

Team Member Handbook



Team Members

Rooted in Community
Core Plaza Building
221 West Webster Avenue, Suite 509
Muskegon, MI. 49440

Table of Contents 🌱

A guide to your journey with Rooted in Community

About Us, ❤️ Page 4

- Mission
 - Vision
 - Values
-

Section 2: Employment Policy, Page 5

Our Commitments 📋

- Equal Employment Opportunity
 - Definitions of Employment Status & Age Qualification
 - Internal Job Posting and Advancement Opportunities
 - Expectations
 - Anti-Harassment
 - Whistleblower's Protection Act
 - Reasonable Accommodation
 - Hiring Relatives
 - Personnel Records
-

Section 3: Safety, Page 9

Keeping Everyone Safe 🚒

- Emergency Preparedness Summary
 - ✓ Fire, Tornado, Serious Accident or Injury, Epidemic or Health Emergency
 - Standard Precautions (Universal Precautions)
 - Safety for Suspected Pests
 - Weapons and Self Protection on Duty
-

Section 4: Standards of Conduct, Page 12

Integrity in Action 🟡

- Privacy & Confidentiality
 - Agency Assets
 - Personal Appearance
 - Driving
 - Ethical Conduct
 - Attendance
 - Personal and Professional Life
 - Substance and Alcohol Use
-

Section 5: Compensation, Reimbursement, & Benefits, Page 16

Investing in YOU 💰

- Compensation
- Universal Paid Time Off (PTO)
- Paid Sick Leave
- Hardship Pay
- Reimbursement

Thank You ❤️ Page 21

- What you bring to the team
 - Review of attached policies
 - Review of benefits package
-



About Us: Rooted in Community ❤️

(See also: Program Statement Policy & Procedure 12302 attached to this handbook)

At Rooted in Community, we believe every child deserves a safe, stable, and loving place to grow—and that begins with us, the people who show up every day with compassion, purpose, and unwavering commitment. Our work is grounded in values that guide every decision, every interaction, and every relationship:

Rooted in Community's Mission Statement: ✨

Building strong, connected communities that prioritize safety, wellness, and health to improve the lives of individuals and families.

Rooted in Community's Vision Statement: 🌱

To foster a future where every individual, regardless of background, is empowered to heal, thrive, and contribute to a community rooted in safety, wellness, and respect for all.

Rooted in Community's Core Values: 🌐

1. **Community Strength:** We recognize that communities possess the inherent power to create safety, wellness, and health, and we work to amplify their voices and capacity for healing.
2. **Holistic Well-Being:** We focus on the whole person—mental, emotional, physical, and social health—believing that all aspects of well-being are interconnected.
3. **Collaboration:** We believe in the power of partnership and community collaboration to create sustainable change and provide comprehensive support.
4. **Healing and Resilience:** We support individuals in overcoming harm, recognizing the strength and resilience within each person, and promoting long-term healing.
5. **Justice and Equity:** We advocate for equal opportunities and access to resources, addressing the needs of individuals and families. We actively identify and counter inequities within our organization and externally in our communities. We recognize inaction perpetuates racism, sexism, ableism, and other forms of discrimination.

As a Rooted team member, you're not just doing a job—you're living out a mission. You are part of a movement to nurture resilience, build belonging, and help children and families' flourish.

SECTION 2

Employment Policy, Our Commitments

(See also File Management and Privacy of Records Policy & Procedure #12213 and Grievance Handling and Compliance #12210 attached to this handbook).

Equal Employment Opportunity

Rooted in Community is committed to providing equal opportunity in all aspects of employment. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our staff, volunteers, interns, and those we serve.

In accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws, Rooted in Community prohibits unlawful discrimination in all employment practices, including hiring, promotion, compensation, benefits, training, termination, and all other terms and conditions of employment.

We do not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, citizenship status, disability, veteran status, religion (or absence of), genetic information, socioeconomic status, or any other protected characteristic.

We believe our strength lies in our diversity and we are committed to fostering an inclusive, equitable, and welcoming workplace for all team members.

Definitions of Employment Status & Age Qualification

All Rooted in Community employees must be at least 18 years old at the time of hire. Employment status categories may include full-time, part-time, or contractual, as determined by the needs of the agency.

Staff, contractors, and volunteers must meet the qualifications outlined for their role, including background clearances, references, and credential verifications. Each role has a detailed job description provided upon scheduled interview, employment offer and new hire orientation.

Apart from part-time positions, all team members fall under exempt under then provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Overtime is not required for exempt status employees, however, RIC recognizes that positions in child welfare often exceed normal business hours during times of crisis. A hardship pay request can be made for any excessive hours worked to ensure fair and equitable pay.

Rooted in Community is an at-will employer and reserves the right to terminate any team member's employment at any time, with or without cause.

Internal Job Posting and Advancement Opportunities

Rooted in Community is committed to recognizing and valuing the dedication, hard work, and contributions of our team members. To honor this commitment, all open positions will first be posted internally for a period of seven (7) days before external recruitment begins.

This ensures that current team members have the opportunity to apply and advance within the agency. Whenever possible, promotions and new opportunities will be awarded to qualified and dedicated team members who have demonstrated their commitment to the mission and values of Rooted in Community. Promoting first from within allows for cost savings, agency value to established

team members, increased team member engagement, improved retention and adds to the cohesive company culture.

