



PERSONNEL POLICY

NOVEMBER 2025

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



Section 1

Introduction

WELCOME

This manual is designed to acquaint you with Knox County Housing Authority and provide you with general information about working conditions, benefits, and policies affecting your employment.

We at Knox County Housing Authority are an Equal Opportunity Employer in all personnel decisions.

The information contained in this manual applies to all employees of Knox County Housing Authority. Following the policies described in this manual is considered a condition of continuous employment. However, nothing in this manual alters an employee's "at-will" status. The contents of this manual shall not constitute nor be construed as a promise of my employment or as a contract between the Authority and any of its employees. The manual is a summary of our policies, which are presented here only as a matter of information.

You are responsible for reading, understanding, and complying with the provisions of this manual. Our objective is to provide you with a work environment that is constructive to both personal and professional growth.

ABOUT YOUR HANDBOOK

Welcome to the Knox County Housing Authority (KCHA)! This handbook is designed to be a helpful resource for you. It provides general information about our mission, policies, benefits, and our expectations for employees. We encourage you to read it carefully and use it as a reference throughout your employment.

Please understand that this handbook is for informational purposes only and is not a contract of employment, expressed or implied. Nothing in this handbook is intended to create a promise of continued employment or specific treatment. Employment with KCHA is on an "at-will" basis, which means that either you or the Authority may terminate the employment relationship at any time, for any reason or no reason, with or without notice, so long as it does not violate applicable law. Only the Executive Director has the authority to enter into a written agreement for employment for a specified period, and any such agreement must be in writing and signed by both the Executive Director and the employee.

The policies and benefits described in this handbook are subject to change. KCHA reserves the right to modify, revoke, suspend, or change any of the policies or procedures, in whole or in part, at any time, with or without notice. This flexibility is necessary to adapt to changing laws, business needs, and other circumstances. This handbook supersedes all previous written or verbal policies.

Nothing in this handbook is intended to interfere with, restrain, or prevent employee communications regarding wages, hours, or other terms and conditions of employment. Our policies should not be interpreted to restrict any employee's rights under the National Labor Relations Act or other applicable laws.

If you have any questions about the content of this handbook, please speak with your supervisor or the Executive Director.

MISSION OF THE AUTHORITY

The Knox County Housing Authority is a dynamic force in our community, providing high-quality affordable housing opportunities for individuals and families, while promoting self-sufficiency, empowerment, and a sense of community development.

Further, we will partner with other agencies to implement programs and services designed to help our families thrive.

The population we serve is as diverse as the community we live in. Our clients represent a broad range of cultures, backgrounds, and stages in life, from hard working individuals and families to persons with disabilities and special needs to single parents seeking to improve the quality of life for their families.

Each year, the combination of low wages, unemployment, rising housing costs, and generational poverty affects thousands in Knox County. We are here to help.

Knox County Housing Authority
216 W. Simmons St.
Galesburg, IL 61401
PH 309-342-8129
Fax 309-342-7206

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Knox County Housing Authority (KCHA) is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to providing a workplace free from discrimination and harassment. It is our policy to provide equal employment opportunities to all persons regardless of their race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.

This policy applies to all aspects of the employment relationship, including but not limited to recruitment, hiring, training, promotion, compensation, benefits, and termination. KCHA makes all employment decisions based on merit, qualifications, and business needs.

In accordance with federal and Illinois law, KCHA prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics:

- Race, which includes traits historically associated with race
- Color
- National Origin and Ancestry
- Religion
- Sex, including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions; gender identity; and sexual orientation.
- Age (40 and over)
- Disability (physical or mental)
- Marital Status
- Military Status and Unfavorable Discharge from Military Service
- Order of Protection Status
- Citizenship Status
- Genetic Information
- Arrest Record (as protected by law)
- Any other status or characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local law.

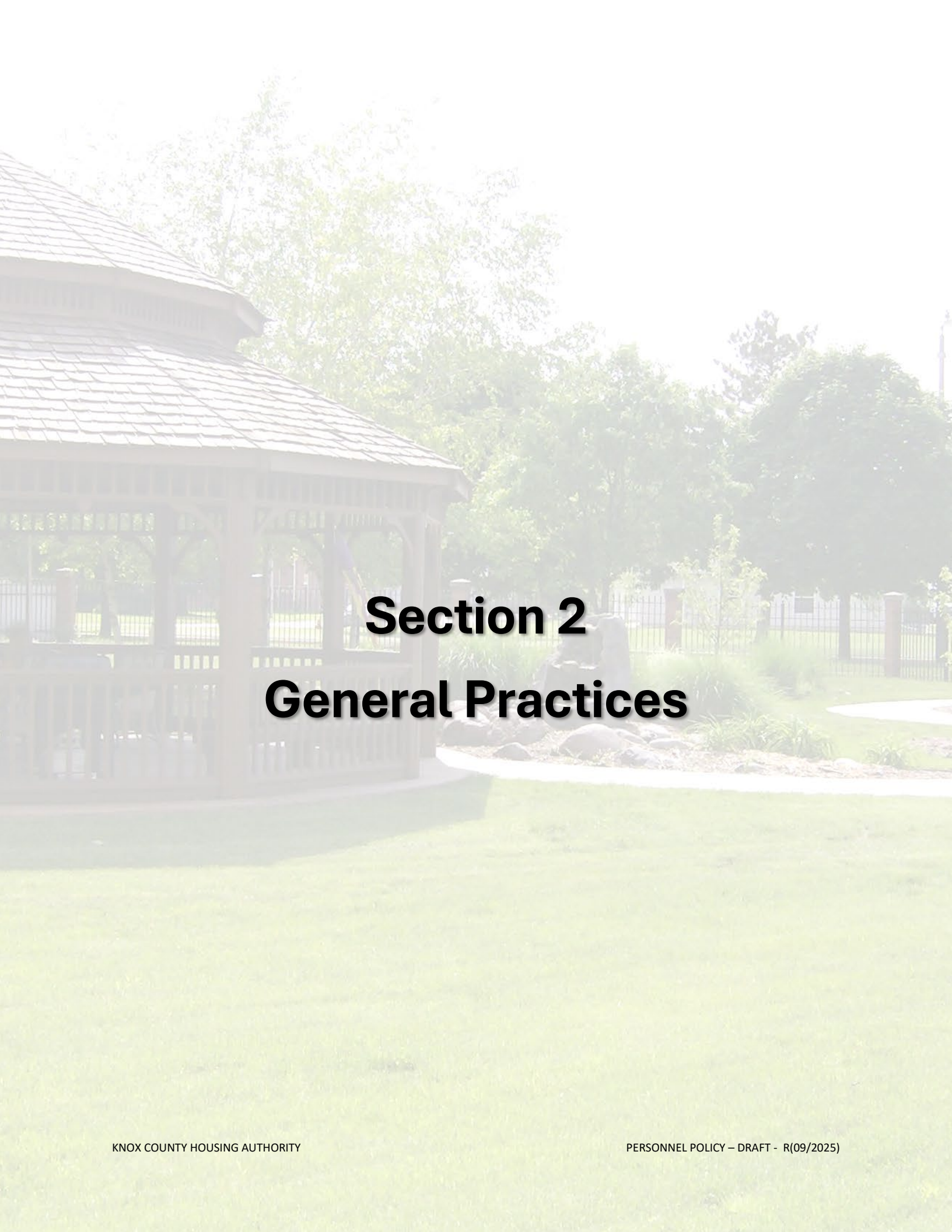
Any employee who believes they have been subjected to discrimination or harassment should immediately report the incident in accordance with the Authority's Harassment and Conflict Resolution policies. KCHA will not tolerate any form of retaliation against employees who make a good faith report of discrimination or assist in an investigation.

INTRODUCTORY PERIOD

The first ninety (90) calendar days of your employment are considered an introduction period, during which time you can become more familiar with our Authority and your job, and we can better evaluate your overall qualifications for the job.

During this initial period, you will be rated by your supervisor on your ability to perform the job, including your cooperation, skill level, dependability and other factors which contribute toward a good working relationship between an employee and the organization. It is also a time you should communicate to your supervisor any training needs or concerns you may have.

Employment with our Authority is at-will and may be terminated at any time, either by you or the Authority. Successful completion of the introductory period is not a guarantee of continued employment.



Section 2

General Practices

EMPLOYEE/EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

Employer's Responsibilities

Employees of the Housing Authority may expect:

- Fair and impartial treatment at all times;
- Adequate and competitive pay;
- Safe working conditions;
- Modern equipment and materials;
- Informed supervision;

Employee's Responsibilities

As an employer, the Housing Authority expects employees to be:

- Fair and courteous in meeting the public and working with fellow employees;
- Industrious;
- Neat in work and personal appearance;
- Prompt in reporting for work and in completing assignments;
- Economical in the use of supplies and equipment;
- Cooperative with the public and with fellow employees in getting the job done well;
- Observant of all Housing Authority policies and procedures;
- If certification of any type is required for a position, the employee must already be certified or must obtain certification within the described period that the job description requires.

HOURS OF WORK

Regular working hours for the Knox County Housing Authority are Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Work schedules may differ from one department to another and the department head of each department will determine each employee's hours and work schedule. Scheduling of weekends and holidays should be on a rotating basis wherever possible. You will be expected to record your own time worked in accordance with established Authority policies and procedures. The Authority may change the starting time of any work shift.

Employees are allowed two (2) breaks of fifteen (15) minutes which should be taken as scheduled by your department head.

All employees working in excess of seven and one-half (7-1/2) continuous hours shall be allowed to take a one-hour unpaid meal break no later than five (5) hours after they have begun work, at a time established by their department head. All employees working in excess of five (5) continuous hours shall be allowed to take a one-quarter (1/4) hour paid rest period at a time established by the department head.

Employees may leave the Authority's premises for their meal period. Leaving the premises during your *working hours* without the express consent of your department head is not permitted.

Knox County Housing Authority will provide reasonable unpaid break time each day to employees who need to express breast milk for their infant child. This break time must, if possible, run concurrently with any break time already provided to the employee. Any other time needed for this purpose will be without pay. Employees who are nursing mothers should see their supervisor for a private location for this purpose.

FLEXIBLE SCHEDULE

The Authority confirms its commitment to develop, maintain and support a comprehensive policy of equal opportunities in employment within the agency. To assist in this, the Authority actively supports a flexible schedule where it is reasonable and practical to do so, and where operational needs will not be adversely affected. In order to facilitate this, the agency may allow working arrangements, in accordance with operational interests, whereby it can widen its recruitment pool, retain the valuable skills of existing employees who no longer want to work full-time or who may want to work full time but with an alternative schedule, and enable staff to retain career development opportunities.

Flexible scheduling allows employees to work hours that are not within the standard 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM range, while maintaining a high level of service during the agency's peak operating hours, which are typically from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. With a flexible schedule, non-exempt employees are still subject to all requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Employees who are exempt from FLSA are expected to work whatever number of hours are required in order to accomplish their duties and may be permitted to set their own schedules.

Because services within each program may vary, not every employee in each program will be able to work similar flexible schedules. Therefore, managers will have to carefully examine the flexible schedules which their employees request, so that they can coordinate work schedules which ensure ample employee coverage during peak hours.

It is the responsibility of the manager to verify and ensure performance of employees with flexible schedules. Managers will need to coordinate the schedules to ensure ample coverage during peak hours. Trust is a big factor; managers must feel confident that employees will not abuse the benefits that are inherent in a flexible schedule. Flexible scheduling is a privilege, not a right, and, if abused, can be taken away at the discretion of the manager or Executive Director.

Flexible scheduling adjusts daily work hours while still working the required number of hours in a day. For instance, instead of the normal 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. day, an employee could work from 7:00 a.m. -4:00 p.m., 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m., etc. Working any arrangement of hours within an 8-hour day constitutes a valid work day. It is important to remember employee that the level of service must be maintained during peak hours. This flex-time schedule also allows employees to adjust the length of their lunch period, while still working your required shift.

For selected positions for which work can be performed away from the office, the agency may approve "work-at-home" on an as-needed basis. The following guidelines apply:

- The needs of the agency will always be the top consideration when allowing work to be completed at home.
- The employee who works from home is expected to comply with all agency policies.
- The employee is expected to meet or exceed all performance standards.
- The employee is subject to discipline based on performance or violation of agency policy.
- Work-at-home arrangements must be approved by the employee's manager.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance affects the morale and success of the Authority, and is important in evaluating performance and potential for advancement. Employees are required to report to work when expected. Unplanned or excessive absenteeism or other attendance issues causes serious disruptions in work and burdens other employees. Strong attendance and engagement is expected of all employees. The Authority recognizes that employees must occasionally be late or absent from work. However, the reasons for the absences and tardiness and your attendance will be evaluated on the basis of your entire work record.

Employees are responsible for their own attendance records. This includes the input of time worked, requesting time off in accordance with this policy, notification of tardy or absence, and providing documentation regarding attendance upon request.

TARDINESS

Employees are required to report to work when expected. Employees are expected to plan for occasional incidents, which may delay their arrival at work.

- If you anticipate that you may be late to work, you must notify your manager within 30 minutes of the start of your shift.
- Failure to notify your manager regarding a tardy will result in an occurrence.
- Employees with more than three unauthorized occurrences in a 12-month period will receive a written warning.
- Employees with six unauthorized occurrences in a 12-month period may be subject to termination.

ABSENCES

When you find it necessary to be absent for any reason, a report should be made promptly to your supervisor, in advance, whenever possible.

Authorized absences include the following:

- Vacation time scheduled in advance
- Sick time with proper notice
- Workers' compensation injury
- Death in the immediate family
- Jury Duty
- Time off to vote in local, state, and federal elections
- Military leave
- Emergency situations beyond the employee's control

The following notification methods and documentation requirements are provided for authorized absences:

- If you know in advance that you will need to be absent, you must advise your supervisor to pre-schedule the absence. To the extent possible, the Authority will accommodate these requests based on the business needs of the organization.
- If you do not know about the absence in advance, you must notify your supervisor within 30 minutes of your scheduled start time.
- For each day you have an unscheduled absence, you must notify your supervisor, giving the reason for the absence and an indication of when you will be back at work.
- If you cannot return to work when you are expected, it is your obligation to notify your supervisor.
- When you return to work after an absence of three (3) or more consecutive days, you may need a doctor's release indicating that you may return to work. The release should be given to the Executive Director.
- We may require documentation of authorized reasons for absence, such as sick leave or jury duty, and may also verify the documentation where appropriate.

Unauthorized absences occur when proper notice has not been given and/or when the Authority has not provided approval for an absence(s). Unauthorized absences indicate a lack of interest in your job.

