dispute, in writing, to the Department Head within fourteen (14) calendar days of the response received in Step 1. The written statement of dispute shall include: the nature of the dispute, the facts on which it is based, the provision(s) of these policies or the County work rules violated, and the remedy requested. The Department Head shall investigate the complaint, discuss the dispute with the employee, and provide a written response to the employee within fourteen (14) calendar days of receiving the written statement.

Step 3 – A dispute not resolved in Step 2 may be appealed to the Personnel Committee using the same presentation procedures outlined in Step 2. The Personnel Committee shall investigate the dispute and alleged violation of these policies. The decision of the Personnel Committee shall be final, with the exception of discharge where the employee may request a hearing before the Personnel Board of Appeals. The decision of the Personnel Committee shall be provided in writing to the employee within twenty-one (21) calendar days following receipt of the appealed dispute.

Appeals Procedure:

Where an employee dispute involving discharge cannot be satisfactorily resolved in the three (3) steps of the Dispute Resolution Procedure, the appeal procedure outlined below shall be followed:

If a discharged employee is not satisfied with the County Board or designee's response, the employee may present the dispute in writing to the County Administrator within fourteen (14) calendar days of the response received in Step 3, for a hearing by the Personnel Board of Appeals.

Upon receipt of the written request to the County Administrator, the request shall be processed as defined in the Personnel Board of Appeals Procedural Rules.

Decision:

The decision of the Personnel Board of Appeals shall be based upon substantial and competent evidence. The Personnel Board of Appeals shall make written findings of fact, decision, and order within sixty (60) calendar days of the filing. All records of the proceedings shall be kept on file in the County Administration Department. Findings, decisions, orders, and any reports of the Personnel Board of Appeals shall be submitted to the County Board for action. Except that, to the extent required with respect to the employees of departments and agencies paid in full or in part by federal funds, the findings of the Personnel Board of Appeals shall be binding and final in those circumstances necessary to conform to any valid federal or state regulations affecting the department or position.

Time Limits:

If the dispute is not presented within the time periods set forth above, it shall be considered waived. If a dispute is not appealed to the next step within the specified time limit, it shall be considered settled on the basis of the last answer. If the proper authority does not answer a complaint or appeal thereof within the specified time limits, the employee shall treat the dispute as denied and may appeal to the next step. The time limit in each step may be extended by mutual agreement of the employee and the authority involved in the step.

Reprisals Prohibited:

No employee shall be disciplined for seeking redress through this procedure or as a result of testimony in accordance with the provisions of these policies. Retaliation based on an employee exercising their rights through this procedure or participating to provide testimony during proceedings is prohibited.

Personnel Policy Manual

PERSONNEL RECORDS, FORMS & TRANSACTIONS

Purpose

In order to produce required reports and maintain personnel records, the County Administrator shall implement the necessary forms and systems.

Policy

The County Administrator shall develop, install or implement appropriate systems and forms to allow employees, applicants, supervisors, and other interested parties to submit and retrieve personnel information, to have records kept, and reports extracted. The County Administrator shall also provide assistance to Supervisors, Managers, Department Heads, and Elected Officials in the keeping of records regarding actions concerning employees in their area of responsibility.

Procedure

The County Administrator shall establish and maintain files on each employee working for the County, and include: their application, selection process information, pre-placement assessment results, proof of initial qualifications, orientation checklist(s), training records, performance evaluations, compensation, benefits participation, promotions, discipline, commendations and other personnel records.

To ensure privacy to the employee and maintain the validity of employment records, Department Heads/Supervisors and authorized administrative staff will only have access to certain personnel file information if their work reasonably requires access for purposes prescribed by the County. Representative of government, County Board members, law enforcement agencies, agents, insurers, or representatives of the County, in the course of their duties, may also be allowed access to file information. Authorized employees must notify the County Administrator for approval prior to accessing any personnel file information.

Employee Access to Records:

Employees have the right to review their personnel files, and may do so by submitting a written request to County Administration to review their Personnel file once every six months. County Administration will respond within five days following the request and an employee shall be provided opportunity to review their personnel file in accordance with the provisions of Minnesota Statute 181.961. The County Administrator shall answer questions regarding the file contents and arrange for any requested copy of file materials to be provided.

Former employees may review their file once a year for as long as the file is maintained.

Employee who dispute information in their personnel file may request that the County remove or revise the disputed information. If the County does not agree to the request,

employees may submit a written statement specifically identifying the disputed information and explaining the employee's position, not to exceed five pages, to be placed in their file. This position statement will be included in the personnel file for as long as the County maintains the record.

Employees requesting their personnel files in good faith are protected from retaliation. Should the County be found to be in violation of the law, it will follow the Department of Labor's guidelines for remedies.

Reference Requests:

Department Heads and Supervisors shall refer all requests from outside organizations for references on current or previous employees to the County Administration Department.

Personnel Policy Manual

HOURS OF WORK, ATTENDANCE, & TIME REPORTING

Purpose

Work schedules are designed to meet the needs of the residents of the County. Department Heads and Supervisors determine employee work schedules. The County intends to pay exempt and non-exempt staff consistently with the intent of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), while meeting a reasonable level of public accountability regarding their work time.

Policy

Department Heads or their designee shall schedule the work hours of employees to meet the service delivery needs of the County residents and the needs of the Department.

All non-exempt employees are to record their hours worked through the E-Time or Costrite System. Non-exempt employees are to record their hours worked accurately, including deducting unpaid meal break time. Employees should begin working at their regularly scheduled start time and attend to restroom or other personal business prior to their start time. Supervisors must approve each employee's hours in E-time or Costrite before sending it to Payroll on the specified deadline of each pay period.

Wages are paid bi-weekly. Paychecks will be distributed on Fridays for the previous two weeks of work ending on the previous Saturday. Employees are paid by direct deposit. Employees must fill out a direct deposit form upon hire to have their paycheck directly deposited into the bank account of their choice.

Employees are responsible for notifying payroll of any changes to or errors in their deductions. Appropriate corrections are generally reflected in the next paycheck.

Employees will generally advance from one step to the next on the first day of the pay period closest to each employee's anniversary date, for full-time employees, and after 2,080 hours for part-time employees. However, pay progression is ultimately determined at the discretion of County Administration and each employee's Department Head/Supervisor annually.

Employees' regular and punctual attendance at work supports effective business operations of the County and provision of services to the public. Employees shall comply with attendance requirements, time recording, and time reporting procedures within their Department or Office. Each Department Head is responsible to ensure compliance with procedures within their Department.

Excessive absenteeism and/or tardiness are not acceptable and disciplinary action will be taken. Wilkin County reserves the right to determine what is excessive absenteeism and

tardiness and the appropriate level of disciplinary action to take, depending on the circumstances.

In situations where employees will be absent or late, they must notify their Department Head or County Administration as soon as they are aware, preferably before the start of the work day, but no later than 15 minutes after their scheduled start time. Employees must speak directly with their Supervisor/Department Head or County Administration to explain the reason for the absence and when they expect to arrive or return to work. Leaving a voicemail message is not sufficient notification. Failure to notify an immediate Supervisor/Department Head or County Administration is considered an unauthorized absence and may result in discipline, up to and including termination.

Any unplanned or unauthorized absence will be automatically deducted from the employee's paid vacation, if any is available.

The County shall pay exempt and non-exempt non-bargaining staff in a consistent manner with their appointment as a full-time or part-time employee and in compliance with the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and Minnesota Statutes.

Any employee who fails to observe attendance or time reporting requirements may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Procedure

Non-Exempt Employee Scheduling and Time Reporting:

1. The Department Head or designee shall determine the work schedule for non-exempt employees, including paid rest periods of fifteen (15) minutes for each four (4) hour period of work and a mandatory 30-minute unpaid meal period when working eight or more consecutive hours, not to exceed one (1) hour in total length.
2. Employees must be completely relieved from duty during meal breaks. If the employee is not completely relieved from duty, the meal period must be counted as hours worked. For example, an employee who is required to remain at his or her desk while eating lunch and regularly answers the telephone and refers callers is working. Meal or rest breaks cannot be taken at the beginning or end of a shift.
3. Non-exempt employees shall prepare, sign, and submit their time each pay period indicating their work time, as well as any use of paid leave, through the E-Time or the Cost-rite system. Non-exempt employees are to record their hours worked accurately, including deducting unpaid meal break time.
4. The foundation of time reporting for non-exempt staff is a 40-hour workweek for the defined seven-day periods within the two-week pay period. Flexing time within each seven-day period may be permitted with supervisory approval.

5. Paid time and paid leave shall be accounted for in blocks of 15 minutes or quarter-hours unless the leave bank is being exhausted at the time leave is taken and there are fractions of hours smaller than a quarter of an hour available in the leave bank.
6. For purposes of computing overtime, the workweek shall begin at 12:00 AM Sunday and end at 11:59 PM on Saturday. The County Sheriff may establish different work periods consistent with FLSA requirements within the Sheriff's Office.
7. Any hours worked beyond the normal workweek require prior supervisory approval.
8. Department Heads or supervisors will not permit employees to work off the clock without recording the time as hours worked.
9. Repeated failure to accurately report hours worked in any way is cause for disciplinary action and/or dismissal.

OVERTIME PROVISIONS

1. Wilkin County will follow the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) for non-exempt employees as it relates to hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek.
2. Accumulated leave hours, sick, vacation, holiday, and compensatory time shall not be included in the definition of "hours worked" for purposes of calculating overtime.
3. Employees must flex their schedules to the greatest extent possible to avoid incurring overtime. No employee shall be allowed to accrue compensatory time off unless otherwise provided by a collective bargaining agreement or other separate employment agreement.
4. All overtime hours worked shall be authorized in advance by the Department Head or designee, unless a departmental rule states otherwise. All records of overtime hours worked must be maintained and reported on the employee's timesheet.
5. Upon approval of the Department Head, non-exempt employees are eligible for overtime compensation at the rate of one and one-half times their regular base wage for actual hours worked in excess of 40 hours per workweek.
6. When an employee is required to travel in connection with a temporary assignment, payment of overtime during this period is to be determined by the immediate Supervisor on the basis of the circumstances involved and in accordance with applicable law.

7. If a non-exempt employee promotes to an exempt position, their compensatory hours shall be cashed out at the non-exempt rate prior to promotion.

Exempt Employee Scheduling and Time Reporting:

1. The Department Head or designee shall determine the work schedule for exempt employees. Exempt employees are paid on a salary basis. This means they receive a predetermined amount of pay each pay period and are not paid by the hour. Their pay does not vary based on the quality or quantity of work performed, and they receive their full weekly salary for any week in which any work is performed. The only exception to this are the following circumstances:
 - The exempt employee has not sought permission to use accrued leave; or
 - The exempt employee has sought permission to use accrued leave and has been denied permission; or
 - The employee employee's accrued leave bank has been exhausted, or
 - The employee chooses to use leave without pay (LWOP)

In the above circumstances the exempt employee's pay will be reduced when absent for more than one full day (8 hours).

2. Exempt employees shall submit their time, through the E-Time system, each pay period indicating their work time and any use of paid leave to ensure that the employee's time off is accurately tracked in our system.
3. The foundation of time reporting for full-time exempt staff is an average of 80 hours per two-week pay period. Flexing time between the weeks within a pay period is appropriate (e.g., working 50 hours one week and 30 hours the next week).
4. Paid time and paid leave shall only be accounted for if in excess of one (1) hour. If absent less than one hour paid leave will not be deducted from accruals.
5. Under no circumstances shall an exempt non-bargaining employee receive non-exempt overtime paid at time and one half.
6. If an exempt employee believes that an improper deduction has been made from his or her salary, the employee should submit a written complaint to County Administration. The County will evaluate the complaint and promptly reimburse the employee if the deduction was improper, or will meet with the employee to explain why the deduction was proper.

Personnel Policy Manual

Flexible Workplace Program Policy

Purpose

This policy is intended to define acceptable and unacceptable uses of flexible work arrangements while engaged in activities or duties related to County employment. This program is intended to foster a positive, flexible work environment by meeting the needs of the applicable department and employee while reinforcing and recognizing positive communication and working relationships between employees and management. Alternative schedules are not appropriate for every department, position or employee at the County. Based upon department needs, position requirements and/or employee performance, some employees may not be eligible for participation in the Flexible Workplace Program. The approval or denial of modified work hours/schedules are not subject to appeal or the grievance process.

Policy

Flexible work schedules for regular full-time employees may be approved pursuant to the County's Flexible Workplace Program, which has been developed to provide alternative work arrangements for County employees in certain situations. Flexible Schedules are pre-arranged, repeating, regular work hours for the units/employees who use them. Flexible Schedules for individual employees must be pre-approved, in writing, by the Department Head, or their designee. Employee requests must include all relevant facts and requested conditions.

Participation in the Flexible Workplace Program does not change the basic terms and conditions of employment with the County. Modified work hours/schedules arranged under this policy are to be practiced within a clearly defined time frame (start date and end date). Department Heads may discontinue schedules approved in accordance with this policy at any time. Flexible schedules, if approved, are on a case by case basis for a timeframe determined by the Department Head with no long-term guarantee. Approval of continued flexible schedule is at the discretion of the supervisor. Flexible hours shall not be permitted where such has an adverse impact on the employer's operation or on other employees.

Flexible schedules shall be reviewed for consideration of their effectiveness and continuation yearly as a part of the yearly evaluation process. Unless arrangements have been made, in accordance with leave policies, employees are to be present at work during all regularly scheduled hours. Unexcused absence and tardiness shall be reasons for disciplinary action. Should a Holiday fall on a scheduled day off, employees on Flexible Schedules shall take the following day as a Holiday. Eight hours will be the maximum allowed for Holiday pay unless otherwise stated in a bargaining agreement.

Compensatory time or paid time off hours should be entered to complete the regularly scheduled day.

Note: Not all positions will be suited to utilize alternative schedules due to specific job responsibilities. An alternative work schedule is a privilege and not an entitlement. Schedules for an entire department, which deviate from normal operating business hours, must receive County Administrator approval.

Flexible work assignments are permitted in certain departments and may include daily flexible work hours or modified work schedules (4-10 hour days, etc.). Schedules should be tailored to responsiveness and productivity: **service to the public comes first, followed by departmental needs.**

Any flexible work schedule arrangement made will be on a trial basis for the first three months, and may be discontinued, at will, at any time at the request of either the employee or the County.

Performance Expectations

Evaluation of employee performance during the trial period of an agreement will include weekly face-to-face meetings to discuss work progress and problems. At the conclusion of the trial period the supervisor will make recommendations for continuance or modifications.

Flexible Workplace Program Guidelines

In an effort to ensure consistent and uniform guidelines, the following rules apply to the Flexible Workplace Program:

1. All employee requests to participate in the Flexible Workplace Program shall be submitted to the employee's Department Head. The Department Head shall submit the request to the County Administration for review and approval.
2. Each department manager must ensure complete departmental coverage at all times, unless otherwise approved by the County Administrator.
3. When making the decision to approve a flexible work assignment; the employee's performance shall be considered a factor in that decision.
4. Modified work schedules that result in additional overtime liability shall not be allowed, except in extenuating circumstances as authorized by the Department Head.
5. Employees shall not be allowed to start work earlier than 7:00 a.m. or after 6 p.m., unless approved by the Department Head.
6. The Department Head, prior to the effective date of the flextime work schedule, shall approve flex/modified schedules. Employees shall not be allowed to randomly, on any given day, decide what time to arrive or leave.
7. Regular full-time employees working on a modified work schedules, i.e. four-day workweek, shall work the required 40 hours in that workweek.

8. Vacation, sick, and other leaves shall be charged at the rate of actual hours not worked on a scheduled workday.
9. If a scheduled holiday occurs while an employee is on a modified work schedule, i.e. 4-10 hour days, he/she shall only receive 8 hours pay for the scheduled holiday, and may have to charge accrued vacation or compensatory time for the extended day on the scheduled holiday. During a holiday week, there shall be no modified work scheduling if there is additional overtime liability because of the scheduled holiday off, except in extenuating circumstances as authorized by the Department Head.
10. Flextime core hours are between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Depending on the approved schedule, some employees may come in early and leave early and others will come in late and leave late in order to assure complete coverage during public/customer service hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
11. Employees may be required to revert to the normal workday schedule (5 days a week) in order to cover his/her section during periods of extended vacation or sick leave, or other circumstances as deemed appropriate by the Department Head.
12. Employees who flex schedules to allow for a longer workday are expected to include a 30-minutes non-paid meal break within their workday.
13. Discontinuance or denial of flexible work hours or modified work scheduling is not subject to appeal or the grievance process.
14. Employees who are not exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act will be required to record all hours worked. Hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week, will require the advance approval of the supervisor. Failure to comply with this requirement can result in the immediate cessation of the flexible work schedule agreement.

Personnel Policy Manual

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Purpose

In order to ensure that employees are performing work in a manner that is efficient, cost-effective and responsible, and that they are recognized for the quality of their work, the County shall implement and maintain an effective performance management system.

Policy

Each employee is required to have a formal written performance evaluation at least once per year at about the same time as their anniversary dates. Supervisors who do not complete evaluations in a timely manner shall be subject to the disciplinary process. The performance management system shall be based on accurate classification and/or job descriptions, job skills and competencies, behavioral and conduct expectations, and results-oriented performance goals. It shall be designed and used to assist and encourage each employee to reach their maximum potential and enhance their delivery of the services provided by the County.

Procedure

The most important factors to the success of a performance management system functioning effectively are clear communication between supervisor and employee and the accurate rating of employee performance, supported by on-going training.

The performance evaluation shall be used to clarify expectations and goals, to recognize excellence in work methods, accomplishments and results, to counsel employees in areas needing change, and to identify training and development needs and opportunities. Standards against which performance is to be measured shall be specific, measurable, related to quality, quantity, reliability and timeliness of work, or other reasonable performance criteria determined by the Supervisor.

The Supervisor/Department Head shall observe the following values in connection with the use of its performance evaluation form and system:

<u>Rating</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Unsatisfactory	0
Learner	1, 2, or 3
Fully Qualified	4, 5, 6, or 7
Exceptional	8, 9, or 10

Each employee's overall performance evaluation rating shall be determined by calculating a simple average of all applicable evaluation factors. If an employee's simple average is deemed "Unsatisfactory" or "Learner" an employee will not receive their step for that calendar year.

The County Administration Department shall train County employees on the performance management system, notify them of evaluation deadlines and requirements, provide consultation on goal setting and evaluation methods, and retain copies of all formal evaluations, including employee comments, if any exist.

Department Heads shall ensure that each employee receives formal and informal performance feedback from their immediate Supervisor.

The immediate Supervisor assigns and directs the employee's work, checks or inspects work for proper methods and results, and is immediately responsible for the work of the employee.

The immediate Supervisor shall, at least annually, formally evaluate the performance of each employee, provide each employee feedback on their work performance and provide a written summary of that evaluation on the Performance Evaluation Form to the employee and to the County Administration Department.

The Supervisor evaluating the performance of an employee must be familiar with the duties of the position and the work performed by the employee. In the case where an employee has had more than one immediate Supervisor during the rating period, the Supervisor at the time of the evaluation shall prepare and deliver the evaluation, preferably, in consultation with the previous Supervisor(s).

The Supervisor conducting the evaluation shall notify the employee in advance of the evaluation and solicit employee input to the evaluation, allowing the employee adequate time to assess their own performance, report their accomplishments, suggest goals, and prepare any questions or suggestions regarding the duties of the position.

The Supervisor shall also hold at least one documented informal performance feedback discussion with each employee to address progress midway between their annual reviews, and midway during the new hire probationary period or promotional trial period.

Supervisors must ensure that employees receive meaningful and objective evaluations of their work. They must use the County established ratings accurately and consistently, both within their departments and work units as well as across the organization. There are no quotas regarding overall ratings. It is expected that there will be a variety of ratings reflecting the work of employees each year across the organization.

Supervisors giving an overall “learner or unsatisfactory” rating to an employee shall make the employee aware of the deficiencies in their performance prior to the annual evaluation. Supervisors in these situations shall inform the employee of the deficiencies in their performance, what they need to do to correct the performance gap, provide a timeline for the necessary improvements, and identify the consequences of not making the required improvements.

The employee shall participate in the performance management process by providing input for the evaluation process (which may include self-evaluations), attending the evaluation

meeting, and signing off on the evaluation to indicate receipt of the evaluation, not necessarily agreement with its content. Employees may provide written comments within two weeks following the evaluation, to be included with the evaluation and placed in the Personnel File. Performance evaluations are not subject to the grievance process.

In addition to the annual formal performance evaluations, employees shall also be evaluated under the following conditions:

- At the completion of three month's service with the County, supervisors shall complete, at a minimum, an informal performance discussion with the employee.
- Prior to the completion of the probationary period for newly hired employees, or trial period for employees promoted or reinstated.
- Any time an employee's performance has changed significantly, positively or negatively.
- Any time the supervisor feels that it is in the best interest of the employee or the County.

Personnel Policy Manual

DISABILITY AND WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATION

Purpose

Wilkin County does not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in regard to application procedures, hiring, advancement, discharge, compensation, training, or other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment. Wilkin County is committed to complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act as well as the State of Minnesota's Human Rights Act.

Policy

Applicants may request a reasonable accommodation during a selection process. These applicants will be given the same consideration as other applicants. The County will provide a reasonable accommodation for qualified applicants if it does not cause an undue hardship or direct threat to health or safety of themselves or others in the workplace.

An employee may request a reasonable accommodation to perform the essential functions of their job. The County will grant a reasonable accommodation if it does not cause an undue hardship or direct threat to health or safety of themselves or others in the workplace.

The County will not tolerate any acts of retaliation against employees who have requested and/or received an accommodation.

Procedure

Employee Responsibility:

Employees who believe they need an accommodation to perform the essential functions of their job may be required to complete an Accommodation Request Form, located on the County's internal website, which identifies limitations arising from the disability and potential reasonable accommodations that would support the employee in performing the essential functions of the job. Employees shall submit the completed form to the County Administration Department. Medical documentation may be needed to support the request.

Supervisors' Responsibility:

Supervisors who receive a verbal request for an accommodation shall direct the employee to complete the Accommodation Request Form. Supervisors shall contact the County Administration Department prior to taking any action.

County Administration Department Responsibility:

County Administration Department will work with Supervisors to evaluate the impact of the limitations arising from the disability and determine whether there is a potential reasonable accommodation that could enable the employee to perform the essential functions of the job.

County Administration staff shall respond to each accommodation request in writing. If a reasonable accommodation is granted, the Supervisor and County Administrator will periodically evaluate its effectiveness. The County reserves the right to discontinue or modify the accommodation based on the results of the periodic review.

Personnel Policy Manual

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

Purpose

In order to avoid conflicts of interest between County employment and other employment situations, the County requires employees to request approval for any additional employment or contract work.

Policy

An employee shall not engage in any employment, private enterprise, participate in any professional activity or perform any act or service during or outside their employment with the County, which would negatively affect the employee's ability to perform the duties of their position with the County.

County employees shall obtain approval for outside employment, contract work, or self-employment prior to beginning a job in addition to the one they hold with the County.

Procedure

Employees shall notify their Department Head, by submitting the outside employment form, of their intent to seek outside compensated employment, including the nature, location and employer, and working hours. The Department Head shall determine whether the outside compensated employment or activity creates a conflict of interest with County employment. The Department Head shall indicate approval or disapproval and forward to the County Administration Department. The form is filed in the employee's personnel file.

Outside employment is to be regarded as secondary to regular County employment and must not interfere with the availability of employees for emergency or call-in duty. Employees may not engage in any outside occupation, employment, or business which might hinder the impartial, objective, or efficient performance of their public duties or create a conflict of interest with their County employment.

An employee's failure to disclose non-County compensated employment may be grounds for disciplinary action, including suspension or termination.