Expectations 🌱

Rooted in Community relies on the dedication and professionalism of every team member to fulfill our mission and provide exceptional service to children, families, and community partners. As part of this commitment, it is expected that all essential work duties — including but not limited to timely submission of reports, referrals for services, and documentation — are completed thoroughly, accurately, and on schedule. Attention to detail and adherence to deadlines are critical to ensuring quality service delivery and agency effectiveness.

Failure to consistently meet expectations related to the timely and high-quality completion of assigned duties may result in corrective action, including placement on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) to support and guide improvement, limited of time off approval and/or separation of employment.

Additionally, team members are expected to comply with all policies and expectations outlined in the Rooted in Community Team Member Handbook. Failure to do so may result in an internal and/or external investigation determining the appropriate course of action. Team members are required to cooperate fully and honestly in all agency-related investigations.

Upon receiving notice of accusations or charges that are misaligned with agency expectations, a review of limited work status or suspension will be held with the team member, their supervisor and the Director of the agency. If suspension occurs, it will be held without pay until the findings of the investigation are clear. If no findings of wrongdoing exist, reimbursement for time missed will be provided to the team member within two weeks of returning to work. Investigations will always air on the side of caution to ensure the best interests and safety of Rooted in Community participants.

Failure to cooperate in any internal or external investigation will be considered a serious violation of agency policy and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including separation of employment.

All investigation summaries and findings will be reported to the Board of Directors through Risk and Compliance Assessments with names withheld as able to be. Any PIP or corrective action plans specific to a team member will be held within that team members employee record file.

Anti-Harassment 🌱

Rooted in Community is committed to providing a work environment that is free from all forms of harassment, including sexual, verbal, physical, or discriminatory harassment. Harassment in any form is not tolerated and will be addressed promptly and thoroughly.

No employee will be subject to retaliation, discipline, or adverse action for reporting harassment or discrimination in good faith — whether internally or to an external agency, including law enforcement. This includes instances where an employee contacts the police or other authorities in response to workplace harassment, threats, or violence. We encourage all team members to speak up without fear and to take any steps necessary to protect their safety and well-being.

Retaliation of any kind is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

If you believe you have experienced or witnessed harassment, report it immediately to your supervisor or designated HR representative. All complaints will be handled with discretion, compassion, and in accordance with agency policies and legal requirements.

Whistleblower's Protection Act

Rooted in Community is committed to maintaining a workplace where employees feel safe and supported when reporting suspected violations of law, policy, or ethical standards.

In accordance with the Whistleblower Protection Act and applicable state laws, Rooted in Community strictly prohibits retaliation against any employee who, in good faith, reports suspected misconduct, legal violations, or unsafe practices to a supervisor, Human Resources, or an appropriate governmental agency.

Employees are encouraged to disclose any information they reasonably believe evidences:

- A violation of federal, state, or local law.
- Gross mismanagement, gross waste of funds, or abuse of authority.
- A substantial and specific danger to public health or safety.

Any form of intimidation, threats, coercion, discrimination, or retaliation against whistleblowers is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Employees making a report are protected under the law, regardless of the outcome of any subsequent investigation, provided the report was made in good faith. Rooted in Community will take all reports seriously and ensure confidentiality is maintained to the extent possible.

If you believe you have experienced retaliation or have witnessed such actions, you are encouraged to report it promptly to <https://www.osha.gov/whistleblower/WBComplaint>.

Reasonable Accommodation

Rooted in Community will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities in accordance with applicable laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. We also comply with the Michigan Persons with Disabilities Civil Rights Act (PWDCRA).

If you require accommodation to perform the essential functions of your job or to participate in the hiring process, please notify your supervisor or hiring personnel. Requests will be handled promptly, confidentially, and in a manner that respects your dignity and legal rights.

In alignment with our traumatically informed and person-centered approach, Rooted in Community also extends this commitment to team members, navigating personal or family circumstances that may require added flexibility. We believe supporting the whole person supports the mission we serve.

Hiring Relatives

Rooted in Community recognizes that team members may have personal relationships with individuals who are also interested in employment. While relatives of current employees may be hired, they may not supervise or directly report to one another. This policy helps ensure transparency, fairness, and objectivity in the workplace.

Any perceived conflicts of interest or concerns should be disclosed during the hiring process or if a personal relationship develops during employment.

Personnel Records 🌱

Personnel records are maintained in accordance with applicable laws and best practices for confidentiality and security. Records include, but are not limited to: employment applications, background checks, references, training logs, performance evaluations, and documentation of licensure or certifications.

Team members have the right to review their own personnel file by submitting a written request. All records are stored securely in systems compliant with HIPAA, ISO 27001, and GDPR standards to protect your personal information. The Division of Child Welfare Licensing (DCWL) has the ability to request access to employee files at anytime for review to meet standards of employment per the Public Acts 116 along with Licensing Rules for Child Placing Agencies - CWL-PUB-11 (Pink Book).



SECTION 3

Safety, Keeping Everyone Safe 🚒

(See also Employee Orientation and Training Policy & Procedure #12209 attached to this handbook).

Emergency Preparedness Summary 📢

Rooted in Community is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of the individuals and families we serve, as well as our team members. All team members are required to be familiar with the agency's emergency plan to support a prompt and effective response during crisis situations. Understanding these procedures is critical to