CORRECTIVE ACTION FOR ATTENDANCE ISSUES

- An employee with excessive absenteeism, authorized or unauthorized, will receive progressive discipline, up to and including termination of employment.
- An employee with three unauthorized absences in twelve months will receive progressive discipline, up to and including termination of employment.
- An employee with five unauthorized absences in twelve months will receive progressive discipline, up to and including termination of employment.
- An absence of three consecutive workdays without proper notification to the Authority will be considered a voluntary termination of your employment.

DRESS CODE

Personal appearance contributes to the impression others form about us and the Authority. Knox County Housing Authority employees are expected to care about their personal appearance and ensure that their personal hygiene and dress projects a positive self and Authority image. Our policy applies to all employees.

All employees should judge their business attire for meetings and contacts outside of the office by the type of function that will be attended. Also, on occasion there may be a specific business reason to require that all employees dress in traditional business attire. In such instance this will be communicated to employees in advance and they will be required to dress accordingly.

This policy is intended as a guideline for appropriate attire but is not a replacement for good judgment and taste. Management personnel have the authority and obligation to send employees home if their appearance is not acceptable. Anyone with questions regarding appropriate dress should contact their supervisor or the Executive Director.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

It is the policy of the Authority to comply with state and federal disability laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended. We will not discriminate against any qualified individual with a disability in any phase of the employment relationship including application for employment, hiring, promotion and/or advancement in employment, termination, compensation, and training opportunities or other conditions or privileges of employment. The Authority will consider all requests for reasonable accommodations consistent with the business needs of the Authority in accordance with state and federal law.

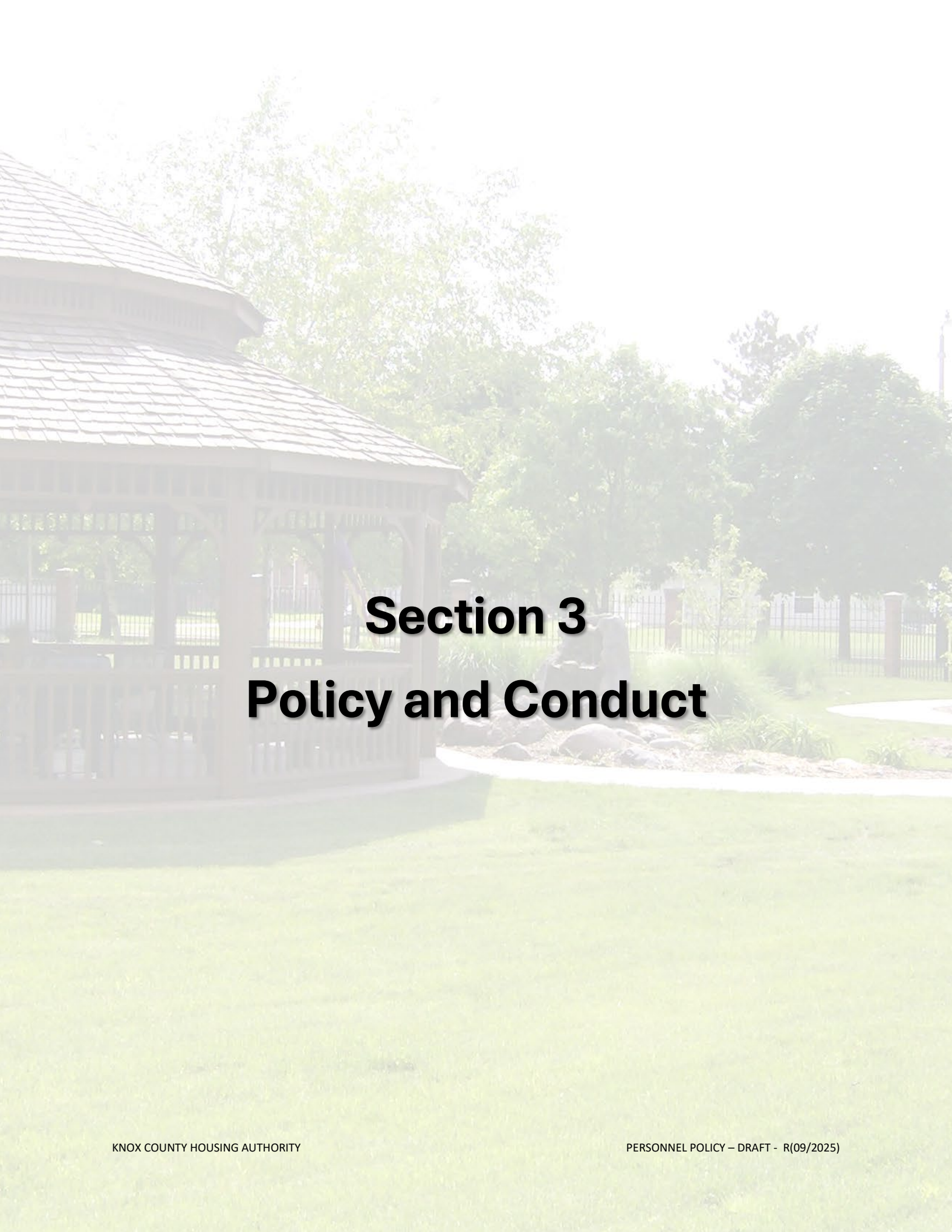
For purposes of this policy, disabled individuals may include persons who:

- Have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or
- Have a record of such impairment; or
- Are regarded as having such impairment.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

As an equal opportunity employer, the Housing Authority is committed to the fair and equal employment of individuals with disabilities. It is the policy of the Housing Authority to reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with disabilities unless doing so would pose an undue hardship for the Housing Authority. For the purposes of this policy, the term “qualified individual with a disability” is defined pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act and other applicable laws.

If an employee believes that he or she needs a reasonable accommodation, he or she should contact the Executive Director.



Section 3

Policy and Conduct

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional, business-like manner. Employees should strive to conduct all business dealings and relationships with integrity, honesty, and respect for others. Employees should loyally and faithfully serve our principles and always deal fairly and honestly with customers and others with whom we do business.

However, to ensure the protection of its property, business interests and other employees, the Authority has established certain guidelines and procedures, which all employees shall follow. No written list of Authority guidelines can be complete or can substitute for good judgment by employees or cooperation between employees and management. Some of these guidelines are outlined in this policy and others may be posted or communicated from time to time. These guidelines do not limit the Authority's right to impose discipline for other conduct detrimental to the interests of the Authority, its principals or other employees. If your conduct should become unacceptable, you will be advised privately about the situation and the methods to correct it.

The following code of conduct is intended to provide guidelines for the professional, ethical, legal, and socially responsible behavior we expect of our employees. While not intended to list all the forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable in the workplace, the following are examples of rule infractions or misconduct that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

While it is not possible to list every form of behavior that is considered unacceptable in the workplace, the following are examples of rule infractions or misconduct that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment. This list is not exhaustive and does not alter the at-will employment relationship.

- **Workplace Conduct and Professionalism**
 - **Discrimination, Harassment, or Retaliation:** Engaging in any form of unlawful discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment), or retaliation against another employee, resident, or vendor based on any protected characteristic.
 - **Abusive or Threatening Behavior:** Using abusive or profane language; making threats of violence; intimidating, coercing, or interfering with others.
 - **Insubordination:** Refusing to follow the lawful and reasonable instructions of a supervisor.
 - **Disruptive Conduct:** Engaging in behavior that disrupts the work of others or interferes with the Authority's operations.
- **Honesty and Integrity**
 - **Dishonesty or Falsification:** Falsifying any Authority records, including timekeeping records, employment applications, or other official documents.
 - **Theft or Misappropriation:** Theft, attempted theft, or the unauthorized removal or possession of property belonging to the Authority, its employees, or its residents.
 - **Fraud:** Engaging in any dishonest or fraudulent act against the Authority.
- **Safety, Security, and Substance Abuse**

- Workplace Violence: Committing any act of violence, including fighting or assault.
- Safety Violations: Willfully violating safety or health policies, or engaging in conduct that creates a safety hazard for oneself or others.
- Substance Abuse: Reporting to work or working under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, or any controlled substance that impairs performance or safety. This includes the illegal use, possession, sale, or distribution of such substances on Authority property or during work hours.
- Weapons: Possessing firearms or other dangerous weapons on Authority property, unless authorized by law and KCHA policy.
- Attendance and Performance
 - Attendance Issues: Excessive absenteeism or tardiness, or failure to follow proper call-in procedures.
 - Unsatisfactory Performance: Failure to perform job duties to the required standards of quality, safety, and efficiency.
 - Negligence: Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of Authority-owned or resident-owned property.
- Use of Authority Property and Information
 - Misuse of Technology and Equipment: Unauthorized or improper use of the Authority's computers, internet, email, communication systems, vehicles, or other equipment.
 - Unauthorized Disclosure of Confidential Information: Improperly disclosing confidential or proprietary information about the Authority, its employees, or its residents. This policy does not prohibit employees from discussing their own wages, hours, or other terms and conditions of employment.
- Violation of Policies: Violating any other policy, procedure, or rule of the Authority.

All employees who suspect violations of the letter or spirit of the standards of conduct have an obligation to report their concerns to their manager or the Executive Director.

CRIMINAL ACTIVITY and FRAUD/ABUSE

CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

Criminal activity, or the concealment of such, will not be tolerated. While on duty, if an employee is cited or arrested for breaking the law for any reason, the employee shall report this matter, in writing, to the Executive Director as soon as possible but no later than five (5) calendar days from the date of the arrest or citation. Furthermore, employees shall report any citations for infractions which occur during the employee's off duty hours if the citation will have an impact upon the employee's ability to perform assigned duties.

For purposes herein, criminal activity shall mean:

- Any offense defined and prohibited by Article 9 (Homicide) of the Criminal Code of 2012, 720 ILCS 3/0-1, et seq.
- Any offense defined and prohibited by Article 19 (Kidnapping and related offenses) of the Criminal Code of 2012, 720 ILCS 5/10-1, et seq.
- Any offenses defined and prohibited by Article 11 and its subdivisions (Sex Offenses) of the Criminal Code of 2012, 720 ILCS 5/11-14, et seq.
- Any offense defined and prohibited by Article 12 (Bodily Harm) of the Criminal Code of 2012, 720 ILCS 5/12, et seq.
- Any offense defined and prohibited by Article 16 (Theft) of the Criminal Code of 2012, 720 ILCS 5/16-1, et seq.
- Any offense defined and prohibited by Article 20-2 (Possession of Explosives or Incendiary Devices) of the Criminal Code of 2012, 720 ILCS 5/20-2, et seq.
- Any offense defined and prohibited by Article 21-1 (Damage and Trespass to Property) of the Criminal Code of 2012, 720 ILCS 5/21-1, et seq.
- Any offense defined and prohibited by Article 24 (Deadly Weapons) of the Criminal Code of 2012, 720 ILCS 5/24-1, et seq.
- Any offense defined and prohibited by the Illinois Cannabis Control Act, 720 ILCS 550.
- Any offense defined and prohibited by the Illinois Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act.
- Any offense defined and prohibited by the Illinois Controlled Substances Act, 720 ILCS 570.
- Any offenses defined and prohibited by Article 11 and its subdivisions (Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol) of the Vehicle Code of 2012, 625 ILCS 5/11-501, et seq.
- Any offense defined and prohibited by Federal Controlled Substances Act, 21 U.S.C. 801 et seq.

For the purposes of this policy, several factors will be considered in determining employee accountability for criminal activity including, but not limited to:

- A finding of responsibility for a crime by a court of law;
- Any finding of "guilty except by reason of insanity," "not guilty by reason of insanity," or similarly worded findings;
- A plea of "guilty" or "no contest" is also considered a conviction for the purpose of this policy; or
- A determination of accountability by the agency considering a preponderance of the evidence.

FRAUD

The management of the Housing Authority is determined to prevent and/or detect fraud and to take the appropriate action if fraud is detected. As such, employees should be familiar with the types of improprieties that might occur within his or her area of responsibility, and be alert for any indication of irregularity.

Fraud encompasses an array of irregularities and illegal acts characterized by intentional deception. Irregularities and illegal acts refer to, but are not limited to:

- Any dishonest or fraudulent act;
- Forgery or alteration of any document or account belonging to the Housing Authority;
- Forgery or alteration of a check, bank draft, or any other financial document;
- Misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies, or other assets;
- Impropriety in the handling or reporting of money or financial transactions;
- Disclosing confidential and proprietary information to outside parties;
- Destruction, removal or inappropriate use of records, files, furniture, fixtures, and equipment;
- Deliberately providing incorrect information or failing to provide information as required for employment at the Housing Authority;
- Failure to follow HUD and HOUSING AUTHORITY housing program and policy requirements; or
- Any similar or related irregularity.

Any person who suspects dishonest or fraudulent activity must notify the Executive Director immediately, and should not attempt to personally conduct investigations or interviews/interrogations related to any suspected fraudulent act. The agency treats all information received confidentially. The employee or other complainant may remain anonymous; however, the Housing Authority reserves the right to disclose any information it considers necessary to prevent future fraudulent acts.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Failure to report such incidents in accordance with this requirement may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Involvement in criminal or fraudulent activity as described in this section will be considered grounds for termination of employment.

EMPLOYMENT AT WILL

Employment with the Knox County Housing Authority (KCHA) is on a voluntary, "at-will" basis. This means the employment relationship may be terminated at any time, by either the employee or the Authority, with or without cause and with or without notice.

This handbook and any other verbal or written communications from the Authority are not intended to create, nor should they be interpreted to constitute, a contract of employment, either expressed or implied. The policies and procedures outlined herein are intended as guidelines and do not guarantee employment for any specific duration.

No supervisor, manager, or other representative of the Authority has the authority to enter into any agreement for employment that is contrary to the at-will relationship. The at-will employment relationship can only be modified by a formal, written agreement that is signed by the Executive Director and the employee.

The Housing Authority retains the same right to terminate someone's employment at any time, for any reason.

ANTI-HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, AND RETALIATION

Our Commitment

The Knox County Housing Authority (KCHA) is committed to providing a work environment where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. We have a zero-tolerance policy for harassment, discrimination, and retaliation in any form. This conduct is illegal, against our values, and will not be tolerated. This policy applies to all employees, applicants for employment, contractors, residents, and vendors.

Prohibited Conduct

Harassment is defined as any unwelcome verbal, physical, or visual conduct based on an individual's actual or perceived protected characteristic, when such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. This policy protects against harassment based on any characteristic protected by law, including race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, military status, and all other protected classes.