Employees participating in non-compensated or volunteer activities are generally encouraged to continue in such participation. Non-compensated or volunteer activities for organizations that have a financial relationship with the County are subject to the same conflict of interest rules as compensated employment. The employee participating in the volunteer activity with such an organization shall discuss the activity with their Department Head. If the employee and the Department Head do not agree on the potential for conflict, the County Administrator will make a determination as to actual or apparent conflict

of interest, whose decision shall be final.

Employees shall submit the request for approval of outside employment at the beginning of each calendar year following the initial approval, for their continuing outside employment in that position.

Personnel Policy Manual

TELEWORK POLICY

Purpose

The County recognizes the benefit of providing flexible remote work location options while using technology to enhance customer service, increase employee productivity and morale, reduce the cost and environmental impact of commuting, and reduce the need to expand County office and parking space. Under certain circumstances, telework arrangements may also serve as effective strategies to support employee health, safety, and productivity during times when reporting to the typical work site is not prudent or not feasible. The flexibility offered through telework arrangements supports the County's objectives to effectively deliver public services through a qualified and engaged workforce focused on service excellence.

Policy

The County supports telework as an alternative work arrangement for County employees when both the employee's performance and the job are suited to such an arrangement. A telework arrangement may be considered by the County when it would benefit the county, the employee, and the community.

Telework allows employees to regularly work at home or at a suitable designated County approved alternative location that is not a County owned or leased space, for all or a portion of the workweek. Working at home on occasion, after hours, or as needed such as on a weekend to complete a project is not considered a telework arrangement as addressed in this policy.

Alternate work sites and telecommuting require support and agreement from the Department Head and approval of the County Administrator. Some provisions of this policy may not apply when employees have supervisory approval to mobile work on a case-by-case, situational, and temporary basis (not lasting longer than 20 days in a calendar year) to meet a business need(s) of the County. **Extenuating circumstances resulting in an employee going above the 20 days in a calendar year must receive Department Head and County Administrator approval.**

Telework is a cooperative arrangement between the employee and their supervisor and department head, and serves as an alternative method of meeting the requirements of the County to effectively deliver high quality public service. Telework is a management tool that allows for flexibility in work options and may serve as a positive arrangement for qualified employees who are committed to engaging in an effective remote work arrangement. It is not a countywide benefit, and employees do not have the right to telework. Alternate work sites and telecommuting is not appropriate for every job at the County. Any approved telework arrangement will be on a trial bases for the first three months. A telework arrangement may be discontinued at will and at any time at the request of either the teleworker or the County, except in circumstances when the County has specifically designated the role as a telework-only position and/or when the County has determined the work must be performed⁴⁸ remotely based on health, safety, or other comparable considerations.

Telework determinations remain a management right. Whether or not an employee is approved to telework or if a telework arrangement is discontinued, these decisions are not subject to a grievance process under any applicable collective bargaining agreement or appeal under the county's policies.

The necessary tools, technology, and services must be readily available at the alternate work site. The County will provide the necessary technology equipment to perform the employee's duties. The County will not assume responsibility for operating costs, home maintenance, or other costs incurred by the employee in the use of a residence for telecommuting. (i.e. if an employee voluntarily opts to accept a telecommuting agreement, the County will not reimburse costs).

An employee's compensation and benefits, and the terms and conditions of employment will not change as a result of alternate work location or telecommuting. An employee who works from an alternate location or telecommutes is still accountable to all County policies, departmental rules, collective bargaining agreements and work direction. In addition, telework arrangements will comply with appropriate state and federal laws including the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Telework in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment with Wilkin County. Employees at alternate work sites must maintain communications with Supervisors as directed.

Wilkin County requires that a telework arrangement be established in accordance with this policy. Important provisions for successful telework arrangements are outlined in the County's ***Telework Program Guidelines***. Additional requirements and provisions may be specified related to telework arrangements at the department or work unit level based on the specific work requirements of that area as well as the nature and requirements of the job.

Telework arrangements are based primarily on:

- The needs of the job, the department, and the organization; and
- The employee's demonstrated readiness to be an effective teleworker including:
 - Past and present levels of performance
 - Consistent demonstration of self-direction and motivation
 - Availability of a suitable remote office environment
 - Access to technology and communication requirements

Telework is not a substitute arrangement for child and/or elder dependent care or an arrangement to accommodate personal or other business endeavors.

Telework is a privilege, and employees participating in this option must maintain a high level of accountability in their work and public service delivery. Teleworkers should avoid both actual and apparent conflicts with the general public's expectations for responsible, effective, and committed public service while working under a telework arrangement.

Violations of this ***Telework Policy***, the ***Telework Program Guidelines***, ***Telework Program Agreement*** and any associated program requirements and expectations may result in discontinuation of a telework arrangement and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Procedure and Eligibility

Telework is generally a voluntary work arrangement, in which both the employee and supervisor agree on the benefits of telework, taking into account the needs of the client/customer, the job, the work group, the County; the employee's level of performance, self-direction and motivation; and the employee's remote office environment and availability of technology and communication systems to support effective remote work. Telework is not an entitlement or contractual benefit. Telework determinations remain a management right. Whether or not an employee is approved to telework or if a telework arrangement is discontinued, these decisions are not subject to a grievance process under any applicable collective bargaining agreement or appeal.

Under certain circumstances, telework may be a required work arrangement – for example during times of natural disaster, pandemic, or other situations when county leadership determines that remote work arrangements best support employee and workplace health and safety. In addition, the county may designate certain jobs or positions to be performed primarily via telework arrangements when the job or position is particularly suited to be successfully performed via remote work arrangement and such designation is in the best interests of the organization and public.

Telework is not a viable work arrangement for all positions or well-suited to all employees. Telework is not considered a contract or guarantee of continued employment. County clients and customers should detect no difference in the quality or timelines of service rendered from the primary office or a County approved telework location.

General Provisions:

- Telework needs to be consistent with the type and level of work performed at a county work location. It must meet or exceed customer service expectations and not negatively impact the quality or timeliness of work performance, service delivery, and/or office coverage.
- Minimum bandwidth requirement is 10MB/10MB
- To assess the effectiveness of telework, any approved telework agreement should have clearly defined objectives, tasks and deliverables, and time frames.
- The duties of an employee approved for telework should be able to be performed without close supervision and without unreasonable reliance on other employees at the county work location.
- While teleworking, an employee's work duties cannot require frequent direct face-to-face contact with others in a county facility or regular access to special equipment only available at a county work location.
- Employee must have an adequate telework location, including sufficient internet service and equipment.
- Employee must be available to travel to and perform work at the county work location upon request by the supervisor as necessary.
- The employee's work status, primary job duties, obligations, responsibilities, and conditions of employment with the County remain unchanged.
- Salary, retirement benefits, and insurance coverage remain unchanged by a change in work location resulting from a telework arrangement.
- Teleworkers may be required to provide work progress reports and/or comply with additional requirements specific to the telework arrangement to support

public accountability and the County's ability to monitor the effectiveness and success of the telework arrangement, as well as to ensure the supervisor is able to effectively evaluate the progress and accomplishments of employees participating in this work option.

- Teleworkers may be assigned to conduct work from the telework site as their primary work location throughout their typical work week, or the teleworker may be regularly scheduled to work onsite at County locations for a portion of their typical work week or during specified work weeks. Scheduling and location arrangements must be approved by the supervisor.
- Teleworkers may be required to attend meetings, training, or other activities onsite at County locations and/or to travel to other work or training locations. These expectations may occur on a regularly scheduled basis, and/or may represent deviation from the typical work week, similar to training and travel expectations of County staff who typically work at a County office upon the request by the supervisor.
- Provisions of the applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement and/or County policies must be followed when planning and implementing telework arrangements.
- Telework arrangements must comply with appropriate state and federal laws including the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), which regulates the payment of overtime compensation.
- Telework is not guaranteed for any specific period of time.
- To the extent possible, or as required in accordance with Collective Bargaining Agreement and/or County Policy, individuals will be provided advance notice of a planned change of work location.
- If the remote work arrangement is ended due to employee performance concerns, the typical advance notice period for changes of location may be shortened, to the extent permitted by Collective Bargaining Agreement and/or County Policy.
- Hours of work for employees participating in a telework arrangement will conform to a schedule agreed upon by the employee and their supervisor.
- Telework selection decisions, with primary rationale, are provided to the employee and are documented in the *Telework Application Supervisor Review*.
- All Employees approved to telework, along with their supervisor and/or department head enter into a signed *Telework Program Agreement* before telework begins, indicating agreement to the terms and conditions set out by Wilkin County associated with teleworking.
- Each *Telework Program Agreement* will be reviewed for continued mutual benefit at regular intervals identified by the supervisor and/or department head.
- An employee who changes from one job or position to another is required to complete a new telework application process to facilitate appropriate review of whether the new job and the employee's experiences, knowledge and abilities in relation to the new job are an appropriate fit for a telework arrangement.

Work Schedules

Alternate work sites or telecommuting scheduling should be in accordance with the regular work day or under an approved flexible schedule.

Alternate work schedules shall NOT be listed as "On an as needed basis." It must list the days and times the employee will be telecommuting.

Responsibilities

Department Heads

Department heads set department direction for telework based on the mission, vision, values, workspace availability, department work plan, job duties, available resources, and needs of the department. This may include determinations of positions eligible for telework, telework schedules, and space configuration. Planning for telework must consider department needs for service delivery, customer needs, and space availability. Preparing a work unit for a telework environment includes, but not limited to, the following: completing required training, setting employee expectations, establishing employee schedules/hours, assigning workspace, and setting expectations for meeting structure and attendance.

A Telework agreement form between the employee and the supervisor must be approved by the department head and submitted to County Administration for final approval in order for a telework arrangement to be approved, modified, or terminated.

Managers and Supervisors

Once an employee requests telework, supervisors will make the determination as to whether to approve mobile work for the employee based on an analysis of job duties and employee needs for success. If the supervisor approves telework, the supervisor will also determine the number of hours and/or days per pay period the employee will telework. The supervisor must objectively evaluate, document, and approve telework eligibility based on job-related criteria, including but not limited to, office needs, job duties, adequate resources, workspace availability, and staffing/scheduling considerations. Managers and supervisors should assess the effectiveness, appropriateness, and impact of employee telework arrangements on an ongoing basis.

The supervisor will work with the teleworker to develop a work plan, including emergency backup plans with necessary phone numbers and messaging plan and a plan for the creation, accessibility, storages, retention, and disposal of data.

Telework requires effective workload management and cannot have a negative impact on customers, public perception, or the department's operations. There should be clear expectations set for responding to emails and phone calls during the telework workday and for maintaining regular communications with the teleworker. This should include timely availability and reasonable response times to both their county work location and to any field-based or community work locations. The supervisor may require the employee to attend meetings in-person and may adjust the telework work schedule to meet business needs. When feasible, the supervisor should communicate planned in-person meetings in advance to afford teleworkers reasonable opportunity to adjust their work schedule and work location accordingly.

Supervisors are responsible for effectively managing and creating cohesive teams whether employees telework or work on-site, and must engage employees, stakeholders, and customers as required to meet business needs.

Supervisors may deny a request to telework or revoke the ability to telework for a variety of reasons and without cause. While circumstances may dictate that revoking a telework arrangement may happen with little advance notice, when feasible, supervisors should provide reasonable advance notice of their decision to revoke telework. Examples of reasons to revoke or deny telework include, but are not limited to negative impact on customers, the department's operations, the teleworker's supervisors, co-workers, or other stakeholders; changes in job duties to include more duties that cannot be performed through telework; unacceptable work output or

employee performance; employee noncompliance with county policies, procedures, guidelines or agreements; cost ineffectiveness; and a lack of necessary resources, connectivity, equipment or system access.

Employees

To be approved for telework or be permitted to continue to telework, an employee's alternate work location must meet certain requirements. The alternate work location must be free from hazards that could affect the equipment or teleworker, accommodate any required equipment needed to effectively telework, and must provide privacy and be free of distractions and interruptions.

The telework is responsible for ensuring that the furniture and equipment needed at the alternate work location is ergonomically appropriate and meets county standards. Office supplies are available at the teleworker's county work location and should be obtained there. Written supervisory approval is required for the purchase of office supplies not obtained from the employee's county work location.

To be approved to telework or be permitted to continue to telework, an employee must consistently demonstrate adequate work performance. Teleworkers must maintain a level of work performance and accessibility consistent with or better than what they would provide in the workplace (e.g., phone calls, texts, and emails answered and returned timely, ability to be physically present on-site or in field/community settings to perform time sensitive duties when necessary). Teleworkers must attend meetings as required by their supervisor(s), both in-person and virtually. In-person work meetings or training with other staff and clients are not permitted in an employee's home. Video should be turned on consistent with the use of video by other meeting participants and/or as directed by the supervisor or conference organizer. When an employee is participating in a video conference, they must comply with supervisory expectations regarding appropriate work attire and their background must be professional and consistent with county and departmental policies and practices or must be a county approved virtual background.

Teleworkers must keep their supervisor(s) informed of their current mobile work location to assist in contacting them if necessary and for safety reasons. Teleworkers shall coordinate with their supervisors and co-workers to provide appropriate office coverage. Employees are to notify their supervisor(s) in the event they are not able to perform telework for a period lasting 15 minutes or more in duration (e.g., power or internet outages, family commitments, and/or other unplanned disruptions) and communicate issues that may be negatively impacting work performance to IT and/or their supervisor(s) for timely resolution.

A teleworker who is scheduled to work at their alternate work location on a day when an emergency declaration has been issued may choose to work their normally scheduled hours unless the emergency condition has caused a situation where telework cannot be performed in a manner consistent with this policy (i.e., power or internet outage, children who are not self-sufficient at the alternate work location, unsafe conditions). In those situations, teleworkers must follow their normal procedure for notifying their supervisor.

Employees approved to telework must comply with the approved work schedule and accurately record their work time (e.g., start times, end times, lunch breaks). Earnings associated with telework may be allocated to the state in which the work is deemed to be performed and taxed according to all current, applicable tax laws. Teleworkers are responsible for determining federal and state tax implications of mobile working and for complying with all applicable tax laws.

county work hours. If the activity would not be performed at the county work locations, it should not be performed at the alternate work location. Telework hours are regular hours and may not be used to perform personal activities. Teleworkers may not perform work outside of designated work hours. Just as with regular work hours performed at the county work location, teleworkers are expected to follow policies and procedures for requesting time off to engage in non-work activities and obtain advance supervisory approval for the use of paid leave as well as overtime.

Telework may not be used as an arrangement for dependent care (child, adult and/or elder) or an accommodation for personal, business, or other non-county endeavors. Teleworkers may only have dependents (child, adult, and/or elder) at home during working hours if those dependents are self-sufficient or are being cared for by another person.

The county work location for an employee approved to telework continues to be their permanent work location. Drive time to the county work location from the alternate work location is considered commute time, which is not work time and is not compensable regardless of the time of day of the commute and regardless of the telework schedule. Likewise, mileage between the alternate work location and the county work location is always considered commuting mileage and is not subject to reimbursement regardless of the time of day of the commute and regardless of the telework schedule.

Travel time and reimbursable mileage from an alternate work location to perform work in the field, shall be compensated from either the alternate work location or county work location to the field work location, whichever is shorter in distance and duration. Teleworkers must have and maintain a permanent home address in the state of Minnesota and be ready and available to work at their county work location within a reasonable period of time as established by their supervisor, which will depend on the duties of the position and/or needs of the office (e.g., 15 minutes plus drive time from their alternate work location).

Technology Considerations

To be approved for or be permitted to continue to telework, employees must have sufficient technology resources. Alternate work locations must have reliable internet that meets the required minimum bandwidth as suggested by the IT department which is 10MB/10MB. Teleworkers are responsible for obtaining and paying for necessary internet services at their alternate work location. The IT department does not support any employee-owned network and/or internet service provider equipment and does not provide on-site support at an alternate work location.

In order to facilitate portability between an alternate work location and a county work location, the teleworker will be provided with a county laptop, tablet, or equivalent mobile technology to be used in both the alternate work location and the county work location. It is the teleworker's responsibility to safely and securely transport equipment back and forth to the office. The teleworker must take precautions to ensure all equipment integrity. The teleworker is responsible for all county equipment assigned to them and must report any damage immediately. Additional technology (e.g., computer dock, monitor, keyboard, mouse, print devices) will be made available for teleworkers at a county work location. In limited cases, other equipment (e.g., phone, scanner, printer) may be provided to a teleworker to use in their alternate work location upon the approval of both the teleworker's supervisor and the IT department based on business need. The mobile worker's supervisor will work with the IT department to maintain a record of county owned software, hardware, and other property located at an alternate work location.

Teleworkers are responsible for setup and use of technology equipment in consultation with the IT department when necessary. The teleworker must be sufficiently proficient with technology in

order to be able to establish connectivity with the county's network, troubleshoot simple problems, and work through issues with the aid of IT department staff. The county is responsible for repairing county-owned equipment and issues related to county-owned equipment are to be reported to the IT department. If an issue is unable to be resolved from the alternate work location, the teleworker will be directed to bring the county-owned equipment into the county work location to further troubleshoot the issue(s).

No software may be run on county-owned equipment that is not approved by the IT department. The county may inspect any county-owned equipment and its contents, or any equipment used for telework. The use of hardware, software, data, and supplies provided by the county at the alternate work location is limited to authorized persons and for purposes related only to county business.

All county-owned equipment must be returned immediately to the county upon request, if telework is discontinued, or upon separation from county employment. Employee will be charged the value of the county-owned equipment if not returned to the county with 3 days of request unless the supervisor approves another arrangement. These costs may be recovered through payroll deduction.

Teleworkers will be required to utilize multi-factor authentication and the Wilkin County Virtual Private Network (VPN) software to connect their computer equipment to the county's network. Teleworkers who connect county-owned equipment to a personal wireless network at the alternate work location are required to ensure that the wireless network location is password protected. All county documents are considered the property of the county, whether working at a county or alternate work location.

Miscellaneous Considerations

Teleworkers must continue to comply with the provisions of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), other data privacy legislation including laws regarding the protection of private data, federal tax information (FTI), and adhere to security, software, and licensing requirements. An FTI inspection (which may be conducted virtually) of the alternate work location may be required for telework to be approved or continued.

Teleworkers are required to carry a homeowner's or renter's insurance policy, at their own expense, for the duration of the time they are teleworking. The county is not responsible for loss, damage, or wear of employee-owned equipment, furniture, etc. This includes but not limited to wear on home furnishings, damage resulting from installation of additional phone lines, or accidental damage due to the failure of county equipment.

The county's workers' compensation and employer's liability coverage will continue to exist while the telework is performing work on behalf of the county. For worker's compensation purposes, the alternate work location shall be considered an extension of the county workplace only during times when teleworkers are performing work on behalf of the county. The county is not responsible for injuries to others at the employee's alternate work location. Any work-related injury must be reporting to the teleworker's supervisor immediately using the county's standard injury reporting process

Compliance with County Policies

Current employees and supervisors will receive a copy of this policy via county-wide email or via their supervisor (for employees without email access). A copy of this policy will be posted on the County Administration Department intranet site with other county personnel policies.

All county policies remain in effect for county employees participating in a telework arrangement. All individuals covered by the policy are expected to become familiar with this and other Wilkin County and departmental policies and procedures and comply with them. Violation of this or any other county policy may result in the discontinuation of telework and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination from county employee. Violations may also result in criminal or civil charges.

Requirements

The following must be submitted/reviewed in order to apply for a telework arrangement:

1. Telework Application
2. Telework Program Agreement
3. Telework Program Guidelines
4. A Request to Utilize Telecommuting Acceptable Use Agreement and Confidentiality Agreement
5. Telework Application Supervisor Review

Written work requirements and parameters must be discussed between County Administration, the employee's Supervisor, the Department Head, and the employee prior to beginning any alternate work site or telecommuting. Final County Administrator approval is required.

There must be clear and mutually understood methods that are documented, in writing, for measuring and evaluating the work of, and for holding accountable, an employee who is working at an alternate site or telecommuting.

Personnel Policy Manual

PHASED RETIREMENT OPTION (PRO)

Purpose

The County may wish to exercise the Phased Retirement Option (PRO) and intends to define a consistent process for administering it with eligible employees.

Policy

The County may offer a Phased Retirement Option (PRO) to employees who are members of the Public Employees Retirement Association of MN (PERA) Coordinated and Basic plans if they meet specific eligibility requirements as long as the State Legislature allows, unless revised by the County Board. The choice to offer a PRO agreement to a specific employee is at the sole discretion of the County, and the County is in no way obliged to offer it to all retiring employees.

The County recognizes that the PRO program can provide a mutual benefit to the County and the eligible employee based on a variety of factors unique to each situation, and will offer PRO agreements only in those cases warranted by business need.

Procedure

When an employee informs their Supervisor or Department Head of their pending retirement, either by submitting a formal notice of retirement or discussing their retirement plans, and where a business needs exists in which a PRO would be of benefit to County service, the Supervisor or Department Head may inquire regarding the employee's potential interest in the PRO. An employee may also inquire with their Supervisor or Department Head regarding the County's interest in offering PRO to the employee.

Terms and conditions of PRO employment, including but not limited to hours of work, job duties and rate of pay will be set forth by the County specific to the PRO arrangement in accordance with state law requirements.

Eligibility and Requirements

Initial PRO offers shall be in accordance with state law and PERA rules. The County is under no obligation to renew a PRO Agreement.

To qualify for a PRO, an employee must:

- 1) Be employed for at least 1,044 hours per year for the five years immediately preceding participation in the PRO program;
- 2) Be at least 62 years of age;

- 3) Reduce the hours of work in public service, when compared to their previous work schedule, by at least 25 percent and limit the hours of work per year to 1,044 or fewer;
- 4) Not a current PERA benefit recipient;
- 5) Be eligible for a monthly retirement annuity from PERA (vested); and
- 6) Provide a completed *Application for PERA Retirement Benefits* to the Human Resources Department prior to the start of employment under the phased retirement program.
- 7) Enter into a PRO Agreement prior to terminating employment and the start of the PRO Agreement.

Additional Requirements:

- 1) The PRO position must be allocated to the appropriate class for the work to be performed;
- 2) The employee must be paid within the range for that class;
- 3) A department must have funds available within its budget to pay for the PRO position;
- 4) The PRO appointment must be approved by the County Board;
- 5) An employee on a PRO appointment is not eligible for benefits, that is, they are treated the same as other temporary employees.
- 6) The employee must be paid out all of their remaining accumulated leave prior to the PRO appointment.

The County Administration Department shall maintain a copy of the PRO agreement and notify the employee and supervisor 30 days prior to the PRO agreement expiration.

An employee with a PRO Agreement may begin collecting a PERA pension benefit without the normally required 30-day break in service. All further accruals of service credit or adjustment of the high-five average salary cease. In addition, the retired member is not subject to any post-retirement earnings limits. No contributions should be withheld.

A current retiree cannot participate in the program. The PRO program shall sunset as required by the State Legislature or further Board action.

Personnel Policy Manual

Conflict of Interest Policy

Policy

Definitions

"Business" means any corporation, partnership, proprietorship, firm, enterprise, franchise, association, organization, self-employed individual, or any other legal entity which engages either in non-profit or profit-making activities.

"Confidential information" means any information obtained under government authority which has not become part of the body of public information and which, if released prematurely or in non-summary form, may provide unfair economic advantage or adversely affect the competitive position of an individual or a business.

"Private interest" means any interest, including, but not limited to, a financial interest, which pertains to a person or business whereby the person or business would gain a benefit, privilege, exemption, or advantage from the action of Wilkin County or an employee that is not available to the general public.

"Immediate family" means spouse, child, parent, grandparent, and spouses of such persons.

Acceptance of Gifts or Favors

Employees of Wilkin County in the course of or in relation to their official duties shall not directly or indirectly receive or agree to receive any payment of expenses, compensation, gift reward, gratuity, favor, service, or promise of future employment or other future benefit from any source, except Wilkin County, for any activity related to the duties of the employee unless otherwise provided by law. The acceptance of any of the following shall not be in violation of this section:

1. Gifts of nominal value;
2. Plaques or similar mementos recognizing individual services in a field of specialty or to a charitable cause; or
3. Honoraria or expenses paid for papers, talks, demonstrations, or appearances made by employees on their own time for which they are not compensated by Wilkin County.