Prohibited conduct may include, but is not limited to:

- Verbal Harassment: Offensive jokes, slurs, epithets, negative stereotyping, or unwelcome comments about a person's body, appearance, or personal life. This also includes threats, intimidation, or ridicule.
- Physical Harassment: Unwelcome physical contact, such as touching, patting, pinching, assault, or blocking another individual's movement.
- Visual Harassment: Displaying or circulating offensive posters, cartoons, emails, text messages, or other materials that are derogatory or sexual in nature.
- Sexual Harassment: Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. This includes both "quid pro quo" harassment (where an employment benefit is conditioned on submission to sexual conduct) and hostile work environment harassment.
- This policy is not limited to the workplace during business hours. It also applies to all work-related settings, including business travel, conferences, and social events sponsored by the Authority.

Harassment by Third Parties

This policy also prohibits harassment of our employees by non-employees, such as residents, vendors, or visitors. Likewise, it prohibits our employees from harassing non-employees in the course of their work. If you experience or witness harassment by a third party, you should report it immediately.

Reporting Procedure

If you believe you have experienced or witnessed any form of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation, you have a responsibility to report it promptly. Prompt reporting is crucial for KCHA to take immediate action.

You may report the incident to any of the following individuals:

- Your direct supervisor
- The Assistant Director
- The Executive Director

If your supervisor is the source of the conduct, you should report it directly to another manager or the Executive Director. We encourage the reporting of all incidents, regardless of who is involved.

Investigation and Corrective Action

All reports will be investigated promptly, thoroughly, and impartially. Confidentiality will be maintained to the greatest extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct a full investigation and take appropriate action. If the investigation confirms that a violation of this policy has occurred, KCHA will take swift and effective corrective action, up to and including termination of employment.

No Retaliation

KCHA strictly prohibits retaliation against any individual who, in good faith, reports harassment or discrimination, or who participates in an investigation of such a report. Retaliation is a serious violation of this policy and will lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. If you believe you are being retaliated against, you should use the same reporting channels outlined above.

WORKPLACE CULTURE, RESPECT, AND PROFESSIONALISM

Our Commitment

The Knox County Housing Authority (KCHA) is dedicated to fostering a positive, inclusive, and professional work environment where all employees are treated with dignity and respect. We believe that a culture built on mutual trust and psychological safety—where employees feel safe to speak up, share ideas, and be their authentic selves—is essential to our success. This policy outlines the standards of conduct expected of every member of our team.

Core Principles of Professional Conduct

- All employees are expected to contribute to a positive work environment by adhering to the following principles:
- **Communicate Respectfully:** Engage in courteous and constructive communication with colleagues, residents, and vendors. Disagreements should be handled professionally and without personal attacks.
- **Collaborate Effectively:** Work cooperatively with others, demonstrate a willingness to help, and support team goals.
- **Maintain an Inclusive Environment:** Value and respect the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of all individuals.
- **Act with Integrity:** Conduct all business dealings with honesty and uphold the ethical standards of the Authority.

Unprofessional and Prohibited Conduct

Behavior that disrupts the workplace, undermines our culture of respect, or creates a hostile environment is strictly prohibited. While not an exhaustive list, the following are examples of unacceptable conduct that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination:

- **Bullying and Intimidation:** This includes repeated, unreasonable actions intended to intimidate, degrade, humiliate, or undermine an individual or group. Examples include shouting, using abusive language, making malicious threats, or engaging in sabotage.
- **Rude or Unprofessional Comments:** Making offensive, disrespectful, or otherwise inappropriate verbal or written remarks.
- **Inappropriate Displays:** Displaying or distributing emails, screensavers, or other materials that are offensive or unprofessional.
- **Gossip and Spreading Rumors:** Initiating or spreading rumors or intentionally conveying false information about another individual.

- **Refusal to Cooperate:** Refusing to comply with legitimate, work-related requests from supervisors or colleagues.

Our Shared Responsibility

Creating a positive workplace culture is a shared responsibility.

- All Employees are expected to comply with this policy, treat others with respect, and report conduct that violates these standards.
- Managers and Supervisors have an additional responsibility to model professional behavior, ensure these standards are understood and maintained within their teams, and address any concerns promptly and fairly.

If you experience or witness behavior that violates this policy, you are encouraged to report it to your Program Manager, the Assistant Director, or the Executive Director. All reports will be handled with discretion, and no employee will be retaliated against for making a good faith report.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION/PROBLEM SOLVING PROCEDURE

It is the Authority's philosophy to communicate openly and candidly with you and encourage feedback from you about your job and the Authority. However, as an employee, you may have questions or concerns regarding your job, your performance and other employment matters. In most instances, those concerns or questions should be handled through a simple inquiry to your supervisor. If your manager does not know the answer, they will get the answer and respond to you promptly. If you are not comfortable addressing the matter to your supervisor, you may contact the Executive Director or any other participating employee of management with whom you feel comfortable. If you believe the situation requires a more formal response, or if you are not satisfied with the answer that you receive, you may utilize the following problem-solving procedure:

1. Put your inquiry or concern in writing. An appointment will be scheduled for you to discuss the problem with your manager. They will give you a prompt response.
2. If you are not satisfied with the response provided by your manager, or the complaint is in regards to your manager, you may work directly with the Executive Director. A time will be set up for you to present your concern, which may involve having other individuals present to describe the facts.
3. The manager (or Executive Director) shall facilitate meetings, gather information, and review policies and procedures. The manager/Executive Director will establish meeting timelines and guidelines and work collaboratively on problem solving. Each of the affected parties shall be met with, separately and/or together, as they determine is appropriate.
4. After this meeting, you will receive a response, which may be in writing, within 15 working days from the completion of the complaint investigation.

All reports of a complaint will be dealt with in a confidential manner. Confidentiality will be maintained to the fullest extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation of the report. The Housing Authority will not discharge, demote, suspend, threaten, harass, or in any other manner discriminate against any employee in the terms and conditions of employment based upon any lawful action of such employees with respect to reporting a complaint in accordance with this policy, which he or she reasonably believes to be true. The Housing Authority cannot accept an employee that purposely makes a report that he or she knows or has reason to believe to be based on false information. Making such false reports will have consequences for the employee (up to and including termination of employment) and, in addition, the employee may be liable for damages toward the agency and any person who has suffered damages from such false report.

Not all conflicts will be resolved to the petitioner's satisfaction by using this approach but they will all be addressed. The determination of the Executive Director shall be final.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Authority maintains certain information which it considers to be confidential, including but not limited to the following: the financial affairs of the Authority; budgetary information; Authority employee information; tenant information; and any and all other confidential information provided by the Authority to the employee and which is maintained as confidential and/or marked as "confidential."

The materials, products, designs, plans, ideas, data and all other proprietary and confidential information belonging to the Authority are the property of the Authority and should never be given to an outside firm or individual without appropriate authorization from the Executive Director. Any improper transfer of material or disclosure of information, even though it is not apparent that an employee has personally gained by such action, constitutes unacceptable conduct. Any employee who participates in such a practice will be subject to disciplinary action, including termination, and possible legal action.

Unless required in the course of their business responsibilities, no employee is authorized to make copies, excerpts or compilations of any of the confidential information or to take that information from the Authority's premises without the permission of the Executive Director.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Employees must avoid conflicts of interest. Employees shall also avoid using their knowledge or awareness of any Housing Authority actions or potential actions that are not public knowledge for personal gain, financial or otherwise. Violation of one or more of the following rules of conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

No employee of the Authority shall acquire any interest, direct or indirect, in any housing project or in a project included or planned to be included in any project, nor shall he/she have any interest, direct or indirect, in any contract or proposed contract for materials or services to be furnished or used in connection with any housing project. If any employee of the Authority owns or controls an interest direct or indirect in any property included or planned to be included in any housing project, he/she shall immediately disclose the same in writing to the Authority. Failure to disclose such interest shall constitute misconduct in office.

No employee of the Authority shall directly or indirectly solicit any gift or accept or receive any gift having a value of \$50.00 or more, whether in the form of money, services, loan, travel, entertainment, hospitality, thing or promise, or any other form, under circumstances in which it could reasonably be inferred that the gift was intended to influence him or her, or could reasonably be expected to influence him or her, in the performance of his or her official duties, or was intended as a reward for any official action on his or her part.

The employment of members of the immediate families of the Executive Director, executive staff members, and the members of the Board of Commissioners are strictly prohibited. Every attempt shall be made to avoid two members of an immediate family being employed in the same administrative department at the same time (including instances with two members of an immediate family being employed at the same time if such employment will result in an employee directly or indirectly supervising a member of his immediate family). The Executive Director may grant special permission to allow immediate family members to work within the same department if he/she determines it to be in the best interest of the Housing Authority.

The KCHA is committed to hiring the most qualified candidates based on merit, skills, and experience. Relatives of current employees, executive staff, agents, officers, and Board of Commissioners are eligible for employment with the Authority, provided that such employment does not create a conflict of interest, an appearance of impropriety, or a supervisory issue. For this policy, a "relative" is defined as a spouse, parent, child, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, and corresponding in-law or step-relations, as well as any person living in the same household.

To ensure fairness and prevent conflicts, the following conditions shall apply:

- Definition of Relative: For this policy, a "relative" is defined as a spouse, parent, child, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, and corresponding in-law or step-relations, as well as any person living in the same household.

- **Prohibition on Supervision:** No relative shall report directly to a family member as defined in this policy. Furthermore, no employee may be placed in a position that is in the direct supervisory line of authority (chain of command) over their relative. The KCHA will ensure a clear and distinct separation of all direct and indirect supervisory lines for related employees.
- **Recusal from Employment Decisions:** In the event an employment decision is required regarding an employee (including but not limited to hiring, promotion, discipline, performance evaluation, or termination), any relative of that employee who holds a supervisory or executive position must recuse themselves entirely from the process. The relative must cede all decision-making authority to another qualified supervisor or executive staff member, designated by the Executive Director, who will handle the matter independently.
- **Temporary Employment Exception:** The strict separation of supervision standards may be relaxed for the temporary employment of a relative, subject to the review and approval of the Executive Director. Temporary employment is defined as any non-permanent position, including seasonal work or positions with a specified duration contingent on specific project needs or funding, such as those funded by grants. Even in these cases, the relationship must be fully disclosed, and the employment arrangement must be managed transparently to avoid any conflict of interest.
- **Disclosure Requirement:** All applicants must disclose any relatives currently employed by the KCHA on their application for employment. Likewise, any current employee who has a relative applying for a position must inform the Executive Director.

In regards to fraternization, a conflict of interest shall be defined as (but not limited to) any social relationship that has potential to cause a negative impact on staff morale, unlawful favoritism/discrimination, interfere with general business operations or create a hostile work environment.

Fraternization between the following groups is prohibited by this policy when it leads to a potential conflict of interest:

- Housing Authority employees and Housing Authority residents;
- Housing Authority employees and Housing Authority contractors and vendors;
- Housing Authority employees and other Housing Authority employees.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

The work of the Housing Authority shall have precedence over all outside employment.

An employee must provide notice of outside employment for approval by the employee's Program Manager, who must determine if the requested employment violates any of the terms of Housing Authority policies. This written approval or disapproval shall be placed in the employee's personnel file. Employees may appeal the Program Manager's decision to the Executive Director.

No time during Housing Authority working hours shall be used to promote or carry out outside employment.

No employee shall engage in outside employment, which impairs the efficiency of Housing Authority services or results in any conflict of interest with the Housing Authority.

Any violation of this policy on outside employment shall be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

All full-time Housing Authority employees and all part-time Housing Authority employees whose employment with Housing Authority is their primary employment are subject to the provisions of the Hatch Act and to all amendments made thereto.

Every eligible employee may exercise his/her right to vote in all legal elections. However, Housing Authority employees shall not;

- Be required as a duty of office or employment or as a condition for employment, promotion or tenure of office, to contribute funds for political or partisan purposes;
- Coerce or compel contributions for political or partisan purposes by any other employee of the Housing Authority, or use official authority or influence to coerce the political action of any person or party;
- Use any supplies or equipment of the Housing Authority for partisan political purposes;
- Be a candidate for public office in a partisan election;
- Be a candidate for public office in a non-partisan election, unless on unpaid leave of absence which has been authorized by the CEO or his/her designee for such purpose.

Any Housing Authority employee who wishes to run for a Federal, State, or Local elective office in a non-partisan election may request permission from the CEO or his/her designee to be placed in unpaid leave of absence status for the duration of the campaign (for a maximum of 90 days).

Violations of any of these prohibitions may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

SMOKE FREE WORKPLACE

The Smoking Policy is designed to foster the health and safety of all employees, residents, and visitors in the conduct of the Housing Authority business. It is not intended to totally prohibit smoking on Housing Authority properties, but does restrict smoking to certain areas. Smoking is permitted only in outside areas in accordance with the Smoke Free Illinois Act and federal regulations set forth at 24 CFR 965.653. Smoking is not permitted in employee workspaces or in any building owned by the Housing Authority.

Smoking can damage sensitive technical equipment and can be a safety hazard. Smoking is prohibited where combustible fumes can collect, such as in garage and storage areas, areas where chemicals are used, and all other designated areas where an occupational safety or health hazard might exist.

Smoking is not permitted in Housing Authority vehicles. The Housing Authority, in its sole discretion, may designate other locations where smoking is prohibited. Any personal breaks taken from work to smoke should not interfere with the employee's overall work productivity or performance.

All employees, visitors and guests on Housing Authority properties are expected to honor all provisions of this Smoking Policy as well as local related laws.

ALCOHOL AND CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE ABUSE

It has been established that the abuse of alcohol and controlled substances (drugs) can constitute a real threat to those who abuse these substances and those who work with such individuals.

Because of the possible effects to the individual, other employees, and the Authority, it is the policy of the Authority to maintain a workplace that is free from the effects of illegal drugs and the misuse of alcohol. The Authority will not tolerate or condone alcohol misuse or substance abuse.

To that end, employees who engage in the sale of, possess, transfer or offer to buy or sell illegal drugs or controlled substances, use or are under the influence of drugs or alcohol during working hours or on Authority property, or abuse prescribed drugs will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Employees are also prohibited from using illegal drugs while away from the workplace.

“Illegal drugs” means any controlled substance, medication, or other chemical substance that (1) is not legally obtainable; or (2) is legally obtainable, but is not legally obtained, is not being used legally, or is not being used for the purpose(s) for which it was prescribed or intended by the manufacturer. Thus, “illegal drugs” may include even over-the-counter medications, if they are not being used for the purpose(s) for which they were intended by the manufacturer. **For the purposes of this policy, 'illegal drugs' does not include cannabis used in accordance with Illinois state law. However, impairment from cannabis in the workplace is prohibited.**

Under no circumstances is an employee of the Authority to report to work, drive an Authority-owned vehicle or operate Authority equipment while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. This includes periods of time when the employee is considered to be “on-call” where they may be summoned to perform off-hours work.