Use of Confidential Information

An employee of Wilkin County shall not use confidential information to further the employee's private interest, and shall not accept outside employment or involvement in a business or activity that will require the employee to disclose or use confidential information.

Use of Wilkin County Property

An employee shall not use or allow the use of Wilkin County time, supplies, or Wilkin County owned or leased property and equipment for the employee's private interest or any other use not in the interest of Wilkin County, except as provided by law.

Conflicts of Interest

The following actions by an employee of Wilkin County shall be deemed a conflict of interest and subject to disciplinary action as appropriate except as provided by law:

1. Use, or attempted use, of the employee's official position to secure benefits, privileges, exemptions, or advantages for the employee or the employee's immediate family or an organization with which the employee is associated which are different from those available to the general public;
2. Acceptance of other employment or contractual relationship that will affect the employee's independence of judgment in exercise of official duties; or
3. Actions as an agent or attorney in any action or matter pending before Wilkin County except in the proper discharge of official duties or on the employee's behalf.

Determination of conflicts of interest. When an employee believes the potential for conflict of interest exists, it is the employee's duty to avoid the situation. A conflict of interest shall be deemed to exist when a review of the situation by the employee, the employee's Supervisor, or the Wilkin County County Administrator determines that a violation of any of the prohibitions in this policy have occurred.

Resolution of conflict of interest. If the employee, employee's Supervisor or Wilkin County Administrator determine that a conflict of interest exists, the County Administrator shall handle resolution of the conflict. If a work assignment is affected by a conflict of interest, the matter shall be assigned to another employee who does not have a conflict of interest. If it is not possible to assign the matter to another employee who does not have a conflict of interest, interested persons shall be notified of the conflict, and the employee may proceed with the assignment.

Acceptance of Advantage by Wilkin County Employee

No employee of Wilkin County in direct contact with suppliers or potential suppliers of Wilkin County, or who may directly or indirectly influence a purchasing decision or by establishing specifications, testing purchased products, evaluating contracted services, or otherwise has official involvement in the purchasing or contracting process, may:

1. Have any financial interest or have any personal beneficial interest, directly or indirectly, in contracts or purchase orders for goods or services used by, or purchased for resale, or furnished to, Wilkin County; or
2. Accept, directly or indirectly, from a person, firm, or corporation to which a contract or purchase order has been or may be awarded, a rebate, gift, money, or anything

of value other than items of nominal value. No such employee may further accept any promise, obligation, or contract for future reward.

Statements of Economic Interest

Time for filing. Each employee, elected or appointed official, or Department Head shall file a statement of economic interest with the commission within 60 days of accepting employment and within 60 days of the development of any economic interest which arises after accepting employment.

A statement of economic interest required by this section shall provide the following information:

1. Employee's name and address;
2. The name of each business with which the employee is associated and the nature of that association when that business has direct or indirect transaction with Wilkin County;
3. A listing of all real property within the state, excluding homestead property, in which the employee holds:
 - a. A fee simple interest, a mortgage, a contract for deed as buyer or seller, or an option to buy, whether direct or indirect, and which interest is valued in excess of \$2,500; or
 - b. An option to buy, which property has a fair market value of \$50,000 or more when said real property involves a current, past, or future transaction with Wilkin County.
4. A listing of all real property within the state in which a partnership of which the employee is a member holds:
 - a. A fee simple interest, a mortgage, a contract for deed as buyer or seller, or an option to buy, whether direct or indirect, if the employee's share of the partnership interest is valued in excess of \$2,500; or
 - b. An option to buy, which property has a fair market value of \$50,000 or more when said real property involves a current, past, or future transaction with Wilkin County.

Each employee who is required to file a statement of economic interest shall file a supplementary statement on April 15th of each year. The statement shall include a space for each category of information in which the individual may indicate that no change in information has occurred since the previous statement.

Violation of the provisions of this policy shall be grounds for disciplinary action against an employee.

Personnel Policy Manual

POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Purpose

The County has an obligation to define and support appropriate standards of conduct for employees in the area of political activity.

Policy

As public employees, County staff shall adhere to certain limitations on the use of County time and County property for political efforts.

All County employees have the right to vote as they please, to express their opinions on political subjects and retain membership in political parties.

Candidate for Public Office:

Any non-elected Department Head or employee seeking public office must devote full-time energies to normal County employment and may not campaign during normal working hours.

An employee seeking public office must notify their Department Head and the County Administrator so that a determination can be made as to whether the position that the employee occupies with the County would be in conflict with the candidacy for the public office the employee is seeking.

If the employee fails to provide proper notification of their candidacy, the County Administrator shall consult with the County Attorney for determination of any conflict of interest. If a finding of a conflict is made, the employee shall be required to take a leave of absence without pay until the first business day following the election, at which the outcome of the election contest is determined.

Upon election, the employee must immediately notify their Department Head in writing. If the Department Head determines that the duties of the elective office conflict with the proper discharge of County responsibilities, the employee will be required to take a leave of absence or be separated from the County service.

Employees Granted a Leave of Absence to Perform the Duties of an Elected Official:

Employees who are elected to fulfill the role of an elected official, and are granted a continuous leave of absence from their County position for the duration of their term, which shall not exceed ten (10) years, shall have their vacation accruals cashed out in accordance with the rules set forth in the severance policy and at the rate of pay prior to being sworn in as an elected official. If applicable, compensatory time earned will be paid in cash.

An employee on a leave of absence relevant to this section will be eligible for reinstatement in accordance with the terms of Minnesota Statutes Section 3.088.

Prohibited Activities:

The following employee political activity is strictly prohibited:

- Using official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with, or affecting the result of, an election or nomination for office.
- Using official authority or influence to compel any officer or employee to apply for membership in, or become a member of, any organization.
- Directly or indirectly coercing or attempting to coerce or command a state or local officer or employee to pay, lend, or contribute anything of value for political purposes.
- Soliciting or receiving funds during hours of employment.
- Placing or distributing campaign materials within the established election areas of the government center.
- Wearing buttons or other regalia at work within the established election areas of the government center which feature a political party, candidate or issue which is on the ballot in the current election.

Legislative Protocol for Employees:

1. Employees are expected to confine their efforts to the County's current legislative agenda if they choose to lobby on a policy issue that would affect the operations of the County.
2. Any legislative participation shall be immediately communicated to the County Administrator.
3. If the issue has not been addressed by the County's legislative agenda, a County Board position should be sought prior to any lobbying effort.
4. An employee who lobbies in a professional capacity, either at the request of a legislator or a professional association, shall note in their testimony that they speak as a professional and not as a County representative.
5. The County Administrator or designated personnel will organize the County's efforts.
6. Employees do not speak for the County Board, unless specifically assigned to do so.
7. When the County is paying the dues for membership in a professional association, employees shall not take a position within that professional association that is inconsistent with County Board policy.
8. Employees and appointed representatives shall notify the County Administrator of a pending appointment to an advisory board or task force of a political subdivision initiated outside of the scope of County Board authority. When appropriate, the County Administrator will notify the County Board.

This policy applies to all employees and respective appointed Board members that lobby as a representative of Wilkin County.

Personnel Policy Manual

CLASSIFICATION PLAN

Purpose

The County is required to maintain a system of assigning jobs of comparable worth, comparable salaries. The County is best able to accomplish its work by defining specific job duties, tasks, and requirements for employees hired to perform that work.

Policy

Each County job shall be evaluated and placed in a specific classification and pay grade to ensure compliance with pay equity requirements. The Position Classification Plan shall assign a point value and pay grade or pay range of each job within the County.

Each Board approved position shall be defined by a job description including specific job duties, tasks, and requirements. These descriptions shall be reviewed periodically for accuracy and continued compliance with pay equity requirements.

Procedure

The County Administration Department shall provide a consistent format for job descriptions throughout the County, and a consistent process for evaluating jobs and assigning them to the appropriate pay level.

Department Heads shall develop and maintain current job descriptions for the positions in their Department. Job descriptions shall include the:

- Summary of the job, including why the job exists, what it does, and how the work is performed,
- Essential duties performed by employees in that job classification
- Required educations, credentials, experience, knowledge, and skills necessary to perform the job successfully,
- Supervisory authority of the position, if any,
- Reporting relationship for the position (the role to which this job reports), and
- Conditions under which the work is normally performed.

It is an inherent management right and duty to design, redesign, restructure, and create new jobs to meet the objectives and changing needs of the County.

The County Administration Department shall notify Department Heads of the positions in their Department scheduled for the regular review of duties, requirements, and conditions. Department Heads shall review the selected positions with staff in those positions to ensure accuracy of duties, work methods, working conditions, and requirements.

Some situations may require the review and re-evaluation of positions outside of the established sequence. The County Administration Department will handle requests for such reviews on a case-by-case basis.

As part of the regular review process, Department Heads or their designees shall inform the County Administration Department of any revisions necessary in the established job descriptions. They shall also recommend which jobs have changed substantially enough to be re-evaluated by the classification consultant.

The County Administration department shall revise the job descriptions on file, documenting the date of any change, review the recommendations for re-evaluation, and forward the positions that have changed substantially to the classification consultant or other designated authority for re-evaluation.

The classification consultant shall provide an objective methodology to evaluate the jobs, the documentation to support the decision, and notification to the County Administration Department of the decisions.

The County Administration Department shall notify the affected employees and Department Heads of the result of the evaluation, the effective dates of any change, and appeal rights if they disagree with the evaluation.

Compensation Following the Job Re-Evaluation Process:

If a position is evaluated at a higher pay grade, the employee will receive a salary increase to either the minimum for the new grade, 5% above their current salary, whichever is greater, not to exceed the maximum of the new range.

If a position is evaluated at a lower pay grade the employee's salary may not exceed the maximum of the lower range.

The effective date of any pay adjustments shall be the beginning of the first pay period following completion of the re-evaluation process.

Reorganization Changes in Jobs:

When a Department Head restructures work within the Department, some positions may require new job descriptions and re-evaluation for appropriate classification. Significant changes in current staffing and organizational structure such as those involving changes in job duties and responsibilities which classify the job in a different grade or those which modify the type and number of positions in existing classifications may be completed with the approval of the County Administrator.

New (Additional) Positions:

If a new position is created, it is the responsibility of management to define and determine essential requirements and duties of the position. The County Administration Department will work with Department Heads to develop job descriptions in a consistent format. The job description will be assigned to a classification under the Classification Plan and to an appropriate pay level in the Compensation Plan. The County Board must approve any additional positions.

Personnel Policy Manual

ADMINISTRATION OF COMPENSATION PLAN (PROMOTION, DEMOTION, TRANSFER & REORGANIZATION)

Purpose

The County seeks to attract and retain a qualified workforce through administration of its compensation plan from new hire salary placement and throughout the employment life cycle. Current employees may also be presented with opportunities to use their knowledge and skills to serve the residents of the County in different roles throughout their employment, by applying for promotions, demotions, or transfers.

Policy

The County shall administer its compensation system to comply with state and federal laws. Qualified current employees shall be afforded the opportunity to apply and be considered for vacancies as they occur throughout the County.

Procedure

Starting Salary:

A new employee shall generally be hired at or near the minimum of the salary range. The Department Head shall consult with the County Administration Department to determine the starting wage. Requests for a starting wage above the third step of the salary range must be approved by the County Administrator. Such authorization shall be based on exceptional qualifications and background of the proposed employee, by labor market conditions, or other extraordinary circumstances.

When an employee transfers from one department to another, or within a department, and makes a lateral move to another position with the same grade, that employee's rate of pay remains the same.

Promotion, Demotion, and Transfer:

Employees may apply to be promoted, demoted, or transferred.

Regular employees promoted, demoted, or transferred, from one regular status non-bargaining position to another governed by these policies shall generally retain and may use accrued benefits including accumulated paid time off; and shall continue to earn benefits based upon their continuous years of service.

However, certain benefits that are provided specific to position status may not be continued upon commencement of work in a different status position. For example, when an employee moves from a non-exempt position eligible to accrue compensatory time, to an exempt position, all accrued compensatory time shall be paid to the employee upon conclusion of employment in the non-exempt role.

Change of Job Title:

When an employee's job title is changed, yet their work is essentially the same as it had been, there is no change in status, promotion or demotion. The job classification seniority remains unaffected by such a title change.

Promotion:

When an employee applies for a promotion and is selected for the position, the employee's salary shall be placed within the new salary range, at the minimum rate of pay for the new classification or at the pay step which provides for a 5% increase, whichever is greater. Any overtime hours worked prior to the promotion and switch to exempt status will be paid at the employee's rate of pay for the non-exempt position. The employee's date of promotion shall become the employee's anniversary date for purposes of the performance evaluation and pay progression.

Supervisory employees promoting are expected to give their present Department Head twenty (20) working days' notice; non-supervisory employees promoting are expected to give their present Department Head ten (10) working days' notice, both exclusive of time off. This requirement may be waived if both Department Heads agree.

Transfer:

When an employee transfers, the employee shall be eligible for annual salary actions based on the current schedule and salary range for the position held following transfer.

Supervisory employees transferring shall provide their present Department Head twenty (20) working days' notice; non-supervisory employees transferring are expected to give their present Department Head ten (10) working days' notice, both exclusive of time off. This requirement may be waived if both Department Heads agree.

Demotion:

Demotions may be voluntary (non-disciplinary) or involuntary (non-disciplinary). Distinctly different is a disciplinary demotion, which may be imposed as a form of disciplinary action and will be identified as such in formal written disciplinary documentation provided to the employee.

An employee's salary placement upon demotion may be addressed differently based on differing circumstances and types of demotions.

Pay level upon demotion will be set in the sole discretion of the Department Head and County Administration consistent with the salary range for the demoted position.

Minnesota Wage Disclosure

Under the Minnesota Wage Disclosure Protection Law, employees have the right to tell any person the amount of their own wages. In accordance with Minn. Stat. 181.172, Wilkin County may not:

1. Require nondisclosure by an employee of his or her wages as a condition of employment;
2. Require an employee to sign a waiver or other document which purports to deny an employee the right to disclose the employee's wages; or
3. Take any adverse employment action against an employee for disclosing the employee's own wages or discussing another employee's wages which have been disclosed voluntarily.

Wilkin County cannot retaliate against an employee for disclosing the employee's own wages. An employee's remedies under the Wage Disclosure Protection Law are to bring a civil action against Wilkin County and/or file a complaint with the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry.

Personnel Policy Manual

POST-EMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

Purpose

The County provides compensation to employees in a consistent manner when they terminate employment, to meet legal obligations and to recognize employees that have not used all of their paid vacation leave over their years of service with the County.

Policy

The County may provide employees who resign or retire in good standing with compensation upon their leaving the organization. The amount and method of payment varies based on the most recent hire date for the employee, their years of continuous employment with the County, their vacation leave balances, and FLSA status (exempt or non-exempt).

The County reserves the right not to make the post-employment payment of unused vacation leave if an employee is terminated.

In the event of an employee's death prior to resignation or retirement, the employee's spouse or estate shall receive post-employment compensation upon the employee's death.

Procedure for Employees Terminating Employment:

Exempt and non-exempt non-bargaining employees who leave the County in good standing by providing adequate notice shall receive their remainder of vacation at the rate of pay on their last paid day. This will normally be handled in a separate payment during the first pay period following their final payment for hours worked. In no case will the County pay out more than 240 hours of Vacation.

Personnel Policy Manual

HOLIDAYS

Purpose

The County establishes a consistent process for compensating employees for specific holidays.

Policy

The following days, and other such days as the Board may designate, are holidays, to be compensated at straight time for regular and probationary full-time employees, provided the employee is in compensated payroll status the last working day preceding the holiday and the first working day following the holiday. A holiday means the actual day it occurs:

1. Designated Holidays:

New Year's Day.....	January 1
Martin Luther King Day	Third Monday in January
President's Day.....	Third Monday in February
Good Friday.....	Afternoon of Friday before Easter Sunday
Memorial Day.....	Last Monday in May
Juneteenth.....	June 19 th
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day.....	First Monday in September
Veteran's Day.....	November 11
Thanksgiving Day.....	Fourth Thursday in November
Friday after Thanksgiving	Generally the Fourth Friday in November
Christmas Eve.....	December 24
Christmas Day	December 25

2. Designated holidays that fall on Sunday will be observed the following Monday, those that fall on Saturday will be observed the preceding Friday, unless another day is specified for observance by the Board. An employee scheduled to work other than the normal workweek of Monday through Friday shall receive the same number of holidays. Employees will receive holiday pay for either the designated or the observed holiday based upon their regularly assigned work schedule. Regular Part-Time employees are paid a pro-rated rate based on the average amount of hours worked per week.

3. Non-exempt employees assigned in accordance with the normal work day schedule and required by the County to work on a designated holiday shall receive premium compensation at one and one half (1.5) times their base pay rate for hours worked in addition to the 8 hours of holiday pay.

4. Exempt employees required to work on a designated holiday by the Department Head or Supervisor shall be eligible for flex time off at one and one half (1.5) time for the hours

worked on that holiday in addition to the 8 hours of holiday pay. In no case shall the total compensation exceed two and one-half (2.5) times the employee's base pay rate.

5. Designated holidays that occur within an employee's approved and compensated leaves of absence or paid time off shall not be charged to the employee's paid time off, but shall be recorded as a holiday.
6. Employees will not receive holiday pay for holidays occurring while on an unpaid leave of absence.
7. Regular part-time employees shall receive holiday compensation for the holidays designated in Section 1 above, on a pro-rated basis, determined by their budgeted full time equivalent (FTE), and paid at the time the holiday occurs.

Personnel Policy Manual

VACATION

Purpose

The County outlines a consistent process for granting Vacation accruals to employees and defines the rules for using Vacation.

Policy

All full-time and regular part-time employees shall be eligible for, and accrue, Vacation. The accruals are based on years of service. Regular Part-time employees will accrue vacation at a pro-rated rate.

Procedure

1. Vacation accumulates and may be used after 6 months during the probationary period.
2. Regular and probationary full-time employee shall accumulate vacation benefits with pay on the basis of continuous service from the last starting date of employment. Vacation shall accrue in accordance with the following schedule, provided that the employee is in compensated payroll status or approved military leave:

<u>Years of Completed Service:</u>	<u>Vacation Hours Earned Per Pay Period:</u>
Less than 5 years	4 (104 hours per year)
5 years but less than 10 years	6 (156 hours per year)
10 years +	8 (208 hours per year)

When continuous service reaches a point entitling the employee to the next higher accrual rate, the new accrual rate will commence on the first day of the pay period on or following the date of eligibility.

The accrual rate shall be determined by the employee's continuous service in a regular full-time or part-time position, including all authorized paid leave(s) and authorized leave(s) without pay for military service. Unpaid leaves of absence of fewer than thirty (30) days, and military leaves of absence, will not affect the date used to determine Vacation accruals.

The maximum accumulation of vacation time is 240 hours. Vacation time accumulated in excess of 240 hours will be forfeited except in cases where the work load is such that vacation time cannot be granted by the Department Head.

3. Regular part-time employees shall accrue pro-rated Vacation benefits in accordance with the above schedule based on their budgeted full-time equivalent (FTE).

Newly hired regular part-time employees will be allowed to accumulate a pro-rated rate of the 240-hour maximum for full-time employees. Vacation time accumulated in excess of the pro-rated amount of hours will be forfeited.

Seasonal, casual, on-call, temporary, non-regular part-time workers and intern employees, shall not accrue Vacation.

4. In exceptional situations where an individual is offered a position that has posed challenges in recruitment and/or retention, and/or that individual has extraordinary skills based on directly related experience in other employment, adjustments may be made to their Vacation balance and/or accruals at the time of hire. This request may be made by the hiring Department Head by outlining the reasons for such a request and submitting the information for review by the County Administration Department. Requests for additional accruals and/or Vacation balance will only be granted if determined appropriate and approved by the County Administrator.

5. An employee shall request Vacation of fewer than five (5) full days off at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance, except in unforeseen situations. An employee shall request Vacation of five (5) days or more at least fifteen (15) calendar days in advance of the first day off, except in unforeseen situations. The Supervisor shall respond within twenty-four (24) hours to the forty-eight (48) hour request and within five (5) days for the longer period request. The advance notice requirements may be waived if, in the judgment of the supervisor, the leave will not cause undue inconvenience to the Employer. At no time shall an employee be granted Vacation when the Supervisor determines that the employee's absence may impair the efficient operation of the Department or Office. Once a request is approved, the County must show substantial cause to cancel or postpone a previously approved request.

6. Vacation requests are granted at the discretion of the Supervisor and must be scheduled in advance and taken at reasonable times as may be approved by the Department Head or their designated representative.

7. Vacation requests will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis, and they will be approved with particular regard to the operating needs of the County, and, insofar as practical, the desires of Department employees. Scheduling conflicts

between employees shall be resolved on the basis of overall seniority where requests are received at the same time.

8. The Department Head will determine the maximum number of employees to be scheduled on vacation at any one time, and these limitations may be changed by the Employer in response to unusual circumstances and/or operation requirements during the year. The Department Head also has the discretion to exceed the established limitation, where, in his or her sole discretion, such will not unreasonably interfere with the operation of the Department.
9. An employee who by reason of sickness or injury receives workers' compensation benefits or long-term disability insurance benefits may keep the workers' compensation benefits and receive from the Employer additional differential benefits from accumulated Vacation or other available accumulated time. In no case shall the total weekly compensation including paid leave and workers' compensation benefits and/or long- or short-term disability insurance benefits exceed the weekly base pay rate of the employee.
10. Upon termination of employment in good standing, a regular employee shall be compensated for accumulated unused Vacation. Payment for unused vacation may be withheld or reduced if the employee is in any way indebted to the County or in possession of County equipment or property.

In the event of death of an employee, accumulated unused Vacation of the deceased shall be paid to the employee's spouse, if living, or to the estate of the deceased employee.

Personnel Policy Manual

Sick

Purpose

The County outlines a consistent process for granting Sick leave accruals to employees and defines the rules for using Sick. Sick leave is a benefit allowing employees to build a reserve of hours they can use for illness or injury.

Policy

All full-time and regular part-time regular employees shall be eligible for, and accrue, Sick time. Regular part-time employees will accrue benefits at a pro-rated rate.

Procedure

Four (4) hours of sick leave benefits are granted to all regular full-time and probationary employees per pay period or while receiving paid vacation, paid sick leave, or workers' compensation lost-time benefits. Sick leave shall be pro-rated for regular part-time employees. Sick leave benefits may be accumulated to a maximum of 800 hours. Sick leave in excess of the maximum is lost to the employee. Newly hired regular part-time employees will be allowed to accumulate a pro-rated rate of the 800-hour maximum for full-time employees. Sick time accumulated in excess of the pro-rated amount of hours will be forfeited.

Employees may not use sick leave solely for the purposes of not losing sick leave accruals.

Employees are responsible for reasonable, prudent, and bona fide use of sick leave privileges. Claiming sick leave when fit, except as provided in this Policy, may be cause for disciplinary action, including cancellation of sick leave benefits, suspension, demotion, or termination.

Newly hired employees will begin accrual based upon their anniversary date/date of hire.

Sick leave benefits are not granted to temporary employees or non-regular part time employees. Sick leave benefits will not accumulate while in non-pay status, except when employees are on military leave.

Use of Sick Leave Benefits

Sick leave shall be granted for the actual illness of employee, routine medical/dental/optical appointments that cannot be arranged during off-duty hours, exposure to contagious disease, or the illness/injury in the immediate family. Employees are responsible for informing their supervisors within four (4) hours from the time they normally report for

work, when they are unable to report for work as scheduled due to illness or injury. Employees claiming sick leave may be required to file written documentation.

Sick leave must be taken and charged in not less than one-quarter hour units.

If, after three consecutive working days of sick leave, an employee is not well enough to return to work, the employee must advise the employee's Department Head. The Department Head may grant additional sick leave or require the employee to furnish a doctor's certificate of verification. The certificate will be provided at the employee's expense.

If a member of the employee's immediate family is sick or injured, sick leave may be utilized for such periods as may be necessary. For purposes of this Policy, the term immediate family shall mean the employee's child, adult child, spouse, sibling, parent, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandchild, grandparent, or stepparent.

Employees are also authorized to use sick leave as "safety leave" for reasonable absences for themselves or for the assistance of the relatives listed in the above paragraph who are providing or receiving assistance because they, or a relative, is a victim of sexual assault, domestic abuse, or stalking. Safety leave, other than for the employee or the employee's child, is limited to 160 hours in any 12-month period.

Employees who are drawing worker's compensation benefits may use as much accumulated sick leave as may be necessary to ensure the employee continues to receive the same amount of regular take-home pay (after tax) that the employee received prior to sustaining the workplace injury.

Personnel Policy Manual

LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Purpose

The County strives to balance the demands of the workplace and our call to public service with the needs of employees and their families. Consistent with this statement, the County provides eligible employees with leave rights in accordance Minnesota state statutes, federal law, and in certain additional situations as defined in these policies.

Policy

Pregnancy and Parental Leave:

Employees of Wilkin County who work for the County at least half time, and have been employed with the County for at least 12 months before commencement of leave, are eligible to receive 12 weeks of unpaid pregnancy and parental leave under Minnesota Parental Leave laws. Parental leave due to birth or adoption of a child must begin within 12 months of the birth or adoption. However, if a child must remain in the hospital longer than the mother, the leave must begin within 12 months after the child leaves the hospital. The 12 weeks of pregnancy or parental leave may be taken consecutively or intermittently.

Employees who take pregnancy and parental leave under Minnesota law are entitled to reinstatement in their same job after returning from leave, or return to a position of comparable duties, hours, and pay. In addition, an employee taking pregnancy or parental leave will be provided with continuation of their employer-provided health insurance during the leave. An employee who is not also eligible for FMLA leave or who has exhausted their FMLA leave entitlement and then takes leave under Minnesota pregnancy and parental leave laws may be required to pay the full premium for continuation of insurance coverage and may not be eligible for continued regular County contributions during their leave. In some cases, Affordable Care Act provisions may provide for continuation of County contribution when maintaining coverage. If an employee is not eligible to maintain regular insurance contributions throughout their leave of absence, regular County contributions toward benefits will be reinstated in accordance with County policy and insurance plan eligibility provisions following the employee's return to work. An employee who is also eligible for FMLA leave shall have FMLA leave run concurrently with pregnancy and parental leave, and in this situation the employer contributions toward insurance benefits will continue during the FMLA leave of absence.

Minnesota pregnancy and parental leave runs concurrently with FMLA leave whenever the employee is eligible for leave under both laws. However, if an employee has taken FMLA leave for unrelated reasons, the employee will still be entitled to 12 weeks of leave for pregnancy-related illness and parental leave. Both paid and unpaid leave count toward the total of 12 weeks of pregnancy and parental leave. Therefore, if an employee utilizes, for example vacation, disability, or sick time for all or part of their time off for the birth of a

child or for health conditions related to pregnancy, the employee would not be entitled to an *additional* 12 weeks of unpaid pregnancy and parental leave. Employees are required to use all available and applicable accrued paid leave such as sick leave, vacation leave, compensatory time, etc., during pregnancy and parental leave prior to converting to unpaid leave of absence.

Employee Notice:

Employees are required to provide reasonable notice to the County Administration Department of the date the leave will begin and the estimated amount of leave.

Pregnancy Accommodation:

The County will provide the following accommodations to a pregnant employee who desires any of these accommodations, without requirement for the employee to provide a note from their doctor or any other certification of the necessity of the accommodations:

- More frequent restroom breaks or food and water breaks;
- Seating arrangements; and
- A limit of lifting no more than 20 pounds.

In addition to the accommodations listed above, a pregnant employee seeking additional or other reasonable accommodations must notify the County Administration Department of their request for accommodation by completing and submitting the Accommodation Request Form. The employee and the employer shall engage in an interactive process with respect to the employee's request for a reasonable accommodation under this policy. The County will provide reasonable accommodations to an employee for health conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth if requested, with the advice of the employee's licensed healthcare provider or certified doula, unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the employer's business. Reasonable accommodation may include temporary transfer to an existing and available position that is less strenuous or less hazardous. Employees should contact their Supervisor or County Administration to request a pregnancy-related accommodation or to report any concerns related to retaliation.

Nursing/Lactation Support:

The County supports employees in meeting their infant feeding goals and will provide reasonable paid break time to an employee to express milk for their child, provided doing so will not unduly disrupt the employer's operations. When possible, this break time will run concurrently with regular break time already provided to the employee. The County will provide space for an employee to express milk that is in close proximity to the work area, is a room other than a bathroom, is shielded from view, is free from intrusion from coworkers or the public, includes access to an electrical outlet, and has a lock to ensure privacy. Employees should contact the County Administration Department to make arrangements for use of lactation rooms or other space which meets the above provisions. Employees should contact their supervisor to discuss appropriate break time arrangements under the lactation support policy.

Minnesota School-Related Activities Leave:

Eligible employees are entitled to take up to 16 hours of unpaid leave during any 12-month period to attend their children's school conferences, classroom activities, child care, or other early childhood programs, or to observe and monitor the services or program, provided the conference, activity, or observation cannot be scheduled during non-work hours. To be eligible for this leave, employees need to work for the County at least half time. Eligible activities must be school, early childhood or childcare related and do not include community or private extracurricular programs. Employees are required to provide reasonable notice of the leave request and make a reasonable effort to schedule the leave so as to not unduly disrupt the operations of the employer. For non-exempt employees, this leave is without pay. Non-exempt employees may substitute any accrued paid vacation for any part of the school conference and school-related activities leave.

Elections, Voting, Court Appearances, Victim and Witness Leave:

Elections and Voting:

All employees eligible to vote in an election shall be provided time off from work necessary to appear at the employee's polling place, cast a ballot, and return to work on the day of that election, without penalty or deduction from salary or wages because of the absence. Employees are encouraged to vote before or after work, but if that is not possible, time off will be granted with pay to vote during Election Day. Due to the adequate coverage in all departments, the County requests several days' advance notice to coordinate the schedule of employees who elect to take time off to vote.

Election Judge:

An employee selected to serve as an election judge pursuant to Minnesota law shall be provided time off with pay for purposes of serving as an election judge, provided the employee gives the County at least twenty day's written notice. The employee's request to be absent must be accompanied with a certification from the appointing elections authority stating the hourly compensation to be paid to the employee for service as an election judge and the hours during which the employee will serve. In order to receive regular pay for the time served as an election judge, the employee shall be required to submit any compensation received for this duty, minus mileage and other expense reimbursement, to the County. The County may limit the number of employees to be absent from work for the purpose of serving as an election judge to no more than 20% of the total work force at any single worksite.

Jury Duty:

Employees called for jury duty shall receive their normal compensation for days they are scheduled to work. Any payments, per diem or fees, excepting expenses, shall be remitted to the County. If an employee is excused from court duty prior to the end of the work shift,

the employee shall return to work as directed by the County or make arrangements for a leave, with or without pay.

Victim or Witness Leave:

An employee who is a victim or witness, who is subpoenaed or requested by the prosecutor to attend court for the purpose of giving testimony, or is the spouse or immediate family member (parent, spouse, child, or sibling of the employee) of such victim, shall be provided reasonable time off from work to attend criminal proceedings related to the victim's case. This time off is without pay; the employee may use their available accrued leave.

Court Appearance/Witness/Testifying for County Related Business:

Employees subpoenaed as a witness in an official capacity or appearing for County related business as authorized by the appropriate Department Head or their Designee, will receive their normal compensation, less any remuneration exclusive of expenses, unless the action is instituted by the employee.

Court Appearance/Witness/Testifying for Personal Matters:

Any other absence to testify in litigation, not in the status of an employee, shall not qualify for any compensation and the employee shall arrange for a leave, with or without pay. Any party to a lawsuit, not connected to County duties shall not qualify for compensation and the employee shall arrange for a leave, with or without pay.

Bone Marrow Donation Leave:

An employee who works an average of at least 20 hours per week for the County who seeks to undergo a medical procedure to donate bone marrow shall be provided paid leave not to exceed 40 work hours, unless additional paid leave is agreed to by the employer. The County may require verification by a physician for the purpose and length of each leave requested by the employee to donate bone marrow. A medical determination that the employee does not qualify as a bone marrow donor does not result in forfeiture of the paid leave of absence granted to the employee prior to that medical determination.

Organ Donation Leave:

An employee who works an average of at least 20 hours per week for the County who seeks to undergo a medical procedure to donate an organ or partial organ to another person shall be provided paid leave not to exceed 40 work hours for each donation, unless additional paid leave is agreed to by the employer. The County may require verification by a physician for the purpose and length of each leave requested by the employee for organ donation. A medical determination that the employee does not qualify as an organ donor does not result in forfeiture of the paid leave of absence granted to the employee prior to that medical determination.

Military Leave:

In accordance with state and federal laws, for qualifying military training or active service in accordance with official military orders or related authority, an employee shall receive full pay at base wage rate for a period not to exceed fifteen (15) days per calendar year. The employee may choose when to take all or part of the 15 paid days for required service throughout the year. Military leave in excess of fifteen (15) days in a calendar year may be provided without pay. At the expiration of such leaves, such employees shall be entitled to their position or a comparable position and shall receive other benefits in accordance with applicable state and federal law.

Extended Military Leave:

In accordance with state and federal laws, an employee shall be entitled to a military leave of absence without pay of up to five (5) years for service in the armed forces of the United States. Reinstatement shall be made upon the request of an employee and within the timeframes outlined in Minnesota Statutes and in accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

Bereavement Leave:

Payment for employee's absence due to death in the employee's family will be authorized based on the following schedule:

1. Group I – (up to 40 hours off): Spouse, child, step-child, employee's parents, and spouse's parents.
2. Group II – (up to 24 hours off): Employee's siblings, spouse's siblings, grandchildren and grandparents of employee or employee's spouse, and any relative that lives in the employee's household.
3. Group III – (up to 8 hours off): Any blood relative or in-laws of either the employee or spouse not specified above.

Approval of Bereavement Leave must be obtained from the Department Head. Time off for attending funerals of friends or fellow employees, or for additional time off for other funerals will be deducted from accumulated vacation or sick leave. Part-time employees will be at a pro-rated rate.

Work Related Injury:

An employee temporarily disabled from work due to an injury or illness sustained directly in the performance of the employee's work with the County may be eligible for Workers' Compensation. See Workers' Compensation policy for additional information. All injuries or illness must be reported to the Supervisor on the date of the injury or as soon as possible thereafter.

Personal Leaves Without Pay:

Personal leaves of absence without pay may be granted to regular full-time and regular part-time employees. Any request for a leave of absence must be submitted in writing by

the employee to their immediate supervisor. Unless justified by an emergency, a written request must be submitted by the employee at least fifteen (15) working days in advance of the time the leave is requested to begin. The request must state the reason why the leave is being requested, and the length of the requested leave. Leaves of absence must be considered by the County Administrator and they may be granted or denied at the Employer's sole discretion, without the ability to grieve the decision. Medical verification may be required to substantiate an illness or to state that the employee will not be able to perform the duties of the position to which he will return.

Employees on a leave of absence will retain their benefits accumulated previous to the leave but will not accumulate additional benefits or receive paid holidays during the leave of absence. Employees will be responsible for their own benefit premiums during such leave.

Seniority and Benefits During Unpaid Leaves of Absence

Except as required by law, seniority shall not accumulate during any unpaid leave of absence exceeding 30 days.

The employee shall pay the entire premiums on health, dental, and life insurance policies while on unpaid personal leave of absence unless required otherwise by law, such as for leaves under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). These premiums are to be paid in advance of the month of coverage and shall be paid to the Auditor's Office. Leaves under FMLA shall proceed with the employee paying their portion and the employer making their monthly contribution.

Paid Leave benefits, such as sick leave and vacation, shall not accrue during an unpaid personal leave of absence. Holidays shall not be paid during an unpaid personal leave of absence.

Failure to comply with the return-to-work date established for the leave, or failure to request an extension from the Department Head within five (5) days prior to the expiration of the leave, may be grounds for termination of employment.

Employees who are collecting third party sick pay while on FMLA or workers' compensation shall not be required to supplement with accumulated paid leave. Employees who are collecting third party sick pay, but not covered by FMLA, shall be required to supplement the third party sick pay with accrued leave to total 100% of their regular base pay.

Retaliation Prohibited:

Retaliation is prohibited for requesting, taking leave, or asserting other rights provided under these policies. An employee who believes they have been retaliated against or have

not been afforded rights under these policies should promptly report any concerns to the County Administrator.

Personnel Policy Manual

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT

Purpose

Wilkin County strives to balance the demands of the workplace and our call to public service with the needs of our employees and their families. Consistent with this statement, the County provides eligible employees with leave rights in accordance with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). The County posts the mandatory [FMLA Notice](#) as required by the United States Department of Labor and also provides all new hires with general notice information regarding FMLA.

This policy serves to provide employees with a general description of their FMLA rights. However, in the event of any conflict between this policy and applicable law, employees shall be afforded all rights required bylaw.

Policy

The FMLA entitles eligible employees with up to 12 weeks (26 weeks for military service member caregiver leave) of unpaid job protected leave for specified family and medical reasons, along with continuation of group health insurance coverage. Wilkin County will measure the 12-month period as a rolling 12-month period measured backward from the date an employee uses and FMLA leave under this policy.

Eligibility:

To qualify for FMLA leave, an employee must meet all the following conditions:

- Employed by the covered employer at least 12 months (or 52 weeks) in the preceding seven-year period. These do not need to be consecutive months of employment in order to meet the requirement. If the break in service was due to National Guard or Reserve military service obligations, the County will count separate periods of employment, exceeding the seven-year period, extended by the length of the military service referenced above.
- Worked at least 1,250 hours during the preceding 12-month period. For purposes of this policy, this includes hours actually worked and does not refer to all hours in compensated status. Paid leave, unpaid leave, and FMLA do not count toward the 1,250 hours worked.
- Works at a location where the employer has 50 or more employees within a 75-mile radius.

Type of Leave Covered:

Eligible employees will be granted FMLA leave for the following reasons:

- Any period of incapacity due to pregnancy or prenatal care, the birth of a child, and to care for the newborn child within one year of birth;

- Placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care and to care for the newly placed child within one year of placement;
- To care for the employee's spouse (but not in-law), child, or parent who has a serious health condition;
- A serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the essential functions of their job;
- Any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a covered military member on "covered active duty;"
- To care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness if the eligible employee is the service member's spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin (military caregiver leave).

Terms and Definitions:

A **child**, for purposes of this policy in situations other than military family leave, includes a biological, adopted or foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child of a person standing *in loco parentis* who is either under 18 years of age, or 18 or older and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability.

The **need to care for** a covered family member encompasses both physical and psychological care. It may also include acquiring or making arrangements for appropriate care, or substituting or sharing care duties.

A **serious health condition** is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves one of the following:

- Incapacity or treatment requiring **inpatient care** (an overnight stay) in a hospital, hospice, or residential care facility, or other medical care facility;
- Any period of incapacity due to **pregnancy**, prenatal medical care, or childbirth;
- Any period of incapacity or treatment due to a **chronic serious health condition** which is defined as a condition that requires periodic visits (twice or more per year) to a health care provider for treatment, continues over an extended period of time, and may cause episodic rather than continuing periods of incapacity;
- A period of incapacity involving **absence plus treatment** – for example, inability to work, attend school, or perform other regular daily activities due to the serious health condition for more than three consecutive days and involving ongoing medical treatment; and any subsequent treatment or period of incapacity relating to the same condition. Ongoing medical treatment may either involve multiple appointments with a health care provider, or may include a single appointment and follow-up care such as prescription medication;
- **Permanent or long-term conditions** requiring supervision of a health care provider, but need not be receiving active treatment;
- **Conditions requiring multiple treatments.** Any period of absence to receive treatments and recovery therefrom, by a health care provider or under orders of or referral by a health care provider, either for restorative surgery after an accident or other injury, or for a condition that would likely result in a period of incapacity of more than three consecutive calendar days in the absence of medical intervention.

An eligible employee whose spouse, son, daughter, or parent has been notified of an impending call or order to covered active military duty, or who is on covered active duty status, may take up to 12 weeks of leave for a **qualifying exigency**. Qualifying exigencies include the following:

- Leave to address *any* issue arising from the military member's short notice deployment may be taken for up to seven days from the military member's receipt of notice of deployment;
- Attending military events or related activities;
- Certain childcare and related activities arising from the military member's covered active duty such as arranging alternative childcare, providing non-routine childcare, enrolling or transferring a child to a new school or day care facility;
- Certain activities related to care of the military member's parent who is incapable of self-care such as arranging for alternative care, providing non-routine care, admitting or transferring a parent to a new care facility;
- Making or updating financial and legal arrangements to address a military member's absence while on covered active duty;
- Attending counseling for the employee, the military member, or the child of the military member when the need for that counseling arises from the covered active duty of the military member and is provided by someone other than a health care provider;
- Certain post-deployment activities within 90 days of the end of the military member's covered active duty such as attendance at arrival ceremonies, reintegration events, and addressing issues arising from death of a military member;
- Taking up to 15 calendar days of leave to spend time with a military member who is on short-term, temporary rest and recuperation leave during deployment.

In accordance with the provisions for **military caregiver leave**, an employee eligible for FMLA leave who is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of a covered service member or a covered veteran may take up to 26 weeks in a single 12-month period to care for the covered service member who is receiving medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, or is in outpatient status, or is on the temporary disability retired list for a serious injury or illness; or to care for the covered veteran who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for a serious injury or illness.

Length and Amount of Leave:

The length of FMLA leave (for reasons other than to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness) shall not exceed twelve weeks in a twelve-month period. The leave year is calculated on the following basis:

- A rolling 12-month period measured backward from the date an employee uses any FMLA leave

For situations involving care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness, the 12-month period begins on the first day the eligible employee takes FMLA leave to care for the covered service member and ends 12 months after that date. During this single

12-month period, an eligible employee's FMLA leave entitlement is limited to a combined total of 26 workweeks for any qualifying reason.

Intermittent Leave and Reduced Work Schedule:

Intermittent or reduced work schedule leave may be taken when medically necessary. Intermittent leave, whether due to the employee's or qualified family member's condition, must be documented in the medical certification form as medically necessary.

The County may temporarily transfer an employee to an available position with equivalent pay and benefits, if the alternative position would better accommodate the need for intermittent or reduced schedule leave.

When leave is required for planned medical treatment, the employee must make a reasonable effort to schedule such leave so as to minimize disruption of the employer's operations.

Intermittent or reduced schedule leave may be taken for the care of a newborn or newly placed adopted or foster child only when the schedule is mutually agreed upon by the County for this situation. In all cases, leave related to the birth, adoption or foster care placement of a child must be taken within one year of the birth or placement of the child.

Coordination of Leave:

The FMLA provides for protected *unpaid* leave of absence. However, FMLA leave taken at Wilkin County may be paid or unpaid, or a combination of both, due to additional leave running concurrently with FMLA leave. The use of paid leave benefits, if any, must occur first and be irrevocably discontinued before leaves of absence without pay are recorded.

Whenever applicable to the situation, additional forms of available leave shall run concurrently with FMLA leave including Minnesota pregnancy and parental leave, and all forms of available paid time off including but not limited to sick leave, vacation leave, disability leave, workers' compensation leave when applicable, third party sick/disability pay when applicable, and compensatory time off. An employee taking FMLA leave will be required to utilize and exhaust available accrued paid leave that is applicable according to the circumstances, prior to converting to unpaid leave status. Employees will not accrue paid time off or vacation during unpaid FMLA leave. However, the use of FMLA leave cannot result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of the employee's leave. Taking FMLA leave does not count as a break in service for retirement plan purposes.

Leave taken pursuant to a disability leave plan, such as short- or long-term disability insurance benefits, may be considered FMLA leave for a serious health condition and counted in the leave entitlement permitted under FMLA if it meets the criteria set forth above in 29 CFR § 825.112–825.115. In such cases, the County shall designate the leave as FMLA leave and count the leave against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement. Because

leave pursuant to a disability benefit plan is not unpaid, the provision for substitution of the employee's accrued paid leave is inapplicable, and neither the employee nor the County may require the substitution of paid leave. However, the County and employees may agree, where state law permits, to have paid leave supplement the disability plan benefits not to exceed 100% of the employee's pre-disability base wage.

If an employee takes paid sick, vacation, or other leave for a condition that is later determined to qualify under the FMLA, the County may designate all or some portion of related leave taken under this policy, to the extent that the earlier leave meets the necessary qualifications and requirements for designation under the FMLA.

Under certain circumstances, a qualified employee may be eligible for additional leave of absence beyond FMLA. All requests for additional leave of absence should be submitted to the County Administration Department.

Procedure for Requesting Leave, Notice, and Certification Requirements:

An employee requesting leave which may qualify under the FMLA must provide written or verbal notice of the need for leave to the County Administration Department as soon as reasonably practicable. Whenever the need for leave is foreseeable, the employee is required to provide notice at least 30 days prior to the date on which the leave is to commence. When an employee becomes aware of a need for FMLA leave less than 30 days in advance, the employee must provide notice of the need for leave within two business days. When the need for FMLA leave is not foreseeable, the employee must comply with the County's usual and customary notice and procedural requirements for requesting leave, absent unusual circumstances that would prevent the employee from doing so. Employees taking intermittent leave will be required to follow their department's regular call-in or notification procedures for approval of time off, to the extent reasonably practicable based on the nature of the condition requiring leave.

The County requires certification by the treating healthcare provider regarding the need for qualified FMLA leave, when the need for leave is due to the employee's serious health condition or that of an employee's family member. The County requires certification of the qualifying exigency for military family leave and for the serious injury or illness of a covered service member. The employee must respond to requests for certification within 15 days of the request or provide a reasonable explanation for the delay. Completed certification documentation must be provided to the County Administration Department. Failure to provide proper and complete certification, or required recertification, may result in a denial or delay of FMLA leave. The certification for leaves requested for medical reasons, will include the date of onset, the probable duration, type of treatment, and appropriate medical facts concerning the condition.

In its discretion, Wilkin County may request a second medical opinion and periodic recertification of the medical condition. This will be at Wilkin County's expense. If the medical opinion sought by Wilkin County differs from the certification from the

employee's health care provider, Wilkin County may, at its own expense, request the opinion of a third health care provider chosen by the employee and Wilkin County. The third opinion will be binding.

Recertification may be required when the employee requests an extension of the original length approved for the leave, when the circumstances regarding the leave have changed, or if the employer receives information casting doubt on the reason given for the absence. Recertification may also be required if there is a question regarding the validity of the certification or if the employee is unable to return to work as planned. In addition, when the need for leave extends beyond a single leave year, the employee shall be required to provide a new medical certification for each subsequent year.

Employer Notice, Certifications, and Designation Procedure:

Within five business days of the employee providing notice of their need for FMLA leave, the County shall provide the employee with the *Notice of Eligibility and Rights and Responsibilities*. The employer may request additional information sufficient to certify the need and eligibility for FMLA leave. Within five business days after the employee has submitted appropriate and sufficient certification documentation, the County will provide the employee with a written response to the employee's request for FMLA leave, using the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) *Designation Notice*.

Employee Status and Benefits during Leave:

An employee granted leave under this policy will continue to be covered under the County's group health plans, which shall include medical, dental, and vision plans, under the same conditions and at the same level of County contribution as would have been provided had the employee not taken FMLA leave. Rights to additional, continued benefits will depend on the County's established policy for providing such benefits when the employee is on other forms of leave, whether the leave is paid or unpaid. The employee is required to continue payment for any employee portion due for insurance coverage while on leave. Arrangements for payment of the employee's portion for insurance coverage must be made by the employee with the Auditor's Office. The County will continue making payroll deductions for other benefits while the employee is on paid leave. If the employee converts to unpaid leave, the employee may request continuation of other benefits by arranging to pay his or her portion of the premiums. If the employee does not continue payments for other benefits during unpaid leave, the County will discontinue coverage during the leave in accordance with plan administration rules.