The Authority complies with the Illinois Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act. While the lawful use of cannabis by individuals 21 or over is permitted under state law, the Authority maintains a strict policy against workplace impairment. Employees are prohibited from being under the influence of cannabis while on duty, on Authority property, or while operating Authority vehicles or equipment. An employee who is reasonably suspected of being impaired by cannabis in the workplace will be subject to the drug and alcohol testing procedures outlined in this policy and may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Supervisors should immediately report to the Executive Director any action by an employee that demonstrates an unusual behavior pattern or who is suspected of being under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. Employees may be tested for drugs and alcohol at the discretion of the Authority.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING POLICY

This policy establishes rules and procedures for drug and alcohol testing based on reasonable cause to believe that an employee is using alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace, is abusing controlled substances in the workplace, or is performing official duties while under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or controlled substance abuse.

Any employee who is reasonably suspected of using alcohol or illegal drugs or of abusing controlled substances in the workplace or of performing official duties while under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or abused controlled substances may be required to undergo an alcohol and/or drug test.

"Reasonable cause" exists when an employee exhibits patterns of behavior that suggest impairment from drug or alcohol use or when job performance or safety is affected. An employee may be requested to take a drug and/or alcohol test if management officials or supervisors have reasonable cause to believe that the employee's faculties are impaired while at work due to drug or alcohol use.

Any observed behavior which reasonably suggests that the employee is using drugs, controlled substances, or is under the influence of alcohol may result in immediate action as outlined in this policy. KCHA reserves the right to require a drug and/or alcohol test in the following situations:

Reasonable Suspicion: An employee may be required to undergo testing when KCHA has a good faith belief that the employee is impaired or under the influence. This belief will be based on specific, objective, and documented observations of the employee's appearance, behavior, speech, or performance.

Examples of such observations include, but are not limited to:

- The odor of alcohol or cannabis.
- Slurred speech or difficulty communicating.
- Unsteady movement, poor coordination, or disorientation.
- A significant and unexplained deterioration in job performance.
- A work-related accident.
- Possession of drugs, alcohol, or related paraphernalia on-site.

Post-Accident: An employee will be required to undergo testing after any work-related accident that results in a fatality, an injury requiring medical treatment away from the scene, or significant damage to property.

Testing Procedure

- **Observation and Documentation:** When reasonable suspicion exists, a supervisor will document the specific observations leading to a belief of impairment, preferably with a second supervisor as a witness.
- **Private Interview:** The employee will be escorted to a private area to discuss the observations with management.

- **Testing and Transportation:** If testing is deemed necessary, KCHA will transport the employee to a designated testing facility. Under no circumstances will an employee suspected of being impaired be allowed to operate a vehicle.
- **Administrative Leave:** The employee will be placed on paid administrative leave pending the receipt of test results.

Consequences

- **Positive Test:** An employee who tests positive and is determined to have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment.
- **Refusal to Test:** An employee who refuses to submit to a test, fails to cooperate with the testing process, or attempts to tamper with a test will be considered to have a positive result and will be subject to immediate termination of employment. Refusal may also result in the denial of Workers' Compensation benefits.

An employee who tests positive will be given an opportunity to provide a legitimate medical explanation for the result. Employees may also request a retest of the original sample at their own expense in accordance with laboratory procedures.

Employees may refuse to undergo drug and alcohol testing. However, employees who refuse to undergo testing or who fail to cooperate with the testing procedures (1) may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment; and/or (2) may result in the denial of Workers' Compensation Benefits and the employee may be required to incur the medical and testing costs related to the accident, injury or illness.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

The agency must continue to operate during periods of bad weather. Thus, the need for employees to be on the job during such emergencies is of paramount importance. You are expected to make every effort to report for work. If you do not report for work when scheduled during a weather emergency, it will be considered an unauthorized absence.

Under certain weather conditions or emergency situations that cause the Authority to be closed for the entire workday, closings will be communicated through designated radio stations or television stations. Under similar conditions that require the closing of the Authority after the start of the normal workday, we will give employees as much advance notice as possible. Only the Executive Director of the agency, or his/her designee, has the authority to determine closings under these circumstances.

When the Executive Director determines that the workday is to be discontinued, employees who are at work and leave will be paid for the full workday. If the Authority is closed prior to the start of the day, employees will be paid for the entire workday; assuming they were scheduled to work.

Every employee is expected to report for work any time the Authority is open. Employees who do not report for work due to the weather may have the absence count as part of their attendance record. Non-exempt employees will be required to take a sick, vacation, or personal day for this type of absence.

OPERATION OF AGENCY VEHICLES

The Knox County Housing Authority (KCHA) provides agency vehicles to authorized employees to conduct official business only. This policy establishes the rules and responsibilities for the safe and proper operation of all KCHA-owned or leased vehicles. Compliance with this policy is a condition of being granted driving privileges.

Driver Eligibility and Responsibilities

To be authorized to operate a KCHA vehicle, an employee must:

- Possess a valid State of Illinois driver's license for the type of vehicle being operated.
- Maintain a safe driving record, as determined by the Authority and its insurance carrier. KCHA reserves the right to periodically review an employee's Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) to ensure continued eligibility.
- Immediately report to their supervisor any change in their license status, including suspension, revocation, or any new restrictions.
- Be personally responsible for paying any traffic citations or fines they receive while operating a KCHA vehicle.

Authorized Use of Vehicles

Business Use Only: Agency vehicles are to be used for conducting official KCHA business and not for personal use, including commuting, unless explicitly authorized in writing by the Executive Director.

Authorized Drivers: Only authorized KCHA employees may operate agency vehicles. No other individuals, including family members or friends, are permitted to drive or ride in an agency vehicle without prior management approval.

Vehicle Security: Drivers are responsible for securing the vehicle at all times by locking doors, closing windows, and safeguarding any KCHA property or equipment inside.

Safe Driving Rules

The safety of our employees and the public is our top priority. All drivers must adhere to the following rules:

- **Obey All Laws:** All traffic laws, signs, and signals must be obeyed at all times.
- **Prohibition on Distracted Driving:** Driver distraction is a leading cause of accidents. The use of handheld cell phones or any other electronic communication device for talking, texting, or any other purpose while driving is strictly prohibited, in accordance with Illinois law. If a call must be made or a device must be used, the driver must pull over to a safe location first.
- **No Impaired Driving:** Never operate an agency vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, or any other substance that may cause impairment, as outlined in the Authority's Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace Policy.

- **Seat Belts Required:** All occupants in the vehicle must wear a seat belt at all times.
- **Vehicle Condition:** Drivers should conduct a brief visual inspection of the vehicle before use and promptly report any damage, defects, or maintenance needs to their supervisor.

Accident Reporting Procedure

In the event of an accident involving a KCHA vehicle, the driver must:

- Stop the vehicle immediately in a safe location.
- Call 911 to report the accident and request medical assistance if anyone is injured.
- Report the accident to their supervisor as soon as possible.
- Exchange information (name, address, license, insurance) with other drivers involved.
- Cooperate fully with law enforcement but do not admit fault or liability.
- Obtain the names and contact information of any witnesses.
- Complete a KCHA vehicle accident report form within 24 hours.

An employee involved in an accident may be required to submit to post-accident drug and alcohol testing.

Use of Personal Vehicles for Business

Employees who are authorized to use their personal vehicles for KCHA business will be reimbursed at the current IRS mileage rate. To be eligible, the employee must maintain personal auto insurance coverage that meets or exceeds the minimum liability limits required by Illinois law.

TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS POLICY

The Knox County Housing Authority (KCHA) provides employees with access to various technology resources to perform their job duties effectively. This policy governs the use of all KCHA technology, including but not limited to:

- Desktop and laptop computers, tablets, and mobile devices.
- The KCHA network, including internet and Wi-Fi access.
- Email, messaging, and other communication systems.
- All software, applications, and cloud-based services.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools.

This policy applies to all employees and contractors who use KCHA technology, regardless of their location. Its purpose is to ensure the security, integrity, and responsible use of our information systems while protecting the Authority's assets and confidential information.

General Use and Responsibilities

Business Purpose: KCHA technology is provided for official business purposes. Limited and occasional personal use is permissible, provided it does not interfere with job performance, consume significant resources, or violate any other Authority policy.

Prohibited Activities: Use of KCHA technology for any of the following is strictly prohibited:

- Any activity that is illegal, fraudulent, or in violation of federal, state, or local law.
- Creating, viewing, storing, or transmitting any content that is discriminatory, harassing, threatening, sexually explicit, or otherwise unprofessional or offensive.
- Engaging in unauthorized access to any system or data.
- Downloading or installing any unauthorized software, applications, or files.
- Violating copyright or intellectual property laws.
- Using technology in a way that damages or overloads our systems, such as sending spam or engaging in excessive non-business-related streaming.

Information Security and Confidentiality

Protecting the Authority's information is a critical responsibility of every employee.

- **Confidential Information:** You must handle all confidential information, especially resident Personally Identifiable Information (PII), with the utmost care. Do not access, share, or transmit this information unless it is a required part of your job duties.
- **Password Security:** You are responsible for safeguarding your passwords. Do not share your login credentials with anyone. Passwords should be complex and changed periodically.
- **Reporting Incidents:** If you suspect a security breach, lose a device, or receive a suspicious email (phishing), you must report it immediately to your supervisor.

Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

KCHA recognizes that AI tools can be valuable for improving efficiency. Employees may use management-approved AI tools for business purposes, but must adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Protect Confidential Information:** Never input any confidential, proprietary, or personally identifiable information (including resident or employee data) into a public or non-approved AI tool. Treat AI prompts as a public disclosure.
- **Verify for Accuracy:** AI-generated content can be inaccurate or biased. You are responsible for reviewing, editing, and fact-checking all AI-generated output before using it for official business. The employee is ultimately accountable for the final work product.
- **Maintain Integrity:** Do not use AI to create content that is misleading, unethical, or violates any KCHA policy.

No Expectation of Privacy

All information created, sent, received, or stored on KCHA's technology systems is the property of the Authority. Employees should have no expectation of privacy in their use of these systems.

KCHA reserves the right to monitor, access, review, and disclose any and all data and communications on its network and devices for any business purpose, including security, maintenance, and investigation of potential misconduct. As a public entity, please be aware that your communications may also be subject to disclosure under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Policy Violations

Any violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment, and may also lead to civil or criminal liability.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The Housing Authority recognizes the increasing use of social media as a communication tool. This Social Media Policy addresses Housing Authority employees' use of social media. For the purpose of this Policy, the Housing Authority considers the term "social media" to include, but not be limited to:

- personal websites;
- web logs ("blogs") or microblogs (e.g., "Twitter");
- "wikis";
- social networking websites (e.g., "Facebook", "LinkedIn");
- online media sharing websites (e.g. "YouTube," "Flickr");
- online forums, message boards, or bulletin boards.

The Housing Authority acknowledges that some of its employees may choose to use social media on their own time for personal purposes. Housing Authority rules and policies apply to the conduct and communications of Housing Authority employees while using social media just as those rules and policies apply to conduct and communications in any other setting. In addition, Housing Authority employees are prohibited from using social media in any manner that:

- Violates any federal, state, or local laws or regulations;
- Violates any Housing Authority policy, rule, standard, or requirement;
- Disrupts or hinders the Housing Authority's operations;
- Infringes on any third-party rights, including but not limited to intellectual property rights such as copyrights or trademarks;
- Is defamatory, libelous, or might be construed as harassment or disparagement on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or any other legally protected status;
- Discloses confidential information related to Housing Authority business, residents, employees, or other matters;
- Is detrimental in any manner to the Knox County Housing Authority.

Employees are reminded that information (e.g., comments, blog entries, photographs, videos) posted or communicated using social media may often be accessible by virtually anyone with internet access. This may include other Housing Authority employees, such as supervisors and subordinates, as well as Housing Authority residents. Also, once information is posted or uploaded onto a social media website or network, it can be nearly impossible to completely remove or eliminate. Housing Authority employees are therefore encouraged to use good judgment if they use social media.

Employees are also reminded that, pursuant to the Technology and Information Systems Policy, they have no expectation of privacy with respect to the use of any Housing Authority owned or issued computer or electronic communications device.

Use of social media by a Housing Authority employee in violation of this Policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.



Section 4

Employee Classification

and Compensation

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF EMPLOYEES

All personnel employed by the Housing Authority shall be selected from the files of applications for employment. It is the responsibility of the Executive Director or designee to advertise, recruit, coordinate interviews, test if applicable, and refer applicants to the appropriate manager. All posted jobs will be open to current internal employees and external applicants (unless stated for internal applicants only).

Persons desiring employment shall file written applications, resumes, and other required documents setting forth their qualifications for employment and such other information as may be required.

As part of the selection and hiring process, criminal and driving records will be obtained for all potential employees. Criminal records will be reviewed for prior offenses, with consideration given to the nature of the offense and length of time since the offense occurred. Consideration will be given to the applicant if the offense is more than three (3) years old, or if the offender is currently enrolled in or has completed an Offenders Program. Consideration will also be given to the seriousness of the offense, as well as the nexus of the offense to the work performed at the Housing Authority.

Job Posting

The announcement of an open position will contain, at a minimum, the following:

- Job title
- A description of the duties of the vacant position
- Hiring salary range
- Required qualifications

When a position becomes vacant, it will generally be open to internal applicants first. The position will be posted in conspicuous locations visible to all employees within a reasonable time of the position becoming vacant. Employees who are interested in applying for a posted position have three (3) business days from the date the announcement to respond by completing and submitting the required documents to the Executive Director. The qualifications of an employee applicant are as follows:

- Should have been in current position for six (6) months or longer;
- Should have been an employee of the Housing Authority for at least one (1) year and must have had an acceptable evaluation rating on the most recent performance evaluation (as applicable).

Once the time period has lapsed for internal applications to be submitted, the position will be posted externally for five (5) days. The posting will be made using a method that best serves the Housing Authority's need for reaching qualified applicants.

At its sole discretion, the Housing Authority may run the internal and external postings concurrently. Internal applicants, as well as external applicants, may compete and be considered simultaneously for the vacancy. The Executive Director has final authority over the selection process.

Exceptions to the applicant eligibility requirements may be made at the discretion of management (based on the Housing Authority's organizational needs).

SALARY ADMINISTRATION

Salaries will be administered in a fair and systematic manner in accordance with the most current HOUSING AUTHORITY Salary Range schedule.

A salary range shall be assigned to each position, and the rate of compensation for each employee shall be within the range established for the position of the employee to which his/her position has been allocated. Appropriate compensation rates shall be established on the basis of industry comparability.

An employee (new hire or promoted existing) is appointed at the rate of the appropriate salary range for their position commensurate with applicable experience, unless otherwise approved by the Executive Director or his/her designee.

Salary increases shall be granted in the Housing Authority's sole discretion, and shall be based upon job performance and availability of Housing Authority allocated funds.