Employees who fail to return to work for a minimum of 30 calendar days following FMLA leave for any reason other than a serious health condition, retirement, or other circumstances beyond their control will be required to repay Wilkin County for premiums paid on their behalf while on leave.

The County may require an employee on FMLA leave to report periodically regarding the employee's status and intent to return to work.

Return to Work and Reinstatement Following Leave:

Employees returning from FMLA leave are required to notify County Administration two days prior to their intended return date that they will be returning. An employee taking leave under this policy shall be required to provide a fitness for duty (FFD) clearance from the treating health care provider whenever the leave is for the employee's own health condition. Failure to provide the FFD certification in a timely manner may eliminate or delay the employee's right to reinstatement under the FMLA. If an employee is utilizing intermittent leave and reasonable safety concerns exist related to return to regular job duties, an FFD certification may be required as frequently as every 30 days during periods when the employee has used intermittent leave.

Employees returning from FMLA will generally be reinstated to the same position held prior to their FMLA protected leave, or to a position equivalent in pay, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment. However, no greater right to reinstatement or to other benefits, terms or conditions of employment exist than if the employee had been continuously employed during the FMLA leave period.

As is true with all policies, this policy is meant to conform to the applicable law, in this case the FMLA, as amended. Therefore, further clarification of specific terms and requirements of this policy can be found in the text of the federal regulations.

Personnel Policy Manual

HEALTH INSURANCE

Purpose

The County wishes to provide health insurance and additional insurance benefits to attract and retain qualified employees to perform County work.

Policy

Regular employees who are budgeted to work at least thirty (30) hours per week are eligible for participation in the health insurance program which includes certain core benefits and various elective insurance products.

Employees who have separated from County service may continue group insurance benefits according to federal and state law.

Benefit Package Plan

In addition to salary, the Employer offers a Benefit Package Plan that includes Medical Insurance and Dental Insurance, to each regular full-time employee. Employees are eligible for the Benefit Package Plan thirty (30) days after the first of the month following the month in which he/she becomes employed. The employee must complete all the Benefit Enrollment Forms at least fifteen (15) days prior to the effective date of eligibility for the plan. Regular and probationary part-time employees who are regularly scheduled to work a minimum of 30 hours per week shall receive a prorated contribution. Temporary, seasonal, and intermittent employees are not eligible for the benefits described herein. Employees working less than thirty (30) hours per week are not eligible for participation in the Benefit Package Plan.

Eligible employees may waive coverage under the Employer's plans by providing written evidence satisfactory to the Employer that they are covered by group medical insurance from another source at the time of each annual open enrollment and sign a current waiver of coverage under the Employer's plans. Subsequent coverage eligibility for such employees, if desired, shall be governed by the insurance plan itself and not this Agreement

Plans

Sub.1. Medical Insurance

Plan 1 - \$1,500 Deductible CMM Plan

Plan 2 - \$3,250 Deductible Plan with HSA/VEBA

Plan 3 - \$6,350 Deductible Plan with HSA/VEBA

Sub.2. Dental Insurance

Employee, Single +1, and Family comprehensive dental care plans are available.

Insurance Committee

Subd. 1. Creation

Wilkin County will have an insurance committee. The Insurance Committee will meet on an as needed basis to discuss and explore insurance coverage, changes to coverage and coverage options. The committee will present recommendations to the County Board. The Employer shall meet and confer with an insurance committee of County employees and managers in reviewing options for insurance coverage.

Subd. 2. Composition

The Committee will be formed of a two representatives from each of the employee groups of the County, both organized under the PELRA and unorganized groups including supervisor and department heads, the County Administrator, the County Auditor-Treasurer, and other such individuals as the County Board deems appropriate. The County Board will designate their representative for this committee. Each of the employee groups agrees to replace its representatives on the committee when he/she has served three (3) consecutive years. The AFSCME Each bargaining unit shall be able to have two representatives on the committee but only one vote.

Subd. 3. Powers

The Insurance Committee has the power to bind the various employee groups that are represented to changes in the medical and dental insurance policies used by the County for group insurance by a majority vote of the Insurance Committee. The decision of the Insurance Committee will be forwarded to the County Board as its recommendation for County Board's review and consideration. If the County Board approves the recommendation, then the changes in the insurance coverage will be placed in specifications which will be used to purchase new group insurance coverage for insurance. In the event the County Board rejects the recommendations, then the Insurance Committee will reconvene to consider the County Board's rejection and determine if other options exist for changes in the medical and dental insurance coverage.

Benefit Package Plan Contributions

Subd. 1. Single Coverage

The Employer shall pay the cost of the Benefit Package Plan for each eligible employee electing single coverage for all plans. Any additional costs for coverage shall be paid by the employee through authorized payroll deductions.

Subd. 2. Family Coverage

The Employer shall contribute \$1,300 each month towards the Benefit Package Plan. In no case shall the Employer contribution exceed that of the actual cost of coverage selected by the employee. The remainder of the costs for coverage will be paid by the employees through authorized payroll deductions.

HSA/VEBA Contributions

Plan 2: The Employer shall contribute \$50 per month for employees electing single coverage and \$75 per month for employees electing family coverage.

Plan 3: The Employer shall contribute \$200 per month for employees electing single coverage and \$300 per month for employees electing family coverage.

Life Insurance Benefits

The Employer shall provide supplemental life insurance benefits in the amount of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000.00) to all regular and probationary full-time employees and regular and probationary part-time employees that work thirty (30) hours or more per week at no cost to the employee. Eligible employees may purchase additional supplemental life insurance and/or coverage for eligible dependents where such coverages are offered by the carrier provided all required premiums are paid by the employee through authorized payroll deductions.

Personnel Policy Manual

EMPLOYEE TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Purpose

The County understands the value of employees maintaining current knowledge in their field and intends to provide learning opportunities for employees to build and maintain professional skills in order to perform County work.

Policy

The County shall conduct programs or ensure that learning opportunities are available to meet the mandatory training and development needs of County employees; offer learning opportunities to support County objectives; and encourage employee participation in formal educational pursuits that enhance job performance or potential for increased responsibility.

The County Administrator shall coordinate the assessment of the training and developmental needs of County employees and develop cost-effective strategies to address those needs.

The County Administrator shall oversee the design, delivery, and evaluation of countywide training programs and services.

County Departments and Offices may choose to implement specific training requirements and opportunities for their staff.

Procedure

Conferences, Workshops & Seminars:

Managers shall assess any employee request and approve or deny the costs for an employee attending a job-related conference, workshop, or seminar within the state, using the following criteria:

- The topic is relevant to the employee's job.
- The employee's attendance provides a direct benefit to the County either by keeping the employee abreast of current developments in their professional field, expanding their knowledge to meet operational goals, or assisting the Department in meeting County objectives.

All out of state conference, workshop, and seminar attendance is subject to the same criteria above, with one additional requirement: out of state attendance requires approval by the County Administrator.

Personnel Policy Manual

CLOTHING ALLOWANCE

Purpose

The County wishes to grant authority to County Departments and Offices to develop procedures and provide clothing allowances to individuals who, by the nature and demands of their work, may soil or ruin clothing in the course of their work, and to those who are expected to wear uniforms for work based on the industry norms for their professions.

Policy

The Department or Office wishing to provide a clothing allowance to employees not covered by a collective bargaining agreement shall draft the rules and procedures to define which employees are eligible to receive the allowance, in what amount, and under what conditions. The rules shall also define how the funds for these expenditures are budgeted within the Department or Office.

The Department or Office shall forward their draft rules and procedures to the County Administration Department for review and approval prior to implementation. They shall also submit subsequent revisions to these rules and procedures to the County Administration Department once the initial approval is granted.

Personnel Policy Manual

Vacation and Sick Donation Program

Policy

The Vacation and Sick Donation Program is the policy of Wilkin County to grant the donation of accrued vacation and/or sick from one employee to the sick leave account of another employee who is unable to retain his or her regular employment earnings due to a serious medical hardship or catastrophic illness or injury.

A catastrophic illness or injury is one that incapacitates the employee or a member of the employee's immediate family (as defined in the Wilkin County Employee Handbook) and which creates a financial hardship because the employee has exhausted all eligible leave credits.

Eligibility

Program recipients must meet the following criteria to receive donated hours:

1. Must be eligible to accrue vacation/sick leave.
2. Must have requested donated leave due to a catastrophic illness or injury or serious medical hardship.
3. Must have written verification of illness/injury from a licensed medical provider.
4. Must have vacation and sick donation request approval from his/her department head and the Department Head must submit to County Administration within three business days of their approval for final approval by the County Administrator.
5. Must have exhausted all paid leave earned pursuant to the applicable personnel policies covering vacation, sick leave, and compensatory time off and must not be receiving long term disability benefits or worker's compensation payments.

A leave donor must meet the following criteria and requirements.

1. An irrevocable donation of not more than the donor's current accrued vacation or sick leave donated in increments of one hour with a minimum donation of one hour.
2. Certification that no solicitation and/or acceptance of any money, credit, gift, gratuity, thing of value or compensation of any kind has been provided, directly or indirectly, to the donor.

Limitations

A full-time employee may not receive more than 520 hours of Vacation and Sick Donation Program leave per request (except on recommendation of their Department Head). The total hours from all sources should not exceed 40 hours per week. The maximum hours a part-time employee may receive will be prorated so that the total hours from all sources should not exceed the employee's regularly scheduled hours in a week.

The Vacation and Sick Donation Program shall not grant sick leave hours to employees who are eligible for or receive wage replacement benefits for the same time period from other sources. Therefore, employees shall not be granted Vacation and Sick Donation Program leave for the same period of time during which they also receive worker's compensation wage replacement benefits or other wage replacement benefits.

Procedures

- The Vacation and Sick Donation Program is administered by the County Administration Office.
- Participation in the program is on a strictly voluntary basis.

Recipient

- Requests are subject to approval of the *Application for Use of Donated Vacation and Sick* form which is available in the County Administration Office. In the event the employee is unable to complete the *Application for Use of Donated Vacation and Sick* form, the employee's designated family member may complete the form on behalf of the employee.
- Donated leave hours are not considered PERA eligible.
- To receive donated vacation and sick, an employee must complete a *Medical Information Form* signed by the physician including the physician's statement.
- The *Application for Use of Donation and Sick* and *Physician's Statement* must be forwarded to the County Administration Office after approval from Department Head. The County Administration office will develop a separate vacation and sick donation leave file with separate files for each ongoing case. The donated hours will remain in the recipients file for 180 consecutive days, at which time a new application may be required.
- The leave recipient shall continue to accrue sick and vacation leave while using donated leave time. This entitlement shall be retained and credited to the employee upon his/her return to work.
- The recipient does not need to pay back donated time received.
- The County Administrative Office will provide memorandums for posting (not to be on public bulletin boards) and for department supervisors to advise them of a request for donated hours.
- The recipient may request to be identified on posted notices.
- The recipient may only use time received for when they were actually absent. It may not be above and beyond the needed leave.

Donor

- A *Vacation Donation Contribution Form* will be available from the Department Heads and/or County Administration and must be signed and returned to that office before a donation can be effective.
- The payroll administrator will be responsible for subtracting the donated vacation and sick leave from the contributing employees vacation and sick balance when

notified that it has been used. The contribution form must be forwarded to the County Administration Office.

- The donor may request to be identified.
- All donations must be directed to a specific employee; they will not be banked.
- Donated time will only be converted into sick leave (hours).
- Donated vacation and sick hours will be converted to an hour to hour rate regardless of hourly rate.
- Donations are not tax deductible.
- Donations will be used on a first come basis. The County Administrative Office will work closely with the applicable Department Head to apply donated vacation or sick to a recipient's sick leave balance during the pay period the contributions have been received. If the contributions are received prior to payroll, it may be necessary to apply those hours the following pay period. If there are excess donations, those excess hours will be adjusted and given back to the contributing employee and the *Vacation Donation Contribution Form* will be returned to the donating employee.
- Donations cannot be made if the employee has submitted a resignation prior to the donation request.

The final decision on the award and distribution of donated leave time rests with the County Administrator and shall not be subject to any labor agreement or County policy grievance procedure. In making decisions, the County Administrator shall review the employee's application, the department's verification of exhaustion of all paid leave, and all medical evidence submitted by the employee, including but not limited to a physician's statement. The County Administrator may request additional information from the applicant

Personnel Policy Manual

Discrimination & Harassment Prevention

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Communicate that Wilkin County will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, or conduct which creates a hostile work environment; and
2. Define a process for reporting, investigating and addressing unlawful and inappropriate discriminatory and harassing behavior.

Policy

Wilkin County is committed to having a workplace and atmosphere free from all forms of unlawful harassment and unlawful discrimination, including express and implied. No employee should be subjected to discrimination or harassment. All employees are expected to treat their coworkers, subordinates, vendors, applicants for employment, supervisors and the public with respect at all times. This policy applies to the workplace during normal business hours, to business travel, and to all work-related social functions, even if such activities are held off-site. The County expects that all relationships among persons in the office will be business-like and free of bias, prejudice, and harassment. Each individual has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal employment opportunities and prohibits discriminatory practices, including harassment.

These policies apply to all applicants, employees, agents, officers, commissioners, and elected officials, whether related to conduct engaged in by fellow employees or someone not directly connected to the County (e.g., an outside vendor, consultant, customer, or entity)

The County shall provide a process for receiving, investigating, and acting upon the findings of any complaints alleging violations of this policy or the law with regard to discrimination, harassment, or creation of a hostile work environment.

The County shall determine if behavior violates this policy or law. If so, the County may impose discipline.

The County will not tolerate acts of retaliation against employees who have made a good faith report of suspected violations or any person who assists or participates in an investigation or a proceeding related to such investigation.

The County will not tolerate false claims of discrimination or harassment and will consider such claims in violation of this policy.

Definitions

Discrimination:

Unfair or unequal treatment of an individual (or group) based on the individual or group being a members of a protected category.

Harassment:

Unwelcome conduct based on someone's membership in a protected category that:

1. Unreasonably interferes with an employee's job performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment; or
2. Affects their employment opportunities or compensation.

Harassment is discrimination.

The absence of intent to harass an individual is not a defense to a complaint of harassment. The determination of whether conduct is unlawful harassment is based on whether the conduct is offensive to the subject and to a reasonable person.

Harassment Officer:

The County Administrator

Protected Categories:

Protected categories include: race, color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, ethnicity/national origin, age, disability, marital status, pregnancy, familial status, public assistance status, genetic information, veteran or military status, local human rights commission activity, exercise of rights related to family and medical leave, and any other characteristic or category protected by law.

Retaliation:

Overt or covert acts of reprisal, interference, restraint, penalty, discrimination, intimidation or harassment against an individual or group exercising rights under this policy.

Supervisory Personnel:

County supervisors, managers, department heads, lead workers or person in a role acting in place of a supervisor.

Prohibited Conduct

The following behavior violates this policy and will be considered misconduct, which may result in discipline up to and including termination of employment:

Discrimination and Harassment:

The County forbids discrimination and harassment of employees, coworkers, subordinates, supervisors, and applicants for employment, vendors and the public on the basis of protected category status.

Discriminatory or harassing behavior includes, but is not limited to

- Derogatory remarks about a person's membership in a protected category.

- Visual messages (e.g., postings of cartoons) which are demeaning to a protected category.
- Jokes that stereotype or make fun of a protected category.
- Nicknames for protected categories.
- Verbal or nonverbal (e.g., mimicking or imitating) innuendoes that have a negative connotation for a protected category.

Retaliation:

The County forbids retaliation against anyone who makes a good faith complaint of a violation of this policy or the law, or who participates in an investigation concerning discrimination and/or harassment.

False Claims:

The County forbids anyone making an intentionally false claim of discrimination and/or harassment.

Procedure

Complaints of violations of the County's Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy or related law shall be assessed to determine appropriate action. Violations by any employee may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Non-Supervisory Employee Responsibilities:

Non-supervisory employees observing conduct, receiving information or with any knowledge of inappropriate conduct of this nature are strongly encouraged to address such behavior and bring this policy to the attention of the participants. Non-supervisory employees should report the behavior promptly to any Supervisory Personnel or Harassment Officer.

An employee who believes he or she is being subjected to discrimination or harassment in any form, or has knowledge or belief of conduct on the part of another employee, coworker, subordinate, supervisor, manager, department head, vendor, public contact, or any other individual which may constitute a violation of this policy or law, should report the conduct to any Supervisory Personnel or Harassment Officer. The County requests written reports of such conduct when possible. The County Discrimination/Harassment Complaint Form is available on the County HR Portal or by contacting the County Administration Department. The report should detail the incident(s) and include a summary of actions taken by the employee or witness.

The employee subjected to the inappropriate behavior is strongly encouraged to tell the individual(s) engaging in the behavior to stop.

Supervisory Personnel Responsibilities:

Supervisory Personnel are responsible for maintaining a work environment that is respectful and free from discrimination and harassment in any form.

Supervisory Personnel shall take immediate action to stop discriminatory and/or harassing behavior when observing the behavior. Supervisory Personnel shall also immediately contact a Harassment Officer. Supervisory Personnel shall complete and forward a written report of the incident to a Harassment Officer within two business days.

When Supervisory Personnel receive a complaint or information of discriminatory and/or harassing behavior, Supervisory Personnel shall immediately contact a Harassment Officer. Supervisory Personnel shall also complete and forward a written report including details of the incident(s) and include a summary of actions taken by the employee or witness.

Failure to follow these Supervisory Personnel responsibilities shall be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Complaint Investigation:

Upon receiving such a complaint or report, the Harassment Officer shall determine whether an investigation is merited, who will investigate, and what methods will be used in the investigation.

The County shall assess, investigate, and take necessary action to address and resolve a complaint of discriminatory and/or harassing behavior. Every effort will be made to respect the privacy and identity of all parties involved in a complaint. The County, however, retains the right to disclose the identities of parties involved in a complaint, including witnesses, to those with a need or right to know. The complainant(s), the alleged harasser(s) and witnesses are required to cooperate in the investigation.

The Harassment Officer will communicate the results of the investigation, the determination as to whether the incident constitutes a violation of this policy, and recommendation(s) to the Department Head(s) of the alleged violator(s), and/or to the Personnel Committee, if applicable. The Department Head(s) shall consult with the County Administrator to determine appropriate disciplinary action, if any. The Department Head or designee shall take action to ensure the behavior is corrected. Failure of the Department Head or designee to take the agreed upon action promptly shall be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. The Harassment Officer shall also communicate to the complainant(s) regarding conclusion of the investigation.

County Attorney Responsibilities:

The County Attorney will assist the Harassment Officer(s) in evaluating and investigating complaints of harassment and discrimination.

Personnel Policy Manual

RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE

Purpose

The County is committed to promoting a respectful and professional work environment, providing employees with a workplace that is conducive to productivity and positive customer service. Respect for one another is fundamental to maintaining an efficient and effective work environment.

Policy

It is the policy of Wilkin County to maintain a respectful workplace and public service environment free from violence, discrimination, harassment, and other offensive or degrading behavior or conduct. The County will not tolerate such behavior by or toward any employee. Disrespectful or unprofessional communications and behavior can disrupt the efficient functioning of the workplace. Any employee found to have acted in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

The County shall provide a reporting process and investigative practices for reported violation of this policy.

Standards of Behavior and Expectations:

Every employee of the County has the right to work in a respectful workplace. In order to promote and sustain a workplace where all employees are treated with respect and dignity, regardless of their status or position, each employee is expected to abide by these values and standards of interpersonal behavior, communication and professionalism:

- a) Treat employees and others with respect, civility, and courtesy. Respect and value the contributions of all members of our workforce, regardless of status or role in the organization.
- b) Work honestly, effectively and collegially with employees and others. Respond courteously and appropriately to requests from others for assistance or information.
- c) Engage in non-retaliatory problem-solving processes that address concerns regarding respectful or professional communications or behavior.
- d) Encourage and support all employees in developing their individual conflict management skills. Use informal means to address issues with individuals whenever possible.

- e) Participate fully and in good faith in any informal resolution process or formal complaint and investigation process.
- f) Have an open and cooperative approach in dealings with employees and co-workers, recognizing and embracing individual differences.
- g) Recognize that differing social and cultural standards may mean that behavior that is acceptable to some may be perceived as unacceptable or unreasonable to others.
- h) Abide by applicable rules, regulations, policies, and bylaws and address any dissatisfaction with, or violation of, specific policies and procedures through appropriate channels.
- i) Demonstrate commitment to continuous personal and professional learning and development.
- j) Demonstrate commitment to a culture where all employees cooperate and collaborate in using best practices to achieve high work-related outcomes.
- k) Be responsible stewards of material and human assets to achieve excellence, innovation, and sharing of knowledge across the organization.
- l) Employees in supervisory and management positions must model civility for others and clearly define expectations for how employees treat each other. Individuals in supervisory and management positions are responsive to complaints when they are brought forward.

Behavior which violates this policy includes, but is not limited to:

1. A pattern of behavior that a reasonable person would find to be demeaning, humiliating, or offensive.
2. Discriminatory behavior which includes inappropriate remarks about or conduct related to an employee's race, color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, ethnicity/national origin, disability, marital status, pregnancy, familial status, age, disability, status with regard to public assistance, genetic information, veteran or military status, local human rights commission activity, exercise of rights related to family and medical leave, and any other characteristic or category protected by law. Also see the County's Discrimination & Harassment Prevention Policy.
3. Offensive behavior includes patterns of actions that have a negative impact on the work environment such as: vulgar obscenities, name calling, disrespectful language, or the intentional filing of an unfounded complaint under this policy.
4. Violent behavior which includes the use of physical force, harassment or intimidation, or abuse of power or authority. Making threats of violence, retribution, litigation, or financial harm.

5. Making comments or engaging in behavior directed as a personal attack on the professional conduct of others. Shouting or engaging in other speech, conduct, or mannerisms that are reasonably perceived by others to represent intimidation or harassment.
6. Making or telling jokes that are intended to be, or that are reasonably perceived by others to be, crude or offensive; teasing, name calling, ridicule or making someone the brunt of pranks or practical jokes. Using sarcasm or cynicism directed as a personal attack on others.
7. Intentionally making comments or engaging in behavior that is untruthful; or spreading unsubstantiated rumors or gossip.
8. Making actual or threatened inappropriate physical contact.
9. Throwing instruments, tools, office equipment, or other items as an expression of anger, criticism, or threat, or in an otherwise disrespectful or abusive manner.
10. Engaging in any pattern of disruptive behavior or interaction that could interfere with the workplace or adversely impact the quality of services.

Procedure

Responding to Violations of this Policy:

Responding to behavior which violates this policy is most effectively handled immediately by the person(s) observing the behavior. An employee who believes that they have been treated in violation of this policy by any person in relation to employment with the County should deal with the situation in one or more of the following ways:

- a) The person who is the target or observer of the behavior should politely but firmly request that the person cease the behavior. The employee may request that a coworker or union representative accompany them. This meeting may include describing how the behavior is disrespectful (e.g., causing feelings of intimidation, offense, or discomfort, unwanted).
- b) The person who is the target or observer of the behavior may write a statement describing the incident(s) of inappropriate behavior, a summary of the conversation with the person violating this policy, and a description of that person's response to the conversation following the incident. This statement may be provided to a supervisor or the County Administration Department as appropriate based on the severity of the situation.
- c) If an employee fears that adverse employment consequences could result from direct conversation with the offender or feels uncomfortable talking directly to the offender for any reason, the employee may go to their supervisor, manager, the Department Head, or the County Administration Department. In the event the complaint is against their Department Head, the employee should report it to the County Administrator. The report of such an incident should include the details of the situation and the resolution sought.

- d) In the case of violent behavior, all employees are required to report the incident immediately to a supervisor, manager, the Department Head, or the County Administration Department, and to the proper legal authorities dependent upon the nature and severity of the incident.
- e) If an issue cannot be resolved by addressing the situation directly, or by working through the appropriate management and leadership team within the employee's work area, the employee may consider filing a formal complaint with the County Administration Department. See the section on "How to File a Complaint."

The cooperation of all employees is required to reestablish and maintain a respectful environment. Employees must make efforts to be aware of the sensitivity of those individuals with whom they work. Disrespectful or unprofessional behavior may or may not be intentional. To ensure an efficiently functioning workplace, employees are encouraged to informally resolve concerns whenever possible.

Responsibilities of Supervisory and Management Employees:

Management's responsibilities include investigating or appropriately following up on all complaints and making necessary efforts to reestablish or provide an environment free of disrespectful behavior to protect the rights of all employees. Management should promptly consult with the County Administration Department regarding significant issues related to this policy; and if they have questions regarding how to appropriately address a concern that has come to their attention.

Supervisors and managers shall deal swiftly and vigorously with persons treating others disrespectfully. An employee who engages in disrespectful workplace behavior is subject to standard disciplinary procedures.

A supervisor or manager who becomes aware of disrespectful workplace behavior and fails to take appropriate actions against it is subject to disciplinary procedures.

A supervisor or manager who receives such a complaint shall record their actions in response to the complaint, including any investigation, correction or discipline. The records should be maintained by the supervisor/manager or the County Administration Department, as appropriate.

When conducting an investigation, management shall operate within the requirements of the Minnesota Data Practices Act, County policy, and other applicable rules and regulations.

How to File a Complaint:

All employees are encouraged to voice their concern if they feel they are being treated disrespectfully. The County offers many options when seeking assistance, such as reporting the concern to a supervisor or manager, the Department Head, or the County Administration Department.

If the problem cannot be resolved by the employee asking the person to stop or reporting the behavior to their supervisor or manager, or to the Department Head, an employee may submit a formal complaint by completing the Respectful Workplace Complaint Form which is available on the County's HR Portal or by contacting County Administration. The completed form should be submitted to the County Administration Department. Complaints must contain details of the situation and the identity of the person or persons against whom the complaint is being made.

Follow-Up and Investigation of a Complaint:

The County Administrator will review the complaint and the employee will generally be contacted within five business days.

The County Administrator will discuss the complaint with the employee, review details, and gather supporting information as appropriate.

The County Administrator will determine if the complaint needs to be investigated further. If it is determined that the complaint requires further action, it will be investigated to conclusion.

Results of the investigation will be compiled into a report by the investigating party and sent to the County Administrator and the Department Head of where the complaint originated as appropriate.

The County Administrator or designee, or the Department Head, will follow up to ensure violations of this policy have been addressed.

Retaliation Prohibited:

The County will not tolerate acts of retaliation against employees who have made a good faith report of suspected violations of this policy or any person who assists or participates in an investigation or a proceeding related to such an investigation.

Personnel Policy Manual

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Purpose

The County is committed to providing employees with a safe workplace that is free from violence; reducing employee vulnerability to workplace violence; responding quickly to employees when workplace violence occurs; and supporting employees who experience such acts, both at the time of and subsequent to the incident.

Policy

County employees are expected to serve angry, upset, or otherwise disgruntled customers with patience, courtesy, and respect. However, no employee is required to tolerate physical or verbal threats to one's safety, or physical or verbal abuse. Further, it is a goal of the County to maintain a work environment that provides for respectful conflict resolution.

The County is committed to:

- providing services to the public in a professional and caring manner;
- providing a safe environment for employees and the public;
- reducing employee vulnerability to workplace violence;
- responding quickly to employees if workplace violence occurs;
- supporting employees who experience violence both at the time of, and subsequent to, the incident.

Definition

Violence is the use of harassment, intimidation, physical force, or the abuse of power or authority, where the intent is to control by causing pain, fear or hurt. The County acknowledges that employees may be exposed to violence by the very nature of their jobs in the provision of service to the public. The County acknowledges that human relationships include the potential for conflict, which may result in violence. This includes the actions of employees, clients, other internal or external customers, vendors, or any other person. The County recognizes that violence at work, family violence, or any other type of violence may impact an employee's work performance.

Procedure

The County assumes the initiative for maintaining a safe workplace. The County retains the authority to act appropriately in performance evaluation and disciplinary procedures. The intention of these procedures is not to conflict with any other County policy or procedure.

Each Department Head is charged with the development, maintenance, and communication of procedures for addressing workplace violence relevant to the functions of the area(s) they oversee. These include procedures for prevention, incident response, and actions

following an incident. The Department Head or their designee provides orientation, training, and support on workplace violence prevention, reporting, and response procedures pertinent to their departments and/or service delivery areas.

Each employee is responsible for participating in training, asking questions as needed to seek clarification or guidance, and adhering to these procedures.

If an employee is threatened or assaulted, the first thing the employee should do is end the encounter and move to a secure place. If defense is necessary, it should be reasonable and proportionate to the situation with a minimum of contact with, or injury to, the individual. The County supports acts of self-defense when an employee is doing so to protect themselves. Once in a secure setting, the employee should obtain medical help if needed and report the incident to law enforcement and to their supervisor or Department Head. Calling 911 may be appropriate for either law enforcement or medical support.

If an employee sees or overhears a violent incident in progress, they should either intervene or call for help. Again, calling 911 may be appropriate for either law enforcement or medical support.

If a violent incident occurs, the employee involved must report the incident to their supervisor or to the Department Head. Follow-up will vary depending on the incident.

Personnel Policy Manual

EMPLOYEE DISCIPLINE & DISCHARGE

Purpose

The County administers a consistent and fair system of discipline to correct employee behavior or conduct to ensure competent delivery of service and avoid misconduct and the associated costs.

Policy

The County affirms its right and responsibility to develop and administer the policies, disciplinary measures and general work rules necessary to ensure high quality service delivery, effective operations, fair and respectful interpersonal interactions, professional conduct, and safe working conditions. The County retains all rights and privileges not specifically addressed in these Policies.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of conduct and/or behaviors that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment:

1. Lack of ability to competently and efficiently perform the duties of the position or classification held by the employee with or without a reasonable accommodation.
2. Failure to produce the quality of work and/or the quantity of work the position or classification requires.
3. Inappropriate treatment of other employees or other persons.
4. Acceptance of a fee, gift or other item of value in the course of the employee's work which might reasonably be construed as evidence of or has the appearance of favoritism, coercion, unfair advantage or collusion.
5. Violations of County or departmental rule, regulation, or policy
6. Insubordination or refusal to comply with employer's instructions.
7. Failure to observe safety rules or regulations or engaging in unsafe work practices.
8. Careless, negligent, or willful conduct which causes loss, defacing, or damage of County property.
9. Misappropriation and/or mismanagement of County funds.
10. Theft of County property or theft of personal property from the workplace.
11. Deliberate or careless conduct endangering the safety of self or other employees, including the provocation or instigation of violence.
12. Possession of illegal weapons while on duty.
13. Unapproved acceptance of employment or volunteer activity determined to be a conflict of interest with County employment.

14. Intentional falsification of personnel records, payroll reports/timecards, or other County records.
15. Falsifying, unauthorized destroying, or inappropriately modifying County reports or records.
16. Violating the data privacy rights of any employee, client or member of the public.
17. Reporting to work under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or controlled substance.
18. Possessions or consumption of alcohol, illegal drugs, or controlled substance while on duty.
19. Violating a criminal or traffic law which has potential for having a negative impact on the employee's ability to do the job, or otherwise threatens the safety of co-workers or members of the public.
20. Failure to notify supervisor within one business day if employee is the subject of a misdemeanor, gross misdemeanor, or felony arrest, charge, and/or conviction, or is incarcerated for any reason.
21. Unauthorized absence from work.
22. Excessive unexcused absences, reporting to work late, or leaving work before the ends of the scheduled shift, or extended break periods.
23. Conduct or performance on the job that tends to lower discipline, morale, or causes disrespect among County employees, or that adversely affects the rendering of prompt, courteous, and efficient service by the County and its employees to the public.
24. Sexual, racial, sexual orientation, ethnic, or other harassment of the public or any County employee.
25. Engaging in threatening or intimidating conduct toward others or retaliation in the workplace.
26. Breaching standards of conduct applicable to the employee's profession.
27. Falsifying information, willful deception, or misrepresentation on an employment application or regarding information provided during the interviewing, testing, recruitment, and selection process.
28. Engaging in a conflict of interest. Before engaging in any other employment or activity that might be or appears to be a conflict of interest, the employee shall obtain prior approval from the department head. A conflict of interest exists when the employee's outside employment or activity is inconsistent, incompatible, or in conflict with County employment.
29. Engaging in deception, fraud, or misrepresentation in the employment application, examination and/or selections process by omitting information or furnishing false, misleading or fraudulent information, certificate or license.
30. Engaging in prohibited political activity.

The foregoing list is not intended to be all inclusive in defining standards of conduct or obligations which employees must observe at all times.

An Employee, after having successfully completed the required probationary period, unless covered by a collective bargaining agreement or contract requiring otherwise, is employed at will and may be terminated by Wilkin County for any reason, with or without notice.

Discipline:

Outlined below are the steps of Wilkin County's progressive discipline. Wilkin County reserves the right to combine or skip steps depending on the facts of each situation and the nature of the offense. The level of disciplinary intervention may also vary. Some of the factors that will be considered are whether the offense is repeated despite coaching, counseling, or training, the employee's work record, and the impact the conduct or performance issues have on the organization. The County generally uses progressive discipline but maintains that any incident of employee misconduct or violation of policy may result in disciplinary action at any level, including discharge from employment, depending upon the circumstances and severity of the conduct or violation.

The supervisor shall inform the Department Head and the County Administrator prior to initiating disciplinary action to ensure consistency.

Employees shall be permitted to respond to formal disciplinary action by preparing a written response to the disciplining authority and having that response placed in their personnel file.

Levels of Disciplinary Action:

1. Documented Verbal Warning (or reprimand) – A formal action documented by the supervisor regarding the employee's behavior to change, cease, or begin. It is generally given for a first occurrence of a policy violation or engagement in misconduct, or related to an infraction of less significance. Verbal warnings are documented and placed in the employee's personnel file.
2. Written Warning (or reprimand) – A formal action by the supervisor providing official notice of the violation or misconduct, the corrections and time frame expected, and the consequences for failing to correct the infractions. The maximum timeframe which may be allowed for correction is twelve (12) months. The written warning shall be maintained in the employee's personnel file.
3. Suspension – An employee may be temporarily removed from their assigned position, with or without compensation, seniority, or benefits, in compliance with applicable state and federal regulations. The notice of suspension shall be written and shall notify the employee of the factual basis for the suspension, directives for correcting the action or behavior, the consequences for future violations of a condition or other rule, and a notice that the suspension may be appealed. The notice of suspension shall be maintained in the employee's personnel file.

4. Demotion – An employee may be demoted as a disciplinary action, to a position in a lower grade with less responsibility.

5. Discharge – Permanent separation from County employment.
A termination decision must be reviewed and approved by the County Administrator. The Department Head may place the employee on a leave of absence with or without pay until the discharge has been reviewed by the County Administrator. If the employee has fulfilled their probationary period and therefore is not considered an at-will employee; the employee will be afforded a Loudermill Hearing. A Loudermill hearing is part of the "due process" requirement that must be provided to a public employee prior to removing or impacting the employment property right (e.g. imposing severe discipline). The purpose of a "Loudermill hearing" is to provide an employee an opportunity to present their side of the story before the employer makes a decision on discipline. If the County Administrator approves the discharge recommendation after consideration of the loudermill hearing, termination will be final.

A. Notice of Intent:

If a Supervisor, in consultation with the Department Head, recommends discharge of an at-will employee, the Supervisor shall notify the employee, in writing, of the discharge. After the discharge, the Department Head shall seek the County Administrator's ratification of the discharge decision.

B. County Administrator approval of Discharge:

The discharge shall be effective only after:

- 1) The County Administrator has approved the discharge.

Wilkin County may elect to administer disciplinary action in a progressive manner. However, Wilkin County reserves the right in all situations to decide the appropriate level and type of disciplinary action to be applied, based on the specific facts and circumstances involved. It is recognized that certain circumstances warrant deviation from the suggested order of progressive discipline, and that in certain situations progressive discipline is not appropriate in response to the offense.

Disciplinary action involving removal of a qualified veteran who has completed the initial probationary period shall include the appropriate notice of rights regarding a hearing. Qualified veterans considered for removal shall be afforded all applicable rights in accordance with Minnesota law.

No discipline policy can be expected to address each and every situation requiring correction action that may arise in the workplace. Therefore, Wilkin County takes a comprehensive approach regarding discipline and will attempt to consider all relevant factors before making decisions regarding appropriate disciplinary action.

Personnel Policy Manual

SOCIAL MEDIA

Purpose

Social networking in government serves two primary functions: to communicate and deliver messages directly to citizens and to encourage citizen involvement, interaction, and feedback. Information which is distributed via social networking must be accurate, consistent, and timely and meet the information needs of the County's customers. Since social media is used for social networking, this policy seeks to ensure proper use of Wilkin County's social media sites by its representatives.

Wilkin County wishes to establish a positive and informative social media presence. County representatives have the responsibility to use the County's social media resources in an efficient, effective, ethical and lawful manner pursuant to all existing County and departmental policies. This policy also provides guidelines and standards for county representatives regarding the use of social media for communication with residents, colleagues and all other followers.

Policy

Wilkin County will determine, at its discretion, how its web-based social media resources will be designed, implemented and managed as part of its overall communication and information sharing strategy. County social media sites may be modified or removed by the County at any time and without notice, as described in this document.

Wilkin County social media accounts are considered a County asset and administrator access to these accounts must be securely administered in accordance with the County's Computer Use policy. The County reserves the right to shut down any of its social media sites or accounts for any reason without notice.

All social media web sites created and utilized during the course and scope of an employee's performance of his/her job duties will be identified as belonging to Wilkin County, including a link to the County's official website.

Scope

This policy applies to any existing or proposed social media web sites sponsored, established, registered or authorized by Wilkin County. This policy also covers the private use of the County's social media accounts by all County representatives, including its employees and agents, appointed board or commission members and all public safety volunteers to the extent it affects the County. Questions regarding the scope of this policy should be directed to County Administration.

Definition

Social media are internet and mobile-based applications, websites and functions, other than email, for sharing and discussing information, where users can post photos, video, comments and links to other information to create content on any imaginable topic. This may be referred to as “user-generated content” or “consumer-generated media.”

Social media includes, but is not limited to:

- Social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and online dating services/mobile apps
- Blogs
- Social news sites such as Reddit and BuzzFeed
- Video and photo sharing sites such as YouTube, Instagram, SnapChat, and Flickr
- Wikis, or shared encyclopedias such as Wikipedia
- An ever emerging list of new web-based platforms generally regarded as social media or having many of the same functions as those listed above

As used in this policy, “employees and agents” means all County representatives, including its employees and other agents of the county, such as independent contractors or Commissioners.

Rules of Use

County employees and agents with administrator access are responsible for managing social media websites. Facilities or departments wishing to have a new social media presence must initially submit a request to the County Administrator in order to ensure social media accounts are kept to a sustainable number and policies are followed. All approved sites will be clearly marked as a Wilkin County site and will be linked with the official County website (www.wilkincounty.gov). No one may establish social media accounts or websites on behalf of the County unless authorized in accordance with this policy.

Administration of all social media web sites must comply with applicable laws, regulations, and policies as well as proper business etiquette.

County social media accounts accessed and utilized during the course and scope of an employee’s performance of his/her job duties may not be used for private or personal purposes or for the purpose of expressing private or personal views on personal, political or policy issues or to express personal views or concerns pertaining to County employment relations matters.

No social media website may be used by the County or any County employee or agent to disclose private or confidential information. No social media web site should be used to disclose sensitive information; if there is any question as to whether information is private, confidential or sensitive, contact County Administration.

When using social media sites as a representative of the County, employees and agents will act in a professional manner. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Adhere to all County personnel and Computer Use policies

- Use only appropriate language
- Be aware that content will not only reflect on the writer but also on Wilkin County as a whole, including elected officials and other county employees and agents. Make sure information is accurate and free of grammatical errors.
- Not providing private or confidential information, including names, or using such material as part of any content added to a site.
- Not negatively commenting on community partners or their services, or using such material as part of any content added to a site.
- Not providing information related to pending decisions that would compromise negotiations.
- Be aware that all content added to a site is subject to open records/right to know laws and discovery in legal cases.
- Always keep in mind the appropriateness of content.
- Comply with any existing code of ethical behavior established by the County.

Where moderation of comments is an available option, comments from the public will be moderated by County staff, with administrative rights, before posting. Where moderation prior to posting is not an option, sites will be regularly monitored by County staff.

Wilkin County's staff with administrative rights will not edit any posted comments. However, comments posted by members of the public will be removed if they are abusive, obscene, defamatory, in violation of the copyright, trademark right or other intellectual property right of any third party, or otherwise inappropriate or incorrect. The following are examples of content that may be removed by County staff before or shortly after being published:

- Potentially libelous comments
- Obscene or racist comments
- Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
- Plagiarized material
- Private, personal information published without consent
- Comments totally unrelated to the topic of the forum
- Commercial promotions or spam
- Hyperlinks to material that is not directly related to the discussion

Personal Social Media Use

Wilkin County respects employees and agents' rights to post and maintain personal websites, blogs and social media pages and to use and enjoy social media on their own personal devices during non-work hours. The County requires employees and agents to act in a prudent manner with regard to website and internet postings that reference Wilkin County, its personnel, its operation or its property. Employees and agents and others affiliated with the County must respect all trademark, copyright, and intellectual property laws. Employees may not use a county brand, logo or other county identifiers on their personal sites, except as permitted by fair use laws, nor post information that purports to be the position of the County without prior authorization.

County employees and agents are discouraged from identifying themselves as county employees when responding to or commenting on blogs with personal opinions or views. If an employee chooses to identify him or herself as a Wilkin County employee, and posts a statement on a matter related to County business, a disclaimer similar to the following must be used:

“These are my own opinions and do not represent those of Wilkin County.”

Employees and agents should also review the Ownership section of this policy (below).

There may be times when personal use of social media (even if it is off-duty or using the employee’s own equipment) may spill over into the workplace and become the basis for employee coaching or discipline. Examples of situations where this might occur include:

- Friendships, dating or romance between co-workers
- Cyber-bullying, stalking or harassment
- Release of confidential or private data; if there are questions about what constitute confidential or private data, contact the Auditor-Treasurer
- Unlawful activities
- Misuse of county-owned social media
- Use of the county’s name, logo, or the employee’s position or title, that does not comply with applicable fair use, copyright, trademark, or other intellectual property laws
- Using county-owned equipment or county-time for extensive personal social media use

Each situation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis because the laws in this area are complex. If you have any questions about what types of activities might result in discipline, please discuss the type of usage with your Department Head or the County Administrator.

Data Ownership

All social media communications or messages composed, sent, or received on county equipment in an official capacity are the property of the County and will be subject to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. This law classifies certain information as available to the public upon request. Wilkin also maintains the sole property rights to any image, video or audio captured while a County employee is representing the County in any capacity.

The County retains the right to monitor employee’s social media use on county equipment and will exercise its right as necessary. Users should have no expectation of privacy. Social media is not a secure means of communication.

Policy Violations

Violations of the Policy will subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including discharge from employment.

Cell Phone and Wireless Communications Policy

Purpose

This policy is intended to define acceptable and unacceptable uses of wireless communications devices, including but not limited to cellular telephones and tablets, while engaged in activities or duties related to County employment. Its application is to ensure wireless communications device usage is consistent with the best interests of the County without unnecessary restriction of employees in the conduct of their duties. This policy will be implemented to prevent the improper use or abuse of wireless communications devices and to ensure that County employees exercise the highest standards of propriety in their use.

Our employee cell phone policy outlines our guidelines for using cell phones at work.

We recognize that cell phones (and smartphones especially) have become an integral part of everyday life. They may be a great asset if used correctly (for productivity apps, calendars, business calls etc.) But, cell phones may also cause problems when used imprudently or excessively.

Policy

Wireless communications devices are intended for the use of County employees in the conduct of their work for the County. The County expects all employees who are required to drive as part of their job to drive safely and legally while on County business, including following the laws governing use of wireless communications devices while operating a motor vehicle.

Supervisors are responsible for the county-issued wireless communications devices assigned to their employees and will exercise discretion in their assigned use.

Despite their benefits, cell phones may cause problems in the workplace. Employees who use their personal cell phones excessively may:

- Get distracted from their work.
- Disturb colleagues by speaking on their phones.
- Cause security issues from inappropriate use of county-issued equipment or misuse of our county's internet connection
- Cause accidents when they illegally use their phones inside company vehicles or near areas where using phones is prohibited.

Our County expects employees to use their cellphones prudently during working hours.

We advise our employees to:

- Use county-issued phones for business purposes only and preserve them in perfect condition.
- Surf the internet, text and talk on the phone only for a few minutes per day.
- Turn off or silence their phones when asked.

We won't allow employees to:

- Play games on their personal or county-issued cell phone during working hours.
- Use their personal phones for any reason while driving a company vehicle.
- Use their personal or county-issued cell phone's camera or microphone to record confidential information.
- Use their personal or county-issued phones in areas where cell use is explicitly prohibited.

How to properly use cell phones in the workplace:

Employees can benefit from using cell phones. They are allowed to use their phones:

- To make county business calls (If driving; in a stationary vehicle)
- To check important messages (If driving; in a stationary vehicle)
- To make brief personal calls away from the working space of colleagues (If driving; in a stationary vehicle)

To ensure that wireless communications devices are used in a manner that supports and enhances effective County service and workplace performance, it is critical that the use of such devices:

- In no way limits the conduct of work of the employee or other employees.
- Does not result in any personal profit gained or outside employment served.
- Is in accordance with all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations.
- Is in accordance with County policies and conduct expectations.

Procedure

All employees are expected to follow applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations regarding the use of wireless communications devices at all times. Employees whose job responsibilities include regular or occasional driving and who use a wireless communications device for business use, are expected to refrain from using their wireless communications device while driving a motor vehicle, except in a legally permitted manner that will not detract from ability to safely operate the motor vehicle. Safety must come before all other concerns. Wireless communications devices shall not be used while operating machinery or heavy equipment.

- In accordance with Minnesota law, employees are required to use hands-free operations or lawfully stop in an area not designed or used for vehicular traffic and not obstructing traffic, or pull off into a parking lot and safely park the

vehicle, before placing or accepting a call. Employees are encouraged to refrain from discussion of complicated or emotional matters and to keep their eyes on the road while driving at all times. Special care should be taken in situations where there is traffic or inclement weather, or the employee is driving in an unfamiliar area.

- Reading text messages, composing or sending text messages while holding the device, making or receiving phone calls while holding the device, emailing, video calling, scrolling/typing, accessing a webpage, or using non-navigation applications while driving is strictly prohibited.
- In accordance with state law, there is an exception to hands free cellular phone operations to obtain emergency assistance to report a traffic accident, medical emergency or serious traffic hazard or prevent a crime from being committed. There is also a state law exception for authorized emergency vehicles while in the performance of official duties.
- Employees who are charged with traffic violations resulting from the use of a wireless communications device will be solely responsible for all liabilities that result from such actions.

Supervisors may prohibit employees from carrying wireless communications devices during working hours, while performing specific work duties, or when entering certain work areas.

Use of public resources by County employees for personal gain and/or private use including, but not limited to, outside employment or political campaign purposes, is prohibited and subject to disciplinary action which may include termination and/or criminal prosecution, depending on the circumstances.

Incidental and occasional personal use may be permitted with the consent of the supervisor. Personal calls must not interfere with working operations and are to be completed as quickly as possible. Participating in excessive or disruptive personal calls may be addressed as a performance issue.