Salary increases based on merit will occur as of April 1 of the year in which it is determined that a merit increase will be given (at the Housing Authority's sole discretion). Employees whose salary is at the max of the pay range will not be eligible for a merit increase.

Salary bonuses/incentives based on a combination of job performance and company-wide accomplished goals may be considered, if the budget allows. These incentive bonuses shall be granted towards the end of each calendar year (in December) at the discretion of the Executive Director or his/her designee.

EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATIONS

The following employment classifications have been established for overtime and benefit purposes:

- Non-exempt full-time: An employee who is regularly scheduled to work thirty-seven and half (37.5) or more hours per week. Full-time employees are eligible for full Authority benefits, provided they meet the requirements of the benefit plan.
- Non-exempt part-time: Regular part-time employees are regularly scheduled to work less than 37.5 hours but more than 30 hours in the workweek. Part-time employees may be eligible for certain benefits, provided they meet the requirements of the benefit plan.
- Casual/Temporary All non-regular employees are casual/temporary employees. Casual/temporary employees are regularly scheduled to work any combination of full- or part-time hours in the workweek, but casual employees are hired for a specified period of hours only. Casual/temporary employees are not eligible for benefits.
- Exempt employees: Full-time or part-time employees who are paid on a salaried basis in excess of \$684.00 weekly (\$35,568.00 annually) and perform executive, administrative, or professional duties are exempt from the minimum wage, overtime, and certain timekeeping provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), as amended, and applicable state law. Exempt employees are not eligible to receive overtime.
- Nonexempt employees: Full-time or part-time employees who do not meet the exemption thresholds are not exempt from minimum wage, overtime and timekeeping provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), as amended and applicable state law. Nonexempt employees are eligible to receive overtime pay.

Changes In Classification:

When an employee's status is changed from regular full-time or regular part-time to casual, the employee forfeits all accrued benefits except those to which they are legally entitled.

When changing from regular part-time to regular full-time, benefits will be increased to regular full-time commencing with the month following the month of change.

When changing from regular full-time to regular part-time, benefits will be decreased to regular part-time

commencing with the month following the month of change.

When changing from regular full-time or regular part-time to casual, benefits will be decreased to casual status commencing with the month following the month of change.

SPECIAL PAY STRUCTURE

Overtime

Compensation for overtime shall be paid in accordance with applicable federal and state law.

All overtime must be authorized in advance by the Executive Director, except in bona fide emergency situations in which case a program manager may approve overtime.

Non-exempt employees shall be paid overtime at a rate of 1-1/2 times their regular hourly rate for hours worked in excess of forty hours (40.0) in a one-week work period.

Employees may elect to take compensatory “comp” time in lieu of receiving overtime pay, at the rate of 1-1/2 times the hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week. Compensatory time may be taken at the discretion of the employee and the Executive Director.

On-Call Pay

Non-exempt non-clerical maintenance employees may be assigned to “on-call” duty during hours outside of normal operations for maintenance emergencies. Work assignments during on-call duty may be beyond the normal work performed by the employees, but will be within their capabilities. On-call duty should be assigned on a rotational basis among qualified employees. Employees who are assigned on-call duty must be able to work during the entire on-call assignment.

Employees normally will not be paid for on-call time when waiting to be called, unless otherwise required by law, or properly determined by the Executive Director or his/her designee. Employees will be paid at their overtime rate for time worked when responding to a call, unless said employees respond to a call on a holiday, in which case said employees will be paid in accordance with the Section III.5 “Holiday Compensation” in these Personnel Policies.

Employee Expense Reimbursement

The Authority will reimburse employees for all necessary expenditures or losses incurred by the employee within the scope of their employment and directly related to services performed for the Authority, in accordance with the Illinois Wage Payment and Collection Act. An expense is considered necessary if it is required for the employee to perform their job duties and primarily benefits the employer. Employees must obtain prior authorization from their supervisor for any anticipated expenses and must submit requests for reimbursement with required documentation in a timely manner. The Authority maintains the right to deny reimbursement for expenses that were not authorized, are excessive, or are not considered necessary business expenses.

PAY PERIODS AND PAYDAYS

Housing Authority employees will be paid on a bi-weekly basis, every other Friday. If payday falls on a holiday, employees will be paid on the last work day prior to the holiday.

For your protection, checks can only be released to the individual whose name appears on the check. An exception to this will be made when an employee has given written authorization and has then verified this with program manager.

Payroll Adjustments

The Authority complies with all state and federal regulations for proper payment of its employees, and takes every precaution to determine the appropriateness of each deduction. Any employee, who believes that an error was made on his/her paycheck, must notify the Authority within 15 days of the pay period in which the error was allegedly made. If it is determined that an adjustment is necessary, the adjustment will normally be made on the next paycheck. Further, the Authority will take actions to remedy any processes necessary to ensure future errors will not occur.

Should you have any questions about your paycheck, contact your supervisor or the payroll department.

HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

Eligibility and Enrollment

All regular, full-time employees are eligible to participate in the Authority's health insurance plan. For the purpose of benefits eligibility, a full-time employee is defined as one who is regularly scheduled to work 30 or more hours per week.

Eligible employees may enroll in the plan following a waiting period. Coverage becomes effective on the first day of the month in which the 90th day of continuous full-time employment occurs.

Plan Costs and Contributions

The Authority makes a substantial contribution to the cost of employee health insurance. The specific contribution levels for both employee-only and dependent coverage are determined annually as part of the budgetary process and are based on available resources. While contribution levels are subject to change, the Authority's goal is to continue providing a highly competitive benefit.

Regardless of the Authority's premium contribution, all enrolled individuals are responsible for any deductibles, co-payments, and other out-of-pocket expenses as outlined in the official plan documents.

Transitional Insurance Stipend for New Hires

To support the recruitment and retention of top talent, the Executive Director has the discretion to offer a temporary transitional insurance stipend to a newly hired, benefits-eligible employee. This stipend is intended to assist the employee in paying for the continuation of their health insurance from a previous employer (such as through COBRA) during the KCHA benefits waiting period. This stipend is a discretionary tool, not an employee right, and will be paid as taxable compensation.

General Provisions

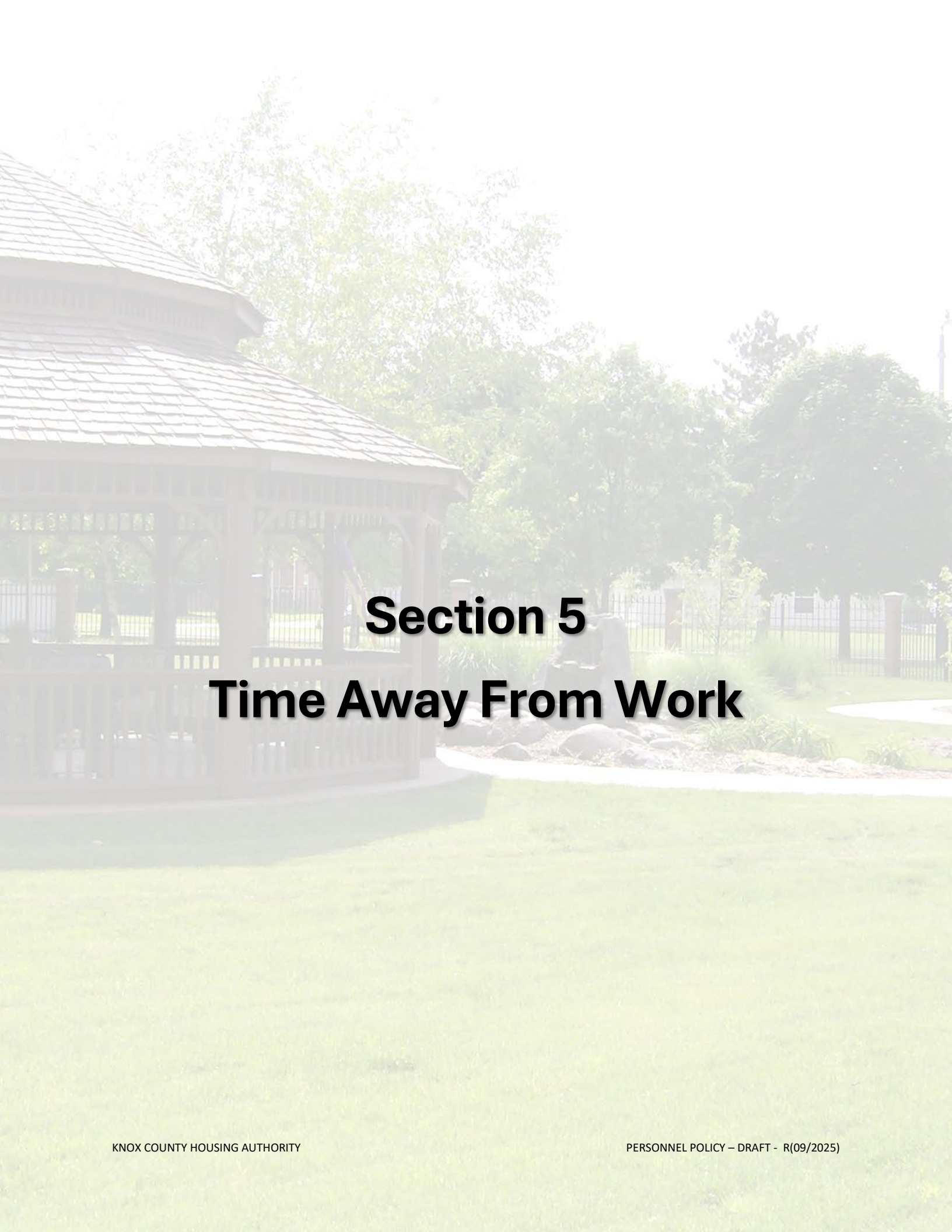
This section provides a summary of our health insurance benefits. The specific details, terms, and conditions of coverage are governed by the official plan documents. KCHA reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to amend or terminate its benefit plans, change insurance carriers, or modify premium contributions at any time.

RETIREMENT PLAN

After six months of employment, all regularly scheduled employees become qualified to participate in the Authority's retirement plan. Under this plan the Authority contributes 15.3% of the employee's annual wage or salary to the employee's account with the designated plan administrator.

During the first year of participation in the retirement plan employees are 50% vested. Should an employee leave prior to the end of the first year of employment they would receive one half of the funds contributed on their behalf. Employees become fully vested after five years of continuous employment.

Prior government or military service may apply for the purposes of calculating the percentage of value in an employee's retirement account.

The background of the page is a faded photograph of a park. On the left, there is a large wooden gazebo with a shingled roof. To the right of the gazebo, there is a landscaped area with rocks and some small plants. In the background, there are several tall trees and a white fence. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

Section 5

Time Away From Work

LEAVES OF ABSENCE

The Authority will consider employee requests for absence from work on either a short-term or long-term basis under certain circumstances. In general, requests for leave will be based upon the circumstances of each individual leave request, the needs of the Authority and any applicable state or federal laws that may apply to the leave. (See each leave for specific information.)

Employees should submit a request for the leave to their supervisor or the Executive Director as far in advance as possible, normally 30 days. When emergency situations arise and it is not possible to give prior notice, employees are required to notify their supervisor or the Executive Director as soon as they are aware of the need for a leave of absence, but no later than two (2) working days after the occurrence of the leave.

If you are on an approved leave, you must contact your supervisor prior to the expiration of the leave to confirm your return date. If the leave is for medical reasons, the Authority may request, at its discretion, a fitness for duty report from your health care provider verifying your disability and/or ability to return to work. Failure to return to work on the day after the expiration of leave will be considered a voluntary resignation. Request for an extension of a short-term or long-term leave of absence must be submitted to the Authority in writing prior to the expiration of the leave of absence.

Employees are generally not authorized to maintain outside employment while on a leave of absence from the Authority. Any exceptions must be discussed with the Executive Director.

Every effort will be made to re-employ you in your former position upon your return from an authorized leave. Except where mandated by law, we cannot guarantee that your position will remain open in your absence. If there is no vacancy, you may be offered another opening for which you are qualified, if available.

Types Of Leave

The following types of leaves will be considered:

- 1) Family Medical Leave
- 2) Personal
- 3) Bereavement
- 4) Jury Duty
- 5) Military
- 6) VESSA

Family Medical Leave

Employees who have worked for the agency for at least twelve (12) months may take up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid leave (FMLA leave) for the following reasons:

- Birth of a child of the employee

- Placement of a child into the employee's family by adoption or by a foster care arrangement
- Care of the employee's spouse, child or parent who has a serious health condition
- Inability of the employee to perform the functions of the employee's position due to a serious health condition.
- A "qualifying exigency" arising from the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter or parent is on (or has been called to) active duty in the Armed Forces during deployment to a foreign country.

An eligible employee who is the spouse, son, daughter, parent or next of kin of a participating employee or veteran of the Armed Forces (including the National Guard or Reserves) may take up to twenty-six (26) weeks of unpaid FMLA leave during a single twelve (12) month period to care for a covered servicemember employee or veteran who, for a serious injury or illness, is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation or therapy. If an employee is eligible for leave to care for a servicemember employee or veteran as well as for another FMLA-eligible reason, the total combined leave may not exceed twenty-six (26) weeks during that single twelve (12) month period.

Any FMLA leave taken by an employee during the preceding twelve (12) month period will be used to determine the amount of available leave pursuant to the Family and Medical Leave Act.

The right to family leave for the birth and/or placement of a child into an employee's family may only be taken within the twelve (12) month period after the date of the birth or placement of the child. In the case of unpaid leave for the birth or placement of a child, intermittent leave or working a reduced number of hours is not permitted, unless both the employee and the agency agree.

For purposes of this policy, a serious health condition means an illness, injury, impairment or physical or mental condition that involves:

- any period of incapacity or treatment in connection with or a consequence of in-patient care in a hospital, hospice or residential medical care facility or
- any period of incapacity requiring absence from work or other regular daily activities for more than three (3) calendar days that also involves:
 - continuous treatment by or under the supervision of a healthcare provider
 - continuous treatment by or under the supervision of a healthcare provider for a chronic long-term health condition that is incurable or so serious that if not treated would result in a period of incapacity of more than three (3) calendar days or prenatal care.

In the case of unpaid leave for serious health conditions, the leave may be taken intermittently or on a reduced-hours basis only if such leave is medically necessary. Where an employee requests intermittent leave or leave on a reduced hours basis due to a family participating employee's or the employee's own serious health condition, the agency has the option, in its sole discretion, to require the employee to transfer to a temporary alternative job for which the employee is qualified and that better accommodates the intermittent leave or reduced-hours leave than the employee's regular job. The temporary position will have equivalent pay and benefits as the employee's regular job.

Employees are required to use their available vacation time during the twelve (12) week family leave period, or twenty-six (26) week period in the case of servicemember employee or veteran family leave, and available sick days will be used when family leave is taken because of serious health conditions.

That portion of the family leave of absence that is vacation time and/or sick days will be with pay according to the agency's policies regarding vacation time and sick days. The employee will be notified immediately in writing that the vacation time and/or sick days will be counted toward the twelve (12) weeks of family leave, or twenty-six (26) weeks of servicemember employee or veteran family leave.

When the necessity of leave is foreseeable, the employee must provide the agency at least thirty (30) days' notice of the employee's intention to take leave. If circumstances require the employee's leave to begin in less than thirty (30) days from the date of notice to the agency, the employee must provide such notice as soon as practical. When the need for leave is unforeseeable, the employee must give notice as soon as practical and use the usual call-in procedures for reporting an absence.

Any leave request based on a family participating employee's or employee's own serious health condition must be supported by certification from a health care provider. The employee must provide a copy of the certification to the agency in a timely manner. Certification from the health care provider must contain:

- the date the serious health condition began
- the possible duration of the condition
- the appropriate medical facts regarding the condition
- a statement that the employee is needed to provide the care and an estimate of the amount of time that need will continue, if the leave is based on the care of a spouse, child or parent
- a statement that the employee is unable to perform the functions of his/her job, if the leave is based on the employee's own serious health condition
- the date the treatment is expected to be given and the duration of the treatment, in the case of intermittent leave or leave on a reduced-hours basis for planned medical treatment.

Any leave request due to a qualifying exigency must be supported by certification showing that the servicemember employee is on (or has been called to) active duty during deployment to a foreign country.

During family leaves of absence, the Housing Authority will continue to pay its portion of the health insurance premiums and the employee must continue to pay his/her share of the premium. Failure of the employee to pay his/her share of the health insurance premium may result in loss of coverage. If the employee does not return to work after the expiration of the leave, the employee will be required to reimburse the agency for payments of health insurance premiums during the family leave, unless the employee does not return because of the presence of a serious health condition that prevents the employee from performing his/her job or circumstances beyond the control of the employee.

During leave, the employee shall not accrue employment benefits such as vacation pay, sick pay, pension, etc. Employment benefits accrued by the employee up to the day on which the family leave of absence begins will not be lost.

The Housing Authority may require an employee on FMLA leave to report periodically on his/her status and the intention of the employee to return to work, and also may require periodic recertification of the medical condition. An employee taking leave due to the employee's serious health condition is required to obtain certification that the employee is able to resume work prior to the return from any FMLA leave. Employees who return to work from a family leave of absence within or on the business day following the expiration of the twelve (12) weeks are entitled to return to their job or an equivalent position without loss of benefits or pay.

Procedure. Requests for family leave of absence must be submitted in writing and signed by the employee's immediate manager. Requests should be submitted at least thirty (30) days before the leave is to commence or as soon as possible if thirty (30) days' notice is not possible.

Each employee seeking FMLA leave will be notified within five business days of their eligibility or ineligibility to take FMLA leave and of their rights and responsibilities. Once the agency has sufficient information to make a determination, the employee will be notified within five business days that leave will or will not be designated and counted as FMLA leave.

Personal Leave

A personal leave of absence without pay may be granted an employee at the discretion of the agency. It is not our general policy to grant personal leaves of absence and such leaves will be granted only under extraordinary circumstances. A personal leave of absence is not available instead of medical leave. Granting of such a leave depends on the review of the merits of each case, including the effect the employee's absence will have on the workload of the other employees. Requests for leaves of absence may be granted or rejected as dictated by the judgment of the Executive Director.

Salary and benefits are not payable to an employee while the employee is on a personal leave of absence. Health insurance may be continued if the employee pays the full premium at the group rate. Although employees do not accrue benefits while on leave, those benefits accrued up to the time the employee started the leave will be retained.

The employee's exact position, tour of duty, or work area may not be guaranteed upon return from a personal leave of absence; however, all efforts will be made to place the employee in the first available similar job with similar pay. The employee's date of initial employment will be adjusted to reflect the time spent on personal leave.

It is the employee's responsibility to return to work on the date the leave of absence expires. Should the employee fail to return and fail to notify the Executive Director of a request for an extension, we will assume that the employee does not intend to rejoin the agency and will consider the employee to have resigned from employment. A request for extension of a leave of absence must be in writing and must be received at least five working days prior to the expiration of a leave.

All personal leaves will be unpaid and any available paid time off, such as vacation, must be exhausted prior to applying for a leave. The maximum time that will normally be granted for any personal leave of absence is thirty (30) days per rolling 12-month period.

Bereavement Leave

The Authority provides paid and unpaid leave to employees for needs related to the death of a family member, in compliance with the Illinois Family Bereavement Leave Act (FBLA).

Paid Bereavement Leave:

- Employees may be granted up to three (3) days of paid leave in the event of the death of an immediate family member (spouse, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, and corresponding in-law and step-relations).
- Employees may be granted up to one (1) day leave with pay in the event of the death of a family member employee. Family participating employees for which an employee would be allowed one (1) day leave include the following: aunt, uncle, cousin, niece, nephew.

Unpaid Family Bereavement Leave Act (FBLA) Leave:

- Eligible employees are entitled to up to ten (10) workdays of unpaid leave for any of the following qualifying events:
 - The death of a covered family member (child, stepchild, spouse, domestic partner, sibling, parent, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandchild, grandparent, or stepparent).
 - A miscarriage, an unsuccessful reproductive procedure, a failed adoption, a failed surrogacy agreement, or a diagnosis that negatively impacts pregnancy or fertility.

Leave Usage: FBLA leave must be completed within 60 days after the employee receives notice of the qualifying event. Employees are entitled to up to 6 weeks of leave in the event of multiple qualifying events in a 12-month period.

Notice and Documentation: The employee must provide at least 48 hours' notice, unless not practicable. The Authority may require reasonable documentation, but for leave related to pregnancy loss, fertility, or adoption, the Authority cannot require the employee to disclose the specific qualifying event.

Jury Duty/Court Appearances

In the event an employee is called to jury duty or to testify as a subpoenaed witness in a judicial proceeding, he/she will be granted a leave of absence. Full-time employees will be paid the difference between their regular pay and the amount received as a juror or witness for a maximum of 10 working days. Part-time employees will receive appropriate unpaid time off.

To be eligible for paid leave, an employee must present a jury summons or subpoena and pay verification from the Clerk of Court. When employees are dismissed from court duty prior to the end of the workday, they are expected to return to work or contact their supervisor for instructions.

Military Leave

Any full-time employee who is a participating employee of any reserve component of the United States Armed Forces or of any reserve component of the Illinois National Guard, shall be granted leave from employment for any period actively spent in military service, including:

- basic training;
- special or advanced training, whether or not within the State, and whether or not voluntary;
- annual training; and
- any other training or duty required by the United States Armed Forces.

Written or oral advance notice of the military service is to be provided to the agency by you or an appropriate officer of the branch of the uniformed service in which you will be serving. However, no notice is required if doing so is impossible or unreasonable because of military necessity or other legitimate reasons.

During these leaves, the employee's seniority and other benefits shall continue to accrue. The employee shall continue to receive his or her regular compensation. During leaves for basic training, for up to 60 days of special or advanced training, and for any other training or duty required by the United States Armed Forces, if the employee's daily rate of compensation for military activities is less than his or her daily rate of compensation as an employee of the agency, he or she shall receive his or her regular compensation minus the amount of his or her base pay for military activities.

You will be eligible for reemployment if:

- you provided the agency with advance written or oral notice of military service, unless giving of notice was impossible or unreasonable due to military necessity or other circumstances;
- you reported back to work or applied for reemployment; and
- your separation from the service was under honorable conditions.

Reemployment and all rights and benefits associated with reemployment can be denied if:

- any one of the above three requirements are not met;
- you left employment with the agency for reasons unrelated to military service and then subsequently decided to enter the military;
- your preservice position with the agency was for a brief, nonrecurrent period that was not reasonably expected to continue for a significant length of time, and you are unqualified for any other position at the agency; or
- the agency's circumstances have so changed as to make reemployment impossible or unreasonable.

VESSA

The Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act ("VESSA") provides an employee who is a victim of domestic or sexual violence, or who has a family or household participating employee who is a victim of

domestic or sexual violence, with up to eight (8) weeks of unpaid leave per any twelve (12) month period to address issues arising from domestic or sexual violence. VESSA leave may also be used to take up to ten (10) workdays of unpaid leave to attend the funeral, make arrangements, or grieve the death of a family or household member who was killed in a crime of violence. This leave must be completed within 60 days of the employee receiving notice of the death.

An employee may take VESSA leave to:

- Seek medical attention for, or recovery from, physical or psychological injuries caused by domestic or sexual violence to the employee or employee's family or household participating employee;
- Obtain victim services for the employee or employee's family or household participating employee;
- Obtain psychological or other counseling for the employee or the employee's family or household participating employee;
- Participate in safety planning, including temporary or permanent relocation or other actions to increase the safety of the victim from future domestic or sexual violence; or
- Seek legal assistance to ensure the health and safety of the victim, including participating in court proceedings related to the violence. VESSA leave may be taken intermittently or on a reduced work schedule.

The employee shall provide at least 48 hours advance written notice of the employee's intention to take VESSA leave, except in such cases where it is not practicable to provide such notice. If an unscheduled absence occurs, the agency will not take action against the employee if the employee, upon request and within a reasonable period after the absence, provides certification.

The Authority reserves the right to require certification for leave taken under the Victims Economic Security and Safety Act ("VESSA") provisions meets criteria for such leave. This certification shall include a sworn statement from the employee and at least one of the following:

- Documentation from a victims' services organization, attorney, participating employee of the clergy, a medical or other professional from whom the employee or the employee's family or household participating employee has sought assistance.
- A police or court record
- Other corroborating evidence acceptable to the Knox County Housing Authority

Employees have the right to reinstatement to the same position they held immediately prior to taking leave under "VESSA" or to an equivalent position upon their return from such leave.

Additional Information

While the Authority believes in and recognizes the need for various leaves of absence, employees have the responsibility to be fair, open and honest with the Authority. The Authority may require substantiation for leaves of absence to verify the nature and length of each leave request. If the verification establishes that

the employee is falsifying the reason for the absence, the employee will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. All pay will be stopped immediately. The Authority may seek reimbursement for compensation or benefits paid to or on behalf of an employee who falsifies a leave of absence.

The Authority will offer the opportunity to continue health insurance coverage for employees while on certain approved leaves. This will be in keeping with the applicable laws on medical coverage continuation (COBRA) and other state continuation laws. If the Authority requires employee contributions to any insurance coverage, the employee will be expected to continue to contribute his/her portion of the premium. A leave of absence may affect other benefits as well. Please see the payroll department for an explanation of continuation options.

HOLIDAYS

The Knox County Housing Authority Holiday Observance Schedule will generally follow the observance schedule of the Office of the Chief Judge, Ninth Judicial Circuit, State of Illinois. Holiday observance will be in accordance with national or local observances. To qualify for payment for each holiday, employees must work their regularly scheduled shift on the day before and the day after the holiday.

All eligible non-exempt employees who are required to work on the day that any of the above holidays are observed will be paid for all hours worked plus extra hours based upon their normal hourly rate of pay. All regular full-time employees who are not required to work on any of the above holidays will be paid as if they worked the hours based on their normal hourly rate of pay. All regular part-time employees will be paid for four hours at their normal rate of pay for a recognized holiday.

There is no compensation for casual employees who are not required to work on any of the listed holidays or the day the holiday is observed. Casual employees who work in any office during one of the above holidays will be paid time and one half for hours worked based upon their normal hourly rate of pay.

Due to the nature of the Authority's services, we reserve the right to schedule any employee to work on holidays.

An employee who wishes to observe religious or ethnic holidays other than those designated above may do so by notifying the Executive Director in writing, at least two weeks prior to such holiday. Late notices may be accepted in certain circumstances at the Executive Director's discretion, but may be rejected. Employees may use a vacation day for such holiday observance or, alternatively, employees who have no accrued and unused vacation days available will be granted an unpaid absence for this purpose if the holiday absence is approved.

The agency may, at the discretion of the Executive Director, adjust the Holiday Observance Schedule, as appropriate.

SICK DAYS/PERSONAL DAYS

Attendance is an important factor in every employee's annual salary review. Regular full-time and part-time employees are entitled to paid sick days for illness or incapacity not covered by workers' compensation. Periods of actual incapacity associated with pregnancy shall be treated the same as any other disability. Paid sick days shall become available to each regular full-time and part-time employee after 30 days of continuous employment.

Full-time employees are eligible for paid **sick days** pursuant to the following schedule:

- .86 days per month beginning with the 1st day of employment through the seventh year of service
- 1.25 days per month each year beginning with the eighth year of service
- Part-time employees receive sick days at one-half the rate of a full-time employee

Sick leave shall be allowable due to the illness of the employee, the employee's spouse, or the employee's minor children. Maximum sick pay accrual is 90 days for full-time and 45 days for part-time. Sick days are not payable upon termination.

Except in an emergency, an employee must give reasonable advance notice at least one-half hour prior to the start of his/her shift, to his/her supervisor or to the Executive Director, regarding the employee's intention to be absent and to be paid for that absence in accordance with this policy.

The Executive Director may request a physician's written verification of incapacity at any time from the employee's treating physician or from a physician chosen by the Authority. In order for an employee to be eligible for paid sick days when an employee is incapacitated, the employee must intend to return to work.

The Authority requires an employee who is absent for three (3) or more consecutive days to obtain a medical report from his/her physician certifying that he/she is able to resume his/her regular job responsibilities. This medical verification must be presented to the employee's supervisor or to the Executive Director before the employee will be allowed to return to work.

Personal Days - Employees may take up to two (2), paid personal days each year. These days are charged against accumulated sick days but no verification of illness or incapacitation will be required. Personal days may not be taken in conjunction with vacation days.

Sick-Time Buy Back: Recognizing the value of an engaged and present workforce, the agency offers a sick leave buyback program as both an attendance incentive and projected savings measure for the agency. Once an employee exceeds 60 days of sick time accrued (480 hours for an hourly employee, 450 hours for an administrative employee), they will be eligible to sell back any balance over that amount at 25% value. Employees will have the opportunity to participate in this program once per year, generally during the month of December, as to allow for year-end accounting processes. This payout will be considered part of their regular compensation, and thus will be taxed accordingly.

PAID LEAVE FOR ALL WORKERS ACT (PLFAW)

In accordance with the Illinois Paid Leave for All Workers Act (PLFAW), all employees are eligible to earn and use up to 40 hours of paid leave during a 12-month period for any reason of the employee's choosing.