Employees should be aware that wireless communications device records about County business are subject to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act whether the employee is using a County provided device or participating in a program that permits both County and personal use of the same device (such as an employee owned device with an approved Mobile Device Access Agreement). What this means is that if a request were received, the County would be under the obligation to determine what information is public data and what information is private data and would need access to the employee's wireless communications device records and possibly the device itself in order to provide the data that is being requested.

The County reserves the right to inspect any wireless communications device used as part of County employment at any time in order to verify or maintain compliance with County policies, respond to data requests, or to monitor employee performance.

Employees who abuse or misuse wireless communications devices may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

COUNTY-ISSUED CELLULAR DEVICE USE POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to a) discontinue County owned cell phones that are exclusively used by one individual; b) define how employee-owned devices can be used for business purposes; c) reduce the administrative burden associated with processing these expenses.

Policy

Except for circumstance noted under “Special Situations”, Wilkin County will no longer reimburse employees for on-going business expenses related to cellular devices (cell phone only or data phone “smart phone”). Instead, Wilkin County Employees who meet the eligibility requirements will be issued a County-owned cell phone to be used for work purposes only. County-Issued cellular devices and phone lines are the property of the County and upon separation of employment must be returned to the County.

If an employee wishes to use their employee-owned device for work purposes this must be approved by the Wilkin County IT Director and a “Mobile Device Access Agreement” must be signed.

Departments are not allowed to establish policies that differ from this County-wide policy.

Eligibility Requirements

The guiding principle for eligibility is that the use of mobile communication devices by an employee is for the benefit of Wilkin County, rather than the convenience of the employee.

Specifically, Wilkin County employees are eligible to receive county-issued phones if they meet all of the following criteria:

1. The employee’s job requires them to be readily accessible for frequent contact with the public or with County staff.
2. The employee’s job limits their access to regular land-line telephones or radios that would satisfy the required business communication needs.
3. The county-issued cellular device is approved by the department head or County Administrator.

Authorization for county-issued phones must be reviewed and renewed annually and must be authorized by a Department Head and County Administrator.

Direct Billing of Employee Expenses

Wilkin County will not allow employees to be reimbursed for mobile communication device expenses. This is because of the administrative burden associated with providing sufficient business documentation for IRS tax purposes, as well as the desire to standardize the payment methods.

The following security requirements apply to all county-owned devices and employee-owned devices that contain or have access to county data. If an employee-owned device does not have county data and is not used for work purposes this policy and its requirements do not apply.

Security Requirements

- All mobile devices, employee-owned or county-owned, must be kept current with security updates, as released by the manufacturer.
- Employees are responsible for backing up any device. Employee-owned devices are not allowed to be backed up onto Wilkin County computers and must be backed up by other means (e.g., personal computer, cloud storage). County-owned devices are allowed to be backed up on Wilkin County computer, County-issued OneDrive cloud storage, or to an iCloud account attached to a County-issued email address, but are not allowed to be backed up to personal computers or any other cloud storage.
- Wilkin County is not responsible for damaged, lost, or stolen employee-owned devices while the user is performing county business. Damaged county-owned devices must be reported to your supervisor immediately.
- Employees are prohibited from downloading sensitive county data (e.g., email text, attachments) onto anything other than a county-owned mobile device or county-owned computer unless otherwise approved by the IT Director.
- All mobile devices, employee-owned or county-owned, must be protected with a password or other form of secure authentication.
- Users may not “jailbreak” devices by installing software in any way not intended by manufacturer.
- If an employee-owned or county-owned device is lost or stolen, the Wilkin County IT Director must be notified immediately.
- If an employee wishes to change devices, the old device must be surrendered to the IT Director immediately upon activation of a new device for decommission (except when lost or stolen)-**failure to do so will result in a 30-day moratorium on configuring the new device to ensure no data breach.**
- County-owned devices are not allowed to be used by anyone other than the county employee to whom it is assigned as well as other authorized county employees.
- County email and other sensitive county data on employee-owned or county-owned devices may not be viewed or accessed by anyone other than authorized county employees.

- Contents of an employee-owned or county-owned device may be subject to search, pursuant to legal or county investigation at any time.
- If a data breach or security concern exists an employee-owned or county-owned device must be brought to the IT Director within a reasonable amount of time.

Special Situations

Departmentally Owned Contracts

Certain units may have special needs that justify departmental ownership of mobile communication devices. Social workers, maintenance personnel, custodians, highway workers and sheriff deputies are examples, where phones may be assigned or rotated among employees. This would also include organizations that have multiple employees sharing a single cellular phone for on-call rotations. Staff may qualify for only intermittent and temporary use of departmentally owned cell phones, when the department determines there is a valid documented business need.

Employees shall not use departmental cell phones for personal calls.

Exceptions

An example of a bona fide policy exception would be occasions where employees are traveling for Wilkin County business and make calls to work that involve roaming charges. The County will reimburse those employees for their additional out of pocket roaming charges.

Reason for Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

Provide direction on what costs that Wilkin County will pay for related mobile communication devices.

Explain what constitutes appropriate business use of mobile communication devices.

Reduce administrative burden and transaction costs associated with mobile communication devices.

Ensure regulatory tax compliance related to mobile communication devices. The current tax laws require documentation of all business use of mobile communication devices when paid for by Wilkin County. This policy will effectively remove this documentation requirement when a taxable allowance is provided to the employee rather than the County paying for these benefits directly. Accordingly, this policy will minimize the compliance risks associated with state and federal tax laws and regulation.

Personnel Policy Manual

COMPUTER USE POLICY

Purpose

This policy serves to protect the security and integrity of the County's electronic communication and information systems by educating employees about appropriate and safe use of available technology resources.

Computers and related equipment used by County employees are property of the County. The County reserves the right to inspect, without notice, all data, emails, files, settings, or any other aspect of a County-owned computer or related system, including personal information created or maintained by an employee. The County may conduct inspections on an as-needed basis as determined by the County Administrator.

Employees and their respective Department Head are jointly responsible to insure compliance with this policy. The policy applies to all employees when they are using computers or internet connections supplied by Wilkin County whether or not during work hours, and whether or not on Wilkin County premises. Inappropriate use exposes Wilkin County to many risks, which could result in legal issues.

Scope

This policy applies to employees, contractors, consultants, temporaries, and other workers at Wilkin County, including all personnel affiliated with third parties. This policy applies to all equipment that is owned or leased by Wilkin County.

Policy

Wilkin County employees should have no expectation of privacy while using County equipment, computers, etc. Computers and related equipment used by County employees are property of the County. No communication using these systems should be considered personally private data. Users should be aware that the data they create, receive, retain or forward on the County's systems remains the property of Wilkin County. Records retention policies apply to electronic communications and users should be aware that even deleted messages are retrievable at a later date. The County reserves the right to inspect, without notice, all data, emails, files, settings, or any other aspect of a County-owned computer or related system, including personal information created or maintained by an employee. Wilkin County reserves the right to audit networks and systems on a periodic basis to ensure compliance with this policy.

County equipment must be used for County purposes only. If there is any uncertainty concerning authorized use, employees should consult their supervisor or manager.

Wilkin County reserves the right to inspect personal devices directly connected to Wilkin County's Network to analyze any files, data, or media (e.g. not limited to but including: flash drives, iPad/Tablets, e-Readers, laptop computers, cellphones) that may be stored within the device. Employees who do not wish such inspections to be done on their personal devices should not use personal devices for work purposes.

Improper Activities

Under no circumstances is an employee of Wilkin County authorized to engage in any activity that is illegal under local, state, federal or international law while utilizing Wilkin County owned resources.

You may not disseminate or knowingly receive harassing, sexually explicit, threatening or illegal information through the use of Wilkin County facilities, including offensive jokes or cartoons. You may not access web sites, chat rooms, groups, or messages of an adult or pornographic or terrorist nature at anytime.

You may not use Wilkin County facilities for personal or commercial gain, advertisements, solicitations, business promotions or gambling.

You may not consume excessive use of bandwidth by accessing sites which provide streaming video, audio (internet radio), interactive downloading of screen savers (e.g. web shots) or other features (e.g. hot bar icons) that are not directly related to your job responsibilities.

Employees may not make modifications to the configuration of, install new components, or in any way modify county owned systems without the approval their respective department head and IT.

At no time is it authorized to conduct personal business while on county paid time when county work is expected to be performed.

Software

Without the approval of the Department Head and IT, employees may not install or download software for personal use such as, but not limited to, games, screen savers, desktop wallpaper, videos, or music programs, or e-mail applications. Any unauthorized software will be removed upon detection.

Passwords

Employees will safeguard their accounts and passwords, as these are the mechanism with which access to the Wilkin County network is achieved. Accounts and passwords are not to be shared with any other person without authorizations. Users are expected to report any observations of attempted security violations.

E-mail and Communications Activities

Employees are required to use the productivity suite that is provided by Wilkin County, and for County related communication only. This includes all components of Microsoft 365.

Security

1. Employees are required to encrypt e-mail messages for all messages that contain secure information including, but not limited to, Protected Health Information (PHI) in compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA) Act of 1996.
2. Employees are required to lock their computer when leaving their work area. Employees must use extreme caution when opening e-mail attachments received from unknown senders, which may contain viruses, e-mail bombs, or Trojan horse code. Employees are required to leave their computers on when leaving work for the day so IT can perform maintenance & update tasks to protect against bad actors.

Media Contacts

Only authorized individuals should communicate to or respond to the public news media regarding county business. Data that is not public under the Government Data Practices Act cannot be transmitted in clear text over the internet.

Disposal of Physical and Digital Media/Equipment

IT will insure that the disposal of physical and digital media is done thru physical destruction (via incineration, shredding, disintegrating, cutting, drilling, or grinding).

Wilkin County will insure this is witnessed or carried out only by authorized personnel.

Violations

Wilkin County reserves the right to treat the misuse of these resources as any other act of employment in accordance with its personnel regulations. Violations of this policy will subject the user to discipline, up to and including termination of employment as well as notification to law enforcement agencies when appropriate.

Personnel Policy Manual

COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE (CDL)

Purpose

In order to comply with state and federal regulations and protect County employees and resources, certain employees of Wilkin County are expected to retain a valid CDL, including necessary endorsements, as required to perform work outlined in their job description.

Policy

Employees who drive without a valid CDL shall be considered as acting outside the scope of their employment and are subject to disciplinary action in accordance with County Personnel Rules & Regulations and the applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Notification:

The County shall inform each employee of the license requirement for their job as well as the reporting requirements should that license be suspended, revoked, or modified.

Upon hire, the employee shall provide the CDL for the County to copy for its records.

Each employee required to have a CDL shall notify the County upon renewal or revocation of the license within seven (7) days of that action. If an off-duty or out-of-state action causes revocation or suspension, the employee shall notify their immediate supervisor or manager within seven (7) days of the occurrence. The supervisor or manager, or the Department Head shall notify the County Administrator.

An employee who is called in to work due to emergency conditions shall notify the County if they are not fit and able to operate the motor vehicle due to impairment.

If the County decides to subscribe to a service to perform periodic checks on the CDL status of employees, the County shall notify the employees of that decision and process prior to implementation.

Training & Education:

The County shall notify each employee required to maintain a CDL of the current requirements to maintain such a license in orientation, and again on a periodic basis. The education should include both basic requirements and recent policy or procedure revisions.

Pre-Hearing Loss of Driving Privilege / Alternative Assignment:

If an employee who is required to maintain a CDL loses that license temporarily, the employee may be allowed to report to work only when the Department Head determines

that work which does not require a CDL is available from the time the license is lost until the hearing is decided. The employee may use vacation, accrued compensatory time, or time off without pay for the hours that the employee is unable to work because of license suspension. This does not include working or using compensated time during any disciplinary suspension without pay. Medical or other leave time may be appropriate in some situations, including inpatient chemical dependency treatment. The employee shall address these matters with their Department Head.

The County may be able to continue the employment of the individual who has lost the CDL in situations where:

- Driving is a minor or occasional part of the job; and
- The employee is cooperative and willing to revise schedules or other conditions to modify their assignment while the license is not valid.

Post-Conviction:

Once the employee's case has been decided by the DMV or the Courts, the employee may request alternate duties or schedules, a modified work assignment, or a leave of absence to accommodate the time the license is invalid, not to exceed one year. If the alternate work assignment is in a different classification and pay grade, the employee's wages shall be adjusted to reflect that classification for the duration of the assignment. An employee assigned to a temporary classification or alternative assignment, or on a leave of absence, is expected to return to their previous classification upon having their CDL restored.

If an employee loses the CDL for a period of time in excess of one year, the employee shall be discharged for just cause.

Multiple Offenses:

If an employee who is required to maintain a CDL for work loses their CDL for more than 30 days, more than once within a three (3) year period, the employee shall be discharged for just cause.

Connection with Drug & Alcohol Policy:

An employee who is required to have a CDL is also subject to the County Drug & Alcohol Testing Policy which addresses pre-employment, reasonable suspicion, random and follow-up testing.

Purchase of Licenses:

The County will not permit the use of County funds to purchase driver's licenses for County employees. This includes reimbursement for driver's licenses purchased by County employees.

Personnel Policy Manual

Employee Concerns and Suggestions

Purpose

At Wilkin County, we realize that effective communication between employees and Department Heads is essential to maintain a productive working relationship.

Policy

If there is a misunderstanding of what an employee's job is or what is stated in the County policies, employees should discuss it with their Supervisor or the Department Head so the employee's concerns can be appropriately addressed.

Employee Complaint and Concern forms are located on the County HR Portal or by contacting County Administration.

In addition, recognizing that on-the-job work experience is the best source of suggestions for improvement in the workplace, Wilkin County welcomes and solicits ideas from all employees. We believe the person doing a job is in the best position to think of ways of doing it more easily, more efficiently, and more effectively. If an employee thinks of a better way of doing his or her job or the job of a fellow employee, the employee should discuss it with his or her Supervisor or Department Head, who will welcome the suggestions and ideas.

Suggestions concerning Wilkin County operations, general maintenance, facilities, services, or other matters should be made to the employee's Supervisor or the Department Head.

We encourage employees to bring their concerns directly to Wilkin County. Concerns that are expressed only to coworkers or persons outside the County are not likely to be given the attention they deserve and may violate confidentiality or data privacy considerations.

EMERGENCY CLOSING OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT OFFICES

Purpose

The County needs a consistent practice for determining whether closing County Offices in dangerous weather or other emergency situations is appropriate, and how that message is communicated to the staff and to the public.

Policy

- A. The Chair of the County Board of Commissioners, or the Chair's designee is authorized to order closure of the County Offices when it is not reasonably possible for employees to travel within the City of Breckenridge. Official closure announcement shall be made only on KBMW radio.
- B. All County employees are encouraged to avoid unnecessary risk to their personal safety when traveling to or from their place of work. Those employees not defined as "essential employees" under the Minnesota Public Employment Labor Relations Act, and not performing highway maintenance duties, may choose not to report to work, or to leave early, as weather conditions require in the interest of their personal safety. Department Heads or Supervisors must approve this absence from work, prior to or after the fact.
- C. Those employees who are unable to safely report to work, as provided above, whether or not the County offices are closed, may select one or more of the following ways to account for their normal work hours missed, subject to the approval of their Department Head:
 1. By utilizing a corresponding number of hours of accrued vacation time; or
 2. By utilizing a corresponding number of hours of accrued compensatory time (accrued overtime); or,
 3. By making up the hours within the work week during which the time was missed, on an hour for hour basis, performing productive work, subject to the approval of the employee's supervisor; or
 4. By taking a corresponding number of hours without compensation.

Employees with questions regarding this policy should contact their immediate supervisor.

Personnel Policy Manual

SMOKE AND TOBACCO FREE

Policy

In keeping with Wilkin County's intent to provide a safe and healthful work environment, smoke and tobacco use is prohibited throughout the workplace, including in County vehicles, equipment, lawn mowers, or other ride-on equipment. Smoking is prohibited in any county office, building, vehicle, or on county grounds. This policy applies equally to all employees, customers, visitors, and includes the use of vaporizers, e-cigarettes, or other smoking devices.

Personnel Policy Manual

SAFETY AND WORKER'S COMPENSATION PROCEDURES

Purpose

Employee safety is of the utmost concern for the County. County Department Heads are responsible for providing safe working conditions. The primary source of information regarding safety is the County Safety Manual located on the County HR Portal. It is the responsibility of each employee to notify their Department Heads of any issue or concern. If an employee is injured on the job it is important that they receive appropriate medical care and report it to their supervisor within 24 hours of the incident.

Policy

It is the policy of Wilkin County to assist employees, injured at work or suffering a work-related illness or disease, in receiving appropriate medical care. Workers Compensation insurance is available for this purpose, and the type of benefits available to employees depends on the nature of the injury or illness. Wilkin County also strives to return employees back to work, whenever possible, within medical restrictions. This will support the employee's sense of job security, help the employee to return to his/her pre-injury lifestyle as soon as practicable, and help Wilkin County maintain productivity.

Employees who are injured at work must report the injury as soon as possible. It is our responsibility to assist you with immediate transportation from work to the medical facility. Your supervisor will report the injury to the County Administrator and a First Report of Injury form must be completed. Following medical treatment, we ask you to report your medical status to your department head and County Administration. If you are unable to return to your regular position, we will engage in an interactive process with you to discuss whether any accommodations are available to allow you to perform the essential functions of your position, or other available positions for which you are qualified, within the medical provider's job restrictions. Wilkin County may also decide, in its sole discretion, to offer modified duty or light duty positions, if available or applicable, on a case-by-case basis.

Employees who are drawing worker's compensation benefits may use as much accumulated sick leave as may be necessary to ensure the employee continues to receive the same amount of regular take-home pay (after tax) that the employee received prior to sustaining the workplace injury. Employees will also continue to accrue paid vacation and sick leave while receiving worker's compensation benefits.

Personnel Policy Manual

WORKPLACE ACCIDENT AND INJURY REDUCTION (AWAIR) PROGRAM

Purpose

Wilkin County affirms that our employees are our most valued resource. Ensuring employee safety in the performance of their work in our community is of the utmost importance, and this objective is the basis of Wilkin County's AWAIR Program, establishing workplace safety and health as one of our highest priorities. The success of the safety program requires clearly defined goals, specific objectives, and identification of those who will share the responsibility of accomplishing the goals and objectives set forth. It is the responsibility of all employees to be aware of unsafe acts in all work areas that can produce injuries. No employee is required to work at a job they know is not safe. It is the responsibility of all employees of Wilkin County to be diligent in detecting hazards, and in turn, controlling them, including informing your Supervisor immediately of any situation beyond your ability or authority to correct.

Goals and Objectives:

Central to our AWAIR program are the goals and objectives, we as a County have established for the overall safety and health program. The goals provide the direction for our program and state what we are striving to achieve. The goals are specific to Wilkin County. The County has established objectives, which are specific actions that we will be taking in an effort to achieve our safety and health program goals.

Goal: We will reduce our injury and illness rate by 20 percent by 2024

Objectives:

- 1. We will address all employee safety concerns in a timely manner. For example, hazards that potentially pose an imminent danger of death or serious physical injury will be initially addressed within one work shift and all other hazards will be initially addressed within one week.*
- 2. We will perform a quarterly safety inspection of all departments and take corrective action or investigate long-term solutions for all hazards identified during the inspection within one week.*
- 3. We will investigate all accidents and near-miss events and take corrective action within 24 hours to prevent a recurrence.*

Goal: We will establish and maintain a culture that is committed to workplace safety and health.

Objectives:

1. *We will conduct regular safety meetings on a monthly basis to inform employees about specific workplace safety and health issues, and to build an overall awareness of employee safety and health.*
2. *We will actively enforce all safety rules throughout the organization.*

Roles and Responsibilities:

- A. Everyone at Wilkin County:
 1. All employees, including Supervisors, Managers, Department Heads and Elected Officials must follow all safety rules at all times.
- B. Employees:
 1. Employees must promptly report any safety and health hazards they observe to their Supervisor or County Administration.
 2. An employee's first priority is to perform each job task safely. If an employee is unsure how to perform the task safely, he or she must consult with their supervisor.
 3. Employees must wear personal protective equipment as required for their protection and maintain the equipment in a sanitary manner.
 4. Employees must report all accidents and near misses to their Supervisor immediately upon occurrence.
- C. Management:
 1. Supervisors must discuss any current safety issues with their employees at the beginning of the work shift or at regularly scheduled staff meetings as appropriate.
 2. Supervisors will address all safety concerns raised by staff by initially investigating the issue, determining if the concern is valid and taking appropriate corrective action whenever necessary. Corrective action can include ordering new equipment, issuing maintenance work orders or consulting with the County Administrator, the Safety Committee, or County Management.
 3. Immediately upon learning of an accident or near miss, the Supervisor must initiate an investigation and submit the completed accident investigation report to the County Administrator.
 4. Supervisors will actively and positively participate in all Safety Committee inspections of their assigned areas.
 5. Discuss the positive effects of safety committee activities, on a one-on-one basis or in group meetings.
 6. Support safety training for all employees.
 7. Respond to safety recommendations in a timely manner.
 8. Communicate to all employees and Supervisors the importance of workers' safety and health throughout the organization.
 9. County Management will review all safety concerns brought forward by County Administration, the Safety Committee or first-line Supervisor and take appropriate action.
 10. County Administration will review the AWAIR program and any recommended revisions from the Safety Committee at least annually, make the appropriate revisions and work with the Safety Committee and first-line Supervisor to communicate the revisions throughout the organization.
 11. County Management also establishes the importance of the AWAIR program, both by the priority they give workplace safety and health issues and through

the example they set by initiating safety and health improvements, correcting hazards, enforcing safety rules, rewarding excellent performance in safety and health, and by following all safety rules.

D. County Administrator:

1. The County Administrator is designated as the Safety Officer and will serve as the lead person in the organization for safety and health issues and will also serve as chairperson of the Safety Committee.
2. The County Administrator must review pertinent facts from all accident investigation reports with the Safety Committee and take appropriate action to prevent recurrence. Incident data will be shared in a manner that protects individual privacy and maintains compliance with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.
3. The County Administrator will coordinate and oversee, in cooperation with first-line supervisors and/or Department Heads, all safety training required by regulation or identified by Management, Supervisors or the Safety Committee as required to assure a safe workplace.
4. The County Administrator will recommend improvements in facilities, machinery, equipment, raw materials and personal protective equipment to County Management.
5. The County Administrator will be responsible for the annual review of this program/policy and documentation of findings. The annual review of the policy is vital to ensuring that Wilkin County is making progress toward the established goals.

DI. Safety Committee:

1. The Safety Committee will conduct regular meetings and area inspections to review accident reports, identify hazards and address all safety concerns raised by employees, first-line supervisors, or the County Administrator.
2. The Safety Committee will review the AWAIR program at least annually and make recommendations concerning updates and revisions to the program to County Management and the County Administrator.
3. Safety Committee members each represent their work area and, therefore, should address all safety concerns brought to them by their coworkers. These concerns should be handled by initially investigating the issue with the area Supervisor to determine if the concern is valid and then, as necessary and appropriate, bring the issue to the County Administrator or the full Safety Committee.

DII. Elected and Appointed Officials:

1. Elected/Appointed Officials will support and reinforce the importance of safety and health throughout the County.
2. Elected/Appointed Officials will provide the resources to improve safety and health throughout the entire organization. This includes providing employees and Supervisors with the authority to identify and correct hazards, the budget to purchase new equipment or make repairs when necessary, the training required to work safely and to recognize hazards, and the systems to ensure repairs are made, materials ordered, and other improvements accomplished.

Enforcement of Safety and Health Programs:

Enforcement of safe work practices should be fair, consistent throughout the County, and based on established policy. Management and supervisors should be conscious of the examples they set for the workplace and should obey the same rules as the rest of the workforce.

Employees will be trained and instructed regarding workplace safety expectation.

Supervisors will monitor and coach employees to ensure that proper safety practices are followed. Unsafe or unhealthy work behaviors by any employee shall be corrected in a timely manner, in accordance with the severity of the violation.

Violation of safety rules and safe work procedures may be subject to disciplinary action. The County may follow progressive discipline for violations of workplace health and safety policy, rules and procedures but reserves the right to issue any level of discipline it deems appropriate based on the circumstances.

Not only should negative behavior be discouraged, but positive behavior should be reinforced as well. Exceptional performance or efforts in workplace safety and health should be recognized by Supervisors and County Management.

Hazard Identification, Analysis and Control:

Wilkin County will use the following steps to identify, analyze and control hazards:

1. Self-inspections by Supervisors, Management and/or the Safety Committee members. Inspections should be conducted on a regular basis to identify both newly developed hazards and any previously missed.
2. Job Hazard Analysis identifying workplace hazards and safety controls associated with particular jobs or tasks.
3. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
4. Preventative Maintenance of Equipment
5. First Aid Program
6. Employee reporting of workplace safety and health hazards
7. Employee Hazard abatement suggestions
8. Management and Employee Training

Wilkin County may utilize the referenced forms to assist in the identification, analysis and control of hazards:

- Safety Hazard Report Form
- Employee Report of Alleged Unsafe or Unhealthy working conditions
- Wilkin County Hazard Correction Log
- Wilkin County Action Plan
- Safety Inspection Checklist
- Certification of Employee Training
- Job Hazard Analysis

Communication:

All Managers and Supervisors are responsible for communicating with all workers about occupational safety and health in a form readily understandable by all workers. The County's communication system encourages all workers to inform their Managers and Supervisors about workplace hazards without fear of reprisal. Our communication system may include one or more of the following items:

- New worker orientation including a discussion of safety and health policies and procedures
- Review of the County's program
- Employee and Management Training
- Regularly scheduled safety meetings
- Posted or distributed safety information
- A system for workers to inform County Management about workplace hazards

Accident Investigation:

Accident Investigations are a key component of the County's AWAIR program, with the goal of hazard identification, correction of deficiencies, and prevention of future incidents. In addition to conducting investigations of incidents in which injury or property damage has occurred, investigations should also be completed regarding near-miss or close call situations.

The investigation should begin as soon as possible following an incident, and no later than 48 hours after the event. Any existing or remaining hazards in the area or related to the incident should be assessed and promptly controlled.

The incident investigation will be conducted by the Supervisor and/or County Administrator.

The incident investigation should focus on identifying and correcting the root cause of the incident. Conducting a root cause analysis will assist in identifying underlying or systemic issues that should be addressed to prevent future incidents. When a shortcoming or deficiency is identified, the investigation should also consider why it existed or occurred, and what prevented it from being previously addressed. This approach helps the County to understand how and why the incident occurred, and to identify and address all factors contributing to the incident.

The investigation should answer the following questions:

- What happened;
- How did it happen;
- Why did it happen; and
- What needs to be corrected

The investigation may include but not be limited to incident site and equipment examination, witness interviews, review of documentation, such as maintenance or training records, review of operating procedures and work process, examination of safety controls in place, constructing sequence of events leading up to the incident, and additional contributing factors or relevant information.

Safety Committee:

Minnesota Statutes 182.676 requires that employers with more than 25 employees establish and administer a joint labor-management Safety Committee. The purpose of our Safety Committee is to involve labor and management in a cooperative effort to promote safety and health in the workplace.

In accordance with state law, the Safety Committee shall:

- Hold regularly scheduled meetings unless otherwise provided in a collective bargaining agreement.
- Include employee Safety Committee members who are selected by employees.

The Safety Committee will advise management about safety and health issues in the workplace. In addition, Safety Committee members may; participate in inspections of the workplace; train new employees on safe working procedures; complete job hazard analyses; provide input and recommendations regarding workplace safety and health rules, policies and procedures; participate in incident investigations; and bring employee safety and health concerns forward for review and correction.

Wilkin County recognizes the critical contributions a well-functioning Safety Committee can make to ensure the safety and health of our employees. Safety Committee members are supported in performing their duties without fear of discrimination or retaliation. Any concerns regarding the proper exercise of duties and responsibilities under this policy should be reported to the County Administrator.

Program Review:

The County Administrator and the Safety Committee shall conduct an annual review of the County's AWAIR Program. The annual program review will evaluate progress toward achieving the program's goals and objectives and identify new or updated goals and objectives, ensure that procedures in place are consistent with those described in the program, and ensure that procedures and program approach are effective in improving workplace safety and health. Recommended updates related to the program will be presented to the County Administrator.

Program review may include, but is not limited to the following:

- OSHA 300 Log- Log of Work-Related injuries & Illnesses
- First Report of Injury
- Accident investigation reports, including near-miss documentation
- Reports and documentation from the Safety Committee, Supervisor inspections, and self-inspections
- Employee and Supervisor interviews
- Inspections and direct observation

Review of these items should be used to discern trends; determine areas for improvement; and identify elements of the program and the County's approach that are working well, and have proven successful in reducing or preventing workplace injury and illness, and in supporting worker safety.

Personnel Policy Manual

Photo ID Policy

Display of Photo ID

All employees, except as outlined below, shall be required to display their Photo ID on their person in a conspicuous manner during working hours. The County will supply an ID badge holder with clip to employees. Employees may supply their own badge clip or lanyard at their preference. Employees shall not be expected to display their Photo ID during any non-working hours, including lunch breaks or rest periods.

Content of ID Badge

Photo Id's for each employee shall, at a minimum, contain a photo of the employee, the employee's first name, and the County logo.

Exceptions

The following are exceptions in which an employee is required to display a Photo ID:

1. Law enforcement personnel who are wearing a law enforcement uniform approved by the County Sheriff, which includes a name tag displaying their first and last name.
2. Engineering, Highway or Maintenance employees that routinely work in the field with high-visibility vests, out of vehicles with County logos already identifying them as County employees, often working with highly sensitive surveying equipment and/or power equipment. The list of applicable positions for this exception shall be as identified by the County Engineer or department head from time to time, but this exception shall not extend to employees while working in the County Shop or while working with members of the general public. Other employees within the highway department may also be exempted if wearing a Photo ID would create a safety hazard as determined by the supervisor.
3. Maintenance employees of the Facilities Operations Department who are wearing a uniform and are routinely working around power tools and HVAC moving parts.
4. Attorneys are not required to wear a Photo ID when they are appearing in court.
5. At the discretion of a department head, an employee may be exempted from displaying his or her Photo ID card when safety concerns are present; however, the employee must carry the Photo ID on their person and present it upon request.

Personnel Policy Manual

COUNTY CREDIT CARD POLICY

(This policy does not pertain to local “charge” accounts)

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide detailed information regarding the use of county issued credit cards authorized by the Wilkin County Board of Commissioners and assigned to selected Wilkin County employees or elected officials to purchase goods and services for Wilkin County.

This policy applies to all County Departments, funds and agencies that have selected employees or elected county officials, including county commissioners, to use County issued credit cards.

Policy

A County issued credit card is to be used for County business only. Personal use of County issued credit cards is prohibited. The Request for a County issued Credit Card will be made by the Department Head and submitted to the County Auditor’s Office for presentation to the County Board for approval. Upon approval, the County Auditor’s Office will process the request for County issued credit cards for the selected employee(s).

The County has used various methods to purchase goods and services for Wilkin County. Wilkin County is enhancing the existing methods of reimbursements for merchandise purchases to provide an effective and efficient tool to allow selected Wilkin County employees to improve methods of requisitioning, purchasing, and payment for transactions. Purchase information will be provided in sufficient detail to allow for verification by the approving official.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

Minnesota Statute 375.171 Credit Cards. “A county board may authorize the use of a credit card by any county officer or employee otherwise authorized to make a purchase on behalf of the county. If a county officer or employee makes a purchase by credit card that is not approved by the county board, the officer or employee is personally liable for the amount of the purchase. A purchase by credit card must otherwise comply with all statutes, rules, or county policy applicable to county purchases.”

CREDIT CARD POLICY AND PROCEDURE

A. Intended Accomplishments.

This policy is intended to ensure that county issued credit cards are used in accordance with

Wilkin County policies; ensure internal controls for authorized credit; ensure that the County bears no legal liability from inappropriate use; to provide a convenient credit method; minimize the number of county issued credit cards used in the County; and to empower employees to increase productivity, flexibility, and efficiency.

B. Credit Card Authorization.

County issued credit cards will have the County's name, employee's name and the expiration date. The credit card vendor will have no personal credit records, social security numbers or other personal information maintained. Without exception, all county issued credit cards require approval by the County Board of Commissioners and will be processed by the Wilkin County Auditor-Treasurer or as delegated to Deputy Auditor-Treasurer's.

C. Request for a County Issued Credit Card.

A request for a County issued credit card will be done by submitting a Request for County Issued Credit Card form (Exhibit A) and a County Issued Credit Card User Agreement (Exhibit B). A request for a County issued credit card must be made by the Department Head. In the event the request is from a county commissioner, the request must be made by the County Auditor. Any Department Head wanting an employee to have a County issued credit card for official business purposes must fill out a Request for County Issued Credit Card form. The Department Head shall complete the appropriate sections of the Request for County Issued Credit Card form and submit it to the County Auditor's Office. The County Auditor will present the request for the County issued credit card(s) to the County Board of Commissioners. The County Board of Commissioners will approve or deny the request based upon the information presented on the form. There must be a compelling reason for the County Board of Commissioners to approve issuance of a County provided credit card. The County may run a background credit check on the employee's personal credit history. Upon approval, the County Auditor will process the request for County issued credit cards for the selected employee(s). The County Auditor will distribute the County Issued Credit Card(s) and add it to the inventory of County issued credit cards list. Upon issuance of the County provided credit card, the cardholder will personally sign for their county issued credit card.

D. County Issued Credit Card Account Limit.

County issued credit card maximum account limits are as follows:

Single Day Purchase Limit - \$2,000.00

Thirty Day Limit - \$5,000.00

Without exception, the County Board of Commissioners will establish all account limits. Any purchase exceeding the cardholder limit will not be allowed on the county issued credit card. Any request for a deviation from the account limits MUST be submitted in writing by the Department Head. The reasons why the limit is not sufficient MUST be stated in detail in the written request.

E. Use of County Issued Credit Card.

County provided credit cards are to be used only for conducting officially approved County business. They are not to be used in any circumstances for personal reasons. Any cardholder who makes a purchase with a county issued credit card that is not authorized by the County Board becomes personally liable for the amount of the purchase, as well as any fees or penalties associated with the purchase. Official County business includes approved travel (hotels, meals, travel expenses) and registration fees per County policy and any other items approved, per County policies, prior to actual purchase. No alcoholic beverages may be charged to a county-issued credit card. Cardholder responsibility – The county provided credit card is issued in the name of a specific cardholder with their name embossed on the card. No other person is authorized to use the card. All items purchased over the counter must be immediately available and cannot be back ordered. Any charges incurred must be submitted to the Wilkin County Auditor’s Office with supporting documentation (monthly statement) and receipts attached within 7 days of statement receipt date. Repeated violations of this section will result in the forfeiture of the county issued credit card.

F. Documentation, Reconciliation, and Payment of County Issued Credit Cards.

Documentation must be retained as proof of purchase whenever using the credit card. For purchases over the counter, the cardholder must obtain a customer copy of the charge slip, and submit it to the County Auditor’s Office with the monthly statement. There must be documentation to verify purchases shown on the cardholder’s monthly statement. If, for some reason, the cardholder is missing documentation of the transaction, the cardholder must contact the vendor for a duplicate receipt. Lost receipts or where no duplicate receipt is available will be immediately reimbursed to the County by the cardholder. It is the responsibility of the cardholder to resolve any dispute with a vendor. Customer copies of charge slips, receipts and monthly statement will be reconciled by the department and forwarded to County Auditor’s Office for payment within seven (7) working days of the receipt of the statement or within the terms and conditions of the vendor. The Department Head must review all documentation and ensure that all purchases are valid and appropriate prior to approving the claims for payment. Any “over limit” fee will be the responsibility of the cardholder. Repeated violations of this section will result in the forfeiture of the county issued credit card.

G. Inventory of County Issued Credit Cards.

A list of County issued credit cards will be maintained in the County Auditor’s Office. Department Heads on an annual basis must submit to the Auditor’s Office a list of who has charge cards in their department and what each card holder is authorized to use the card for. As needed, but at least on an annual basis the County Auditor will conduct a physical inventory of county issued credit cards and provide a report to the County Board. The cardholder must physically produce the card.

H. Lost or Stolen County Issued Credit Cards.

Should any cardholder lose or have their County issued credit card stolen, it is their responsibility to immediately notify, within 24 hours, the credit card issuer and the County Auditor’s Office. Contact information of the credit card issuer will be provided to the cardholder.

I. Cancellation.

The Wilkin County Board of Commissioners reserves the right to cancel any individual cardholder at any time. The County Auditor (or as delegated to Deputy Auditors) is authorized to cancel individual cardholders due to resignation or termination of employment from Wilkin County.

Any deviation from this policy may be grounds for discipline up to and including termination of employment from Wilkin County.

Personnel Policy Manual

Expense Reimbursement Policy

Purpose

This policy has been established to define the guidelines as set by the County Board in the areas of expense reimbursement, transportation, and travel. This policy is set by the County Board and interpreted by the County Administrator. This policy conforms to M.S. 471.38, 471.96(1) and 471.97 governing expenses incurred by employees in the conduct of County business. It also conforms to M.S. 471.661 governing out-of-state travel for elected officials. It is designed to provide the basis for determining whether there is authority for County expenditure, the expenditure serves a public purpose, and the expenditure is necessary and directly related to the betterment of the County. This policy applies to all County employees. In the event that this policy conflicts with a current collective bargaining agreement, the latter prevails. Should there be any conflict between this policy and state or federal law, the latter prevails.

Policy

REIMBURSEMENT OF CLAIMS

1. All claims for meal and mileage reimbursement should be submitted through the payroll process for the time period in which they occurred in accordance with payroll submission due dates. Claims for contract employees must be submitted within 60 days of incurring the expense. These claims will be added to an employee's paycheck. Failure to submit receipts for expenses will result in no reimbursement. It is the employee's responsibility to keep all receipts for expenses incurred.
2. Claims for reimbursement, other than meal and mileage reimbursement, must be submitted by employees within 30 days of incurring the expense. The employee's supervisor shall approve and initial all expenses claimed before they are submitted for payment. Travel related claims are paid by warrant. Failure to submit receipts for expenses will result in no reimbursement. It is the employee's responsibility to keep all receipts for expenses incurred.
3. If an employee has a guest accompany him or her on a County business trip, the expenses attributable to the guest's travel, meals, lodging, etc. are not reimbursable. If a guest accompanies an employee on a business trip, the reimbursable expenses for transportation and lodging is the single rate cost of accommodations for the employee.

TRAVEL REQUESTS AND APPROVAL

The County Board of Commissioners shall approve travel costs through the annual budget process. In the event that there are not sufficient budgeted funds for training and conference costs in the annual budget process, these additional costs must be presented to the County Board for approval by the County Administrator. This must be done by submitting an itemized listing, including all associated costs, for Board approval.

Travel Guidelines

In order to determine what travel is of the most value and which employees should go, the following guidelines have been established:

- A. The cost of the conference, institute, training program and related travel must be within the annual Travel Expense budget appropriation approved by the County Board.
- B. Utmost discretion is to be exercised in submitting a request for out-of-state or overnight travel. Conferences are to be unquestionably professional in content and should be selected only when a similar conference cannot be found locally in the same calendar year.
- C. Any requests for out-of-state travel or training must be approved by the County Board before any expenses are incurred.
- D. Travel for training purposes is limited to training specific to an employee's job and which is not currently offered through the County.
- E. Information obtained or contacts made are expected to benefit the improved operation of the County and the respective department.
- F. Only one employee per department should be sent to a conference, institute or training program unless it can be clearly supported that there is a need to send others.
- G. Reimbursement for extended travel is paid on the basis of the prevailing mileage allowance rate set by the County Board or tourist airfare, whichever is less. Time and expenses incurred for such travel shall be paid on the same basis. For example, when an employee chooses to travel by vehicle, the time paid and the travel expenses incurred shall be limited to the time and the normal expenses required for air travel. When personal vehicles are used for extended travel not available by commercial transportation, travel reimbursement is made on an actual mileage and travel time basis.
- H. Employees will be compensated for time spent driving to and from the conference, meeting or training seminar.
- I. Employees are not compensated for time spent outside of the educational program format at conferences and training seminars. Non-compensated time includes meal time, recreational activities, social gatherings, and other periods of down time.
- J. Only expenses related to employee travel are eligible for reimbursement. Reimbursement for non-employee individuals is prohibited.
- K. Lodging upgrades and other non-lodging charges are prohibited.

LODGING, MEALS, AND INCIDENTALS

Employees are reimbursed for lodging, meals, and incidentals at actual cost in accordance with the following.

A. Lodging Charges

- a. Charges for lodging will be reimbursed for those nights when the event is actually in session and the event is 60 miles or more from Breckenridge.
- b. Lodging charges for the night prior to the formal start of an event and for the last night of the event will only be reimbursed if there is prior approval from the Department Head.
- c. Expenses will be reimbursed by Commissioner Warrant.
- d. All original lodging receipts must be submitted for reimbursement and have supervisory approval.
- e. When a guest accompanies an employee, the additional cost of lodging for the guest will be paid by the employee.

B. Meal Reimbursement

- a. An employee is considered to be in travel status and eligible for taxable meal reimbursement as indicated below. Meals are reimbursed at actual expense not to exceed the following maximum amounts (including tax and tip), whichever is less:
 - i. Breakfast - \$15; May be claimed for a meal prior to 10:30 a.m. when the employee must leave home before 6:00 a.m. or is in travel status overnight.
 - ii. Lunch - \$20; May be claimed for a meal between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. when an event starts prior to 11:00 a.m. and continues after 2:00 p.m.
 - iii. Dinner - \$25; May be claimed for a meal after 5:00 p.m. only when an employee cannot return home until after 7:00 p.m. or is in travel status overnight.
- b. Expenses for alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable.
- c. Itemized receipts must be provided for all meal reimbursements. Credit card receipts are not sufficient documentation for reimbursement.
- d. Tips in excess of 15% will not be reimbursed and tips are to be included in the maximum meal reimbursement.
- e. Wilkin County Credit Cards shall not be used for any meals expenses which do not include an overnight stay, as these are taxable expenses. IRS regulation requires that meal reimbursement which does not accompany overnight lodging be considered as income and, therefore, subject to income tax withholding and FICA. Meal reimbursement is not subject to PERA or included in the pension base. Information on meal reimbursement without overnight lodging will be reported on W-2 forms. Meals included as part of a conference or seminar fee or airline ticket are not separately identified and should not be reported.
- f. In the event of out of state travel, the Board may approve larger meal allowances. Sufficient information must be provided to justify any increase that is requested and this must be approved before the expense is incurred.

- f. Meal expenses incurred while performing the duties of one's position are not reimbursed unless the employee is 25 miles or more from Breckenridge when the meal expense is incurred.
- g. Meals included in any registration or tuition fees will be paid in full, as part of those fees. In cases such as this, employees will not be reimbursed for a meal purchased elsewhere.
- h. Supervisors may recommend approval of, meal reimbursements for reasonable exceptions where an employee is unable to meet the time parameters of the aforementioned meal reimbursement policy, to the County Administrator for final approval.
- i. County Board approval is required for all meal, and other related expenses, in excess of \$100 for any department that wishes to host events or meetings at County expense.

C. Parking Reimbursement

- a. Employees shall be reimbursed for actual parking expenses while on County business.
- b. Wilkin County Credit Cards shall not be used for any parking expenses which do not include an overnight stay, as these are taxable expenses. IRS regulation requires that travel reimbursements which do not accompany overnight lodging be considered as income and, therefore, subject to income tax withholding and FICA. Parking reimbursement is not subject to PERA or included in the pension base. Information on parking reimbursement without overnight lodging will be reported on W-2 forms.
- c. All original parking receipts must be submitted for reimbursement and have supervisory approval.

D. Incidentals

- a. Itemized receipts are required for all Incidental expenses. All expenses must have supervisory approval.

MILEAGE AND COUNTY VEHICLES POLICY

Use of County Vehicles

1. County vehicles are made available to County elected officials and employees to provide a safe and cost effective means of transportation while performing duties for the County.
2. County owned vehicles shall not be used by an employee or official for personal use other than for very incidental use (such as stopping for a meal while conducting County business). Permissive use includes volunteer firefighters, emergency medical technicians (EMT) or paramedics for fire departments and volunteer ambulance services located in the State of Minnesota responding to a call after being dispatched by their fire department or volunteer ambulance service; provided they are authorized to do so by their department head or his/her designee.
3. County-owned vehicles assigned to personnel for their use within their job assignment may be used to transport the employee to and from their residence for work related purposes. The assignment of vehicles is at the discretion of the County Board. Assigned vehicles may be changed at any time and/or permission to take home a vehicle may be withdrawn at any time.

4. By checking out a County vehicle or choosing to use your own vehicle, you are declaring you are a licensed driver and have automobile insurance.
5. Only authorized persons are permitted to ride in County owned vehicles. Authorized persons include County employees; other persons participating in related County programs; or friends of handicapped employees.
6. Passengers not associated with County business are not allowed in County vehicles.
7. County vehicles should be parked in designated parking spaces.
8. Drivers are required to observe and obey all traffic laws regarding the operation of a motor vehicle, including speed limits. Seat belts are to be worn by all occupants at all times. Drivers of County vehicles are responsible for all fines and penalties imposed for parking or traffic violations with respect to the vehicle while it is in their possession.
9. All County vehicles are insured by the Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust.

Mileage Reimbursement

1. An employee shall be reimbursed for the use of privately-owned vehicles at the current IRS business rate.
2. Mileage incurred while an employee uses a private vehicle may be reimbursed pursuant to this policy beginning or ending at the office where the employee is required to report to work before or after incurring the travel expense. However, if the employee goes directly to the destination from their home, the lesser of either the actual distance traveled, or the distance from the office to the destination will be used as reimbursable mileage. This also applies for returns home without first reporting back to the office.
3. In all cases, mileage must be on the most direct route. Employees must submit a map of the route that includes the beginning and ending address. Failure to submit the mapping for expenses will result in no reimbursement.
4. Mileage within the city limits of Breckenridge and Wahpeton will not be reimbursed, except for those with a job description of Homemaker. Employees must submit a mapping of their mileage and include all stops for reimbursement. Failure to submit the mapping for expenses will result in no reimbursement.
5. Wilkin County is not responsible for damages occurring to your personal vehicle while operated by a County employee on County time except as determined by law. County employees, contractors and volunteers are responsible for their own insurance coverage while operating a personal vehicle for County use.

Employee Acknowledgement of Receipt of Handbook

DATE: _____
TO: _____
(Employee's name)
FROM: County Administration
RE: Employee Agreement on Receipt of Handbook

I have received a copy of the Wilkin County Handbook, along with the collective bargaining agreement/employment agreement pertaining to my position, if applicable. I understand that, taken together, these documents establish the principles governing employment conditions, pay and benefits, and employee conduct at Wilkin County. I also understand that this Handbook does not constitute an employment contract.

I agree to read and familiarize myself with the provisions of the above documents. I understand that not every situation or subject can be addressed in this Handbook, and it is intended as a general reference. Therefore, if I have questions about these policies or my workplace, it is my responsibility to ask my Department Head/Supervisor or County Administration.

I understand that only the Wilkin County Board of Commissioners have the authority to revise the provisions of this Handbook and that it may change, amend, modify, or suspend, interpret, or cancel in whole in part the provisions of the Handbook as needed, with or without advance notice and that employees will be notified of such changes as soon as practicable through the normal channels of communication.

_____ Employee Name (Please Print)	_____ Date
_____ Employee Signature	_____ Date
_____ Management Representative	_____ Date