- **Accrual:** Employees will earn paid leave at a rate of one hour for every 40 hours worked.
- **Usage:** Newly hired employees may begin using accrued paid leave on the 91st day after the start of their employment. Leave should be requested in accordance with the Authority's normal time-off request procedures. If the need for leave is not foreseeable, the employee must provide notice as soon as is practicable.
- **No Documentation Required:** The employee is not required to provide a reason for the leave, and the Authority will not require documentation or certification as proof or in support of the leave.
- **Coordination with Other Policies:** This leave is provided in addition to any leave available under the Authority's existing sick and vacation policies.

VACATION

Regular full-time employees accrue paid vacation based on anniversary years of continuous service on the following basis:

- Between the first day of employment and the fifth anniversary of employment 10 days
- Between the fifth anniversary and the tenth Anniversary of employment 15 days
- Annually after ten years of employment 20 days

Regular part-time employees will accrue vacation at fifty percent of the rate for full-time employees.

Employees are not permitted to use vacation time during their introductory period. In addition, employees may not take vacation time prior to the time that it is earned.

Vacation is paid at the employee's regular rate of pay at the time the vacation is taken in accordance with the Authority's regular payroll policy.

Upon termination, all pay for accrued but unused vacation will be included in the employee's last paycheck. However, under no other circumstances will an employee receive pay in lieu of vacation. Vacation requests must be submitted to your supervisor or the Executive Director at least two weeks before your requested first day of vacation. Every effort will be made to give you the vacation period you prefer. Of course, the needs of the Authority and its operating efficiency will be considered foremost.

Employees may carry over vacation days from one year to the next. However, when any employee accumulates 1.5 times the number of annual vacation days allowed for their classification and length of service he or she shall have 60 days to use a sufficient number of vacation days to bring his or her total vacation accrual to less than 1.5 times the annual accrual for her or his tenure and classification. Vacation day accrual will continue during this 60-day period but will cease after that period unless the employee's accumulated vacation days has dropped below 1.5 times the annual accrual. Employees are encouraged to use accumulated vacation time within the year it is accrued. It should be noted that requests to take larger blocks of vacation time may be denied if doing so may compromise the mission of the Authority.

ACCOMODATIONS FOR NURSING MOTHERS

The Housing Authority will adhere to all federal and local laws as they pertain to accommodating nursing mothers. The Housing Authority will comply with the break time requirement for nursing mothers in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (“PPACA”), which took effect on March 23, 2010 (P.L. 111-148). This law amended Section 7 of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

The Housing Authority will provide reasonable break time for an employee to express breast milk for her nursing child for 1 year after the child’s birth each time such employee has a need to express the milk. A place, other than a bathroom, will be provided that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public, which may be used by an employee to express breast milk.

An employee who uses break time to express milk will be compensated in the same way that other employees are compensated for break time (according to the FLSA and Housing Authority policies and procedures).

WORKER'S COMPENSATION

You are covered by Worker's Compensation insurance if injured in the course of your work or if you become ill due to work-related causes. This insurance is paid for by the Authority and may cover medical costs, as well as partial income replacement, if you are unable to work.

If you are injured on the job, notify your supervisor immediately, no matter how minor the injury may seem. He/she will assist you in obtaining appropriate medical treatment, if necessary, and will also help with completing the necessary paperwork required under Authority policy and/or state law. Any medical bills incurred due to such injury should be submitted to the Executive Director.

Work-Related Illness or Injury

Employees who are unable to work because of a work-related injury or illness will be given an unpaid leave of absence. The length of the leave and the amount of compensation will be in keeping with state Worker's Compensation laws. This leave may run concurrent with other leaves offered through the Authority.

There are certain procedures that will be followed when employees are injured on the job. In general, these procedures are:

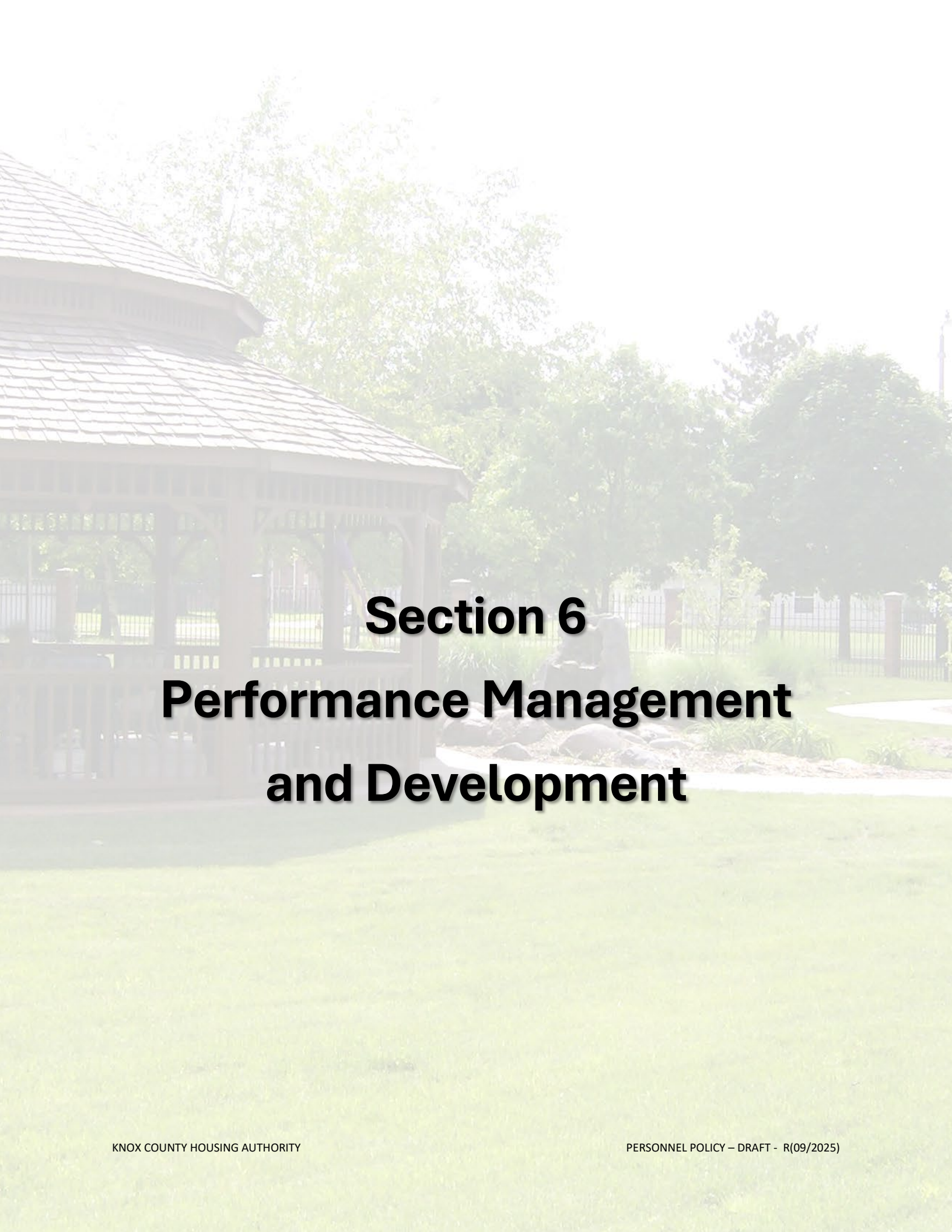
- Employees who are injured on the job are expected to report the injury or illness to their supervisor as soon as the injury or illness happens, no matter how slight the injury.
- Employees must personally inform the supervisor that the injury was work-related. Working together, the Housing Authority can then ensure that the injured employee receives proper treatment, completes the appropriate paperwork, and that the employee returns to work as soon as possible.
- It is the employee's responsibility to keep in regular contact with his/her supervisor while away from work for all extended illnesses or injuries to provide a status update. The Authority may require a second opinion from a health care provider obtained and paid for by the Authority.
- A written return-to-work report will be required for all employees upon return to work. Worker's Compensation cases may be considered closed when the employee returns to work, when all therapy and treatments have been completed or when the employee has reached a healing plateau as determined by state Worker's Compensation laws.

VOTING TIME

Knox County Housing Authority believes that each employee should have the opportunity to exercise his/her right to vote in a general election. Since the polls are open extended hours, in most instances, you may vote before or after work.

However, if your work schedule does not provide you with time to vote during non-working hours, you will be granted reasonable time off to vote during work hours according to legal requirements and state law. The Authority asks that you notify your supervisor prior to Election Day if you anticipate a need to take time off to vote.

The Housing Authority may designate the hours of voting time leave.



Section 6

Performance Management and Development

EMPLOYEE TRAINING

When a new employee is hired, the individual goes through orientation, which includes information about the Housing Authority in general, as well as departmental information. The relationships and responsibilities between departments are covered in detail.

The Personnel Policies are reviewed during this orientation so that the employee has a good understanding of the benefits, rules and regulations.

The department head, supervisor, and/or manager are/is responsible for providing and coordinating job-specific training of their employees, if necessary.

When certain training courses are required by management, employees must successfully complete the training courses in the specified time frame (as determined by management) to ensure continued employment in their current position. The Housing Authority will pay for the training and supplies needed to complete these required courses on a first come, first serve basis for up to two attempts with each training opportunity (depending on annual budget allowances for training purposes).

If the employee is unable to successfully complete the required training after these two attempts, he/she will need to successfully complete the required course(s)/certifications at his/her own expense as a term of continued employment. If the employee is unable to successfully complete and pass the required course(s)/certifications, the Housing Authority reserves the right to demote or terminate the at-will employee based on organizational and budgetary needs.

On their own initiative, or per the request of their supervisors, regular employees may take training courses which are either related to their present job or will help them qualify for jobs requiring a higher level of responsibility or skill.

The Housing Authority, in its sole discretion, may share a portion or the total cost of taking courses from accredited institutions when such courses are successfully completed and proper documentation is provided for approval by the CEO or his/her designee. In order to be eligible for such reimbursement from the Housing Authority, a regular employee must obtain approval from the Housing Authority prior to enrolling in such a training course.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

The Housing Authority may require an evaluation of each employee's performance on an annual basis. Special evaluations may be necessary for purposes of transfers, promotions, demotions and other purposes. Performance evaluations are not necessarily linked with a transfer, promotion, or demotion and may take place regardless of whether an employee is eligible for a transfer, promotion, etc. Employees will be evaluated based on current performance and the standards and requirements of their respective position.

Your performance appraisal discussion will include:

- An appraisal of expected performance;
- A measure of key performance indicators for each position;
- A review of your strengths;
- Identification of any areas needing improvement;
- Goals and objectives that need to be achieved in the upcoming appraisal period.

Specific performance problems may be addressed outside the performance appraisal cycle through either informal discussions or formal disciplinary action.

Performance evaluations shall be filed in each employee's personnel file and may be considered in any personnel actions.

DEMOTIONS

Unless otherwise specified in a written contract or by law, employment for Knox County Housing Authority employees is at will, and such employees may be demoted or terminated without cause and without any reason being given for such action.

A demotion occurs when an employee is not capable of satisfying the requirements of his/her position as described in the job description for the position. When an employee is demoted, he/she shall be paid at a rate that is within the approved range for the new position.

Whenever the employee's supervisor and the Executive Director determine that an employee should be demoted or terminated, the Executive Director will provide written notification to the employee. Said notice will include:

- The date of determination;
- The nature of the determination and the effective date;
- The reasons for the determination;
- The rights of the employee to examine his/her personnel file and examine all written evidence which has a bearing on such determination;
- The employee's appeal rights.

Employees will receive a minimum two (2) weeks' notice of demotion.

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Employees who violate the provisions of the Knox County Housing Authority Personnel Policy shall be disciplined in a timely, fair, equitable and consistent manner. A system of progressive discipline may be used for the purpose of encouraging an employee to correct unacceptable behavior. The Housing Authority will consider all aspects of each individual case when rendering a decision on disciplinary action.

The HOUSING AUTHORITY reserves the right to bypass the disciplinary steps and base its disciplinary action on the severity, frequency, or combination of infractions when circumstances warrant immediate action. The following corrective actions and disciplinary steps shall be used as appropriate:

Oral Warning:

The employee will be counseled by supervision following an infraction of the Knox County Housing Authority Personnel Policy in order to eliminate any possible misunderstanding concerning the rules, state clearly what is expected in the future, point out the consequences of a further infraction(s). An informal record is made of the oral warning by the supervisor and put in the employee's personnel file.

Written Warning:

A written warning notice is issued to document the fact that the employee has been officially advised of the precise nature of his or her misconduct and warned that any future violations will result in further disciplinary actions, up to and including termination of employment. The employee is invited to make a written statement on the warning notice and requested to sign the form. If the employee refuses to sign the notice the supervisor should indicate the fact and reasons on the warning notice form.

A copy of the notice is given to the employee, one is retained in the personnel file. The warning notice becomes a part of the employee's personnel record.

Disciplinary Suspension:

A disciplinary suspension is a period of not more than three (3) days. The employee is relieved of his or her job assignment for the duration of the suspension because of serious or repeated instances of misconduct. The employee may or may not be required to forfeit pay as a result of the suspension. Suspension is considered in situations where there is no specific instance of conduct that is so outrageous that justifies termination, but there is a pattern of conduct where the employee has continually engaged in infractions of the rules and has previously received a documented verbal and/or written warning for rule(s) infraction(s).

Termination of Employment:

The employee is **immediately** discharged as a result of a serious offense, or as the final step in an accumulation of infractions for which a warning notice or notices have been written. When circumstances warrant discharge, the employee will be discharged for cause rather than be given the option to resign, be laid-off, or retire.

PERSONNEL RECORDS

Employees may request the opportunity to inspect portions of their personnel records which are available for review under applicable law.

Record review requests must be in writing and requested at least 7 working days prior to the desired inspection date. Inspection will generally be permitted 7 working days after the request unless it cannot reasonably be provided on that date, in which case inspection will be permitted within 14 working days from the date of receipt of the request.

The employee shall be notified of the location at which records will be made available. Generally, record inspection will only be permitted during working hours and under Authority supervision, unless other arrangements acceptable to the Executive Director and the employee can be mutually agreed upon.

If the employee desires copies of his/her records, copies will be provided to the employee upon payment of the actual duplicating costs incurred.



Section 7 Safety

SAFETY POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

Your Safety and Health

It is Housing Authority policy to provide safe working conditions for all employees. The Housing Authority will comply with the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) and other applicable federal, state, and local safety laws. All Housing Authority employees must promote accident prevention by using all protective equipment supplied to them by the Housing Authority, and by observing the safety processes, policies, and procedures of the Housing Authority.

The Housing Authority will periodically provide safety training sessions for employees in an effort to reduce or eliminate the occurrence and recurrence of accidents on the job. The goal of safety training is to educate all employees to be able to (1) recognize hazards to life, health, property and work practices, (2) avoid and eliminate unsafe conditions and (3) properly and safely use inherently hazardous material and equipment.

Any form of unsafe conduct has no place in a working environment and is prohibited. The Authority considers safety to be a critical consideration in the operation of the business. It is the responsibility of every employee to follow the safety guidelines and work safely.

To summarize, our safety requirements include, but are not limited to:

1. Follow all prescribed safety procedures; if you don't know, ask your supervisor.
2. Immediately report accidents or injuries to your supervisor for prompt first aid.
3. Know how and when to wear all safety equipment required for your job. Appropriate equipment may include, but is not limited to, safety glasses, safety shoes, respiratory protection and seat belts.
4. Horseplay and unsafe conduct are prohibited at all times.
5. Maintain good housekeeping at all times.
6. Understand and exercise required safety lockout procedures, and keep required safety guarding in place and defect-free.
7. Do not operate any tools, equipment or processes unless you have been properly safety-trained and are authorized to do so.
8. Make sure you understand what you are working with, make yourself aware of potentially hazardous materials by utilizing our Hazard Communication Program Manual.
9. Remember, safety is everybody's job—all the time! Work carefully and safely.

Our safety and work guidelines and other information provided in this handbook are intended to help make you a safe and productive worker. Management may elect to modify or change the safety program and work guidelines and other information at any time.

Employees found disregarding the safety guidelines of the Authority will face discipline consistent with the Standards of Conduct Policy described earlier in this handbook. Discipline could include verbal warning,

written warning, suspension or termination. Depending on the nature of the violation and the surrounding circumstances including, but not limited to, the employee's past work record and past conduct, one or more steps of the progressive discipline system may be repeated or skipped. Thus, in some circumstances, immediate termination may result.

Additional departmental safety guidelines and procedures may be set forth in separate documents as deemed necessary.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Workplace violence is a frustrating problem facing agencies today. While more information on the causes of violence and how to handle it is becoming known, there is often no reasonable rationale for this type of conduct and, despite everything we know or do, violent situations happen. No employer is immune from workplace violence and no employer can totally prevent it.

The cost to organizations is staggering. It is impossible to overstate the costs of workplace violence, because a single incident can have sweeping repercussions. There can be the immediate and profound loss of life or physical or psychological repercussions felt by the victim as well as the victim's family, friends, and co-workers; the loss of productivity and morale that sweeps through an organization after a violent incident; and the public relations impact on an employer when news of violence reaches the media.

Workplace violence affects other areas as well. The adverse impact on organizations and individuals is wide-ranging and can include:

- Temporary/Permanent Absence of Skilled Employee
- Psychological Damage
- Property Damage, Theft, and Sabotage
- Productivity Impediments
- Diversion of Management Resource
- Increased Security Costs
- Increased Workers' Compensation Costs
- Increased Personnel Costs
- Temporary/Permanent Absence of Skilled Employee

There are many theories about the causes of workplace violence. However, caution should be taken when profiling or stereotyping individuals or organizations since the presence of any of the factors related to these theories does not necessarily indicate a violent act will be carried out. Nevertheless, an incident can be the result of any one or a combination of these factors.

Remember – violence or threats of violence in all forms is unacceptable workplace behavior. It will not be tolerated and it will be dealt with appropriately.

One of the common types of workplace violence is that among co-workers. In addition, a high percentage of violent incidents are perpetrated by individuals from outside the workplace. This includes situations such as domestic violence, bomb threats, and violence by customers.

While they are often preventable, it is still difficult to determine whether or not any particular workplace situation is potentially violent. This is an emotional and complex topic, and decisions about what to do in certain situations are not always straightforward or made in a clearheaded state of mind. In many cases, employees ignore warning signs because they believe they are not important, "that's just the way Joe is,"

or that it is none of their business. In other situations, employees react based on fear and what they believe is the profile of a potentially violent person, not necessarily observed actual behavior.

Actual threats should always be taken seriously and responded to immediately. When there is not an actual threat, judgment and senses should be trusted. The "gut feeling" that one gets when talking to people should be respected. If one feels that someone is dangerous, take the proper precautions.

There are many forms of workplace violence among co-workers. Unfortunately, the one form that receives the most attention is workplace homicide. But there are far more incidents of violence that do not involve casualties but have the same traumatic effects. Some examples of the most frequently encountered situations among co-workers are:

- concealing or using a weapon;
- physical assault upon oneself or another person;
- actions which damage, destroy, or sabotage property;
- intimidating or frightening others
- harassing, stalking, or showing undue focus on another person;
- physically aggressive acts, such as shaking fists at another person, kicking, pounding on desks, punching a wall, angrily jumping up and down, screaming at others;
- verbal abuse including offensive, profane and vulgar language; and
- bullying;
- threats (direct or indirect), whether made in person or through letters, phone calls, or electronic mail.

The Housing Authority is committed to maintaining a safe environment for its employees, free from violence, threats of violence, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior. Such behavior will be taken seriously and will not be tolerated. Individuals who commit such acts may be removed from Housing Authority premises and may be subject to disciplinary action, criminal penalties, or both.

Employees of the Housing Authority should not ignore violent, threatening, harassing, intimidating, or other disruptive behavior. If anyone on Housing Authority premises displays such behavior, whether or not he/she is an employee, such behavior should be reported immediately to Program Manager or the Executive Director. The incident will be promptly investigated and appropriate action taken.

Employees (Including Managers and Supervisors) are responsible for:

- their own behavior by interacting responsibly with fellow employees, supervisors, and clients;
- being familiar with agency policy regarding workplace violence;
- promptly reporting actual and/or potential acts of violence to appropriate authorities;
- cooperating fully in investigations/assessments of allegations of workplace violence; and
- informing appropriate personnel about restraining or protective court orders related to domestic situations so that proper precaution can be afforded at the work site.

Managers and Supervisors are additionally responsible for:

- informing employees of the agency's workplace violence policy;

- taking all reported incidents of workplace violence seriously;
- investigating all acts of violence, threats, and similar disruptive behavior in a timely fashion and taking the necessary action(s);
- providing feedback to employees regarding the outcome of their reports regarding violent or potentially violent incidents;
- being cognizant of situations that have the potential to produce violent behavior and promptly addressing them with all concerned parties;
- encouraging employees who show signs of stress or evidence of possible domestic violence to seek assistance;
- assisting in assessing and investigating allegations of workplace violence raised by employees, supervisors, and/or managers, as requested;
- assist in determining what course of administrative action is most appropriate in specific situations,
- providing advice and counsel regarding personnel rules and regulations; and
- offering training courses to assist employees to deal with situations which may lead to potential violence, e.g., conflict resolution, stress management, negotiation skills, etc.

Threats, assaults, or physical violence that require immediate attention by police should be reported first to police at 911, then the Program Manager and the Executive Director.



Section 8

Leaving Employment

RESIGNATIONS

An employee who wishes to resign should give at least two (2) weeks advance written notice of resignation to their Program Manager and the Executive Director. Unless otherwise provided in these policies, an employee who is terminated may not receive prior notice of termination.

To resign in good standing, an employee shall give notice, in writing, to the Executive Director at least two (2) weeks (10 working days) prior to the effective date of resignation. The notice should indicate the reason for the resignation, and the date of separation. During the notice period, the employee will not be paid for time taken off as sick or compensatory time unless approved by the Executive Director. Failure to comply with the two weeks' notice provision shall be entered on the service record of the employee. The two weeks' notice period may be waived by the Executive Director, if such action is determined to be in the best interest of the KCHA.

An employee who resigns, is discharged, retires, or fails to return after an authorized leave of absence, will be regarded as permanently separated from employment. Should such separated employee be rehired, he/she will be re-employed as a new employee. An employee, who is involuntarily terminated, other than in connection with a reduction in force, will be ineligible for rehire.

Terminating employees will receive their final paycheck, along with any other required final compensation, on the first regularly scheduled payday following their termination date.

TERMINATIONS

Employees may be discharged for failure to successfully complete their probationary periods and for reasons of unsatisfactory performance, disciplinary problems or other reasons. The termination date in these instances is determined by the Executive Director.

Dismissal, discharge, or termination is an involuntary separation from employment. KCHA employees are at-will employees. KCHA employees are considered “at-will employees” and may be dismissed at any time, with or without cause, notice, or reason. Termination of, or discharge from employment is a final decision, from which there is no right to file a grievance. All decisions to terminate employment are made by the Executive Director.

If you leave the Housing Authority for any reason, you must schedule an exit interview with the Executive Director or his/her designee.

REDUCTION IN WORKFORCE (RIF)

When a lack of funds, lack of economic viability, economic slowdown, or technological or structural changes to KCHA's operation occurs, it may be necessary to lay off employees, i.e., conduct a Reduction-in-Force (RIF), to ensure the financial health and viability of the organization. In the event of a RIF, the Executive Director shall: 1) determine the number of employees and programs/operations to be affected and 2) define and designate employee(s) for RIF. Initially, an employee's competition for retention in the work force will be within the affected administrative division/housing entity and project funding authority.

The order to layoff is determined by management based on the skills, knowledge, and abilities that are necessary to perform the ongoing or future work of the Authority. When management determines that two or more employees possess substantially equal skills, knowledge, and abilities, layoffs occur in order of seniority. For the purpose of this procedure, seniority is based on a person's full-time equivalent months of service.

The names of employees who are laid off will be placed on a reinstatement list maintained by the Authority. The right to reinstatement shall remain in force up to 24 months following the effective date of lay off.

An employee's reinstatement rights shall be canceled for any of the following reasons:

- The employee does not respond to a reinstatement notice (sent by certified mail) within ten working days after receiving it.
- The employee refuses a position in the same job classification and competitive area.
- The employee does not have a current address on file with the Authority.
- The employee has been laid off for more than 24 months.
- The employee no longer meets the Authority's conditions for employment.

VOLUNTARY SEPARATION INCENTIVE PROGRAM (VSIP)

The Knox County Housing Authority (KCHA) may, at its discretion, implement a Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP) to offer eligible employees a financial incentive to voluntarily separate from service through retirement or resignation. This program is an employee-centered strategy for making workforce adjustments and creating opportunities for organizational renewal. The VSIP is a management tool, not an employee right or benefit, and applying to participate is a voluntary, employee-initiated action.

Eligibility

To be eligible for a separation incentive, an employee must meet several criteria as outlined in the full VSIP policy. Key minimum requirements include:

- Having full-time employment status and being in "Good Standing" with the KCHA.
- Being a minimum age of 55.
- Having completed 20 continuous years of service with the KCHA.
- Not having received a previous separation incentive.

Incentive and Process

The maximum incentive amount that may be offered is \$40,000, subject to standard employment taxes and withholdings. The total incentive paid shall not exceed the participating employee's remaining annual base pay plus benefit compensation.

Eligible employees interested in the program must submit a KCHA VSIP Notice of Interest Application to the Executive Director. The Executive Director has full responsibility for validating eligibility and providing final approval for participation in the VSIP. Approved participants will be required to sign a Voluntary Separation Waiver and General Release Agreement. Employees who accept a separation incentive are ineligible for unemployment compensation and must repay the entire incentive if they accept re-employment with KCHA within five years of their separation date.

Governing Policy

This section provides a brief overview of the VSIP. The program is governed by the official KCHA Voluntary Separation Incentive Policy document. All employees are advised to consult the full policy for complete details regarding eligibility, incentive calculations, application procedures, and all other terms and conditions. In the case of any discrepancy, the official policy document will supersede this summary.

EXIT INTERVIEW

In order to ensure that all employees who leave Housing Authority employment are sufficiently informed about their final pay, continuation of fringe benefits under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA), and their rights and conditions of separation, exit interviews are conducted by executive staff.

If you leave the Housing Authority for any reason, you must schedule an exit interview with the Executive Director or his/her designee.

MEDICAL CONTINUATION OF BENEFITS (COBRA)

In the event of a death, termination of employment (including retirement), certain reductions of hours or entitlement to Medicare benefits, participants and their eligible dependents will be contacted by the Finance Department and offered the opportunity to continue medical coverage through the Housing Authority.

If you become divorced or legally separated or have a child who no longer qualifies as a dependent under the plan, you must notify Finance within 60 days of the event to receive applicable continuation rights.

You or your dependents will be entitled to continue medical coverage through the Authority by paying the full 100% of the monthly premium for the coverage. The maximum time allowed for continuation coverage is 18 months in the event of termination or a reduction in work hours and 36 months for most other events, with the exception of the flexible spending account which will run only run through the remainder of the plan year. Failure to make timely payment of your premiums will result in the forfeiture of continuation benefits.

At the end of the continuation period, certain coverage's may be converted to an individual policy through the plan carrier at the rates then in effect, subject to the terms of the plan.

This benefit is provided in accordance with the requirements of the federal law on continuation of health insurance (commonly known as "COBRA"). This benefit is subject to change as necessary to comply with the federal or state law.

RE-EMPLOYMENT

A former employee of the Housing Authority is eligible for re-employment provided his/her previous Housing Authority employment record has been satisfactory. Individuals re-employed are subject to the conditions of employment in effect at the time of re-employment. Individuals re-employed on this basis would establish a new employment date (for retirement plan purposes).

With the exception of employees terminated for disciplinary reasons, employees who are within 1 year of their original separation date may be eligible for a continuation of their most recent leave accrual rate. This accrual rate will be based on their new position and previous years of service. Recent rehires may also be eligible for continued retirement benefits as described in the retirement plan.

RECEIPT/ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

This form acknowledges that I have received a copy of the Knox County Housing Authority (KCHA) Employee Handbook. I understand that it is my responsibility to read, understand, and comply with the policies and procedures it contains.

By signing below, I acknowledge and agree to the following:

- **At-Will Employment:** My employment with KCHA is "at-will," meaning that either I or KCHA may terminate the employment relationship at any time, for any reason or no reason, with or without notice.
- **Handbook is Not a Contract:** This handbook is a set of guidelines and is not a contract of employment, either expressed or implied. No statement or policy in this handbook guarantees my employment for any specific duration.
- **Right to Modify Policies:** I understand that KCHA reserves the right to modify, revoke, or change any of the policies, benefits, or procedures in this handbook at any time, with or without notice.
- **Supersedes Prior Policies:** This handbook supersedes all previous written and verbal policies and agreements.
- **Employee Rights:** I understand that nothing in this handbook is intended to interfere with, restrain, or prevent employee communications regarding wages, hours, or other terms and conditions of employment, or to otherwise limit any rights protected by state or federal law.

My signature below confirms that I have received the handbook and understand the key terms of my employment as outlined above.

This will acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Authority Employee Handbook dated November, 2025.

Name (Print) _____

Signed _____

Date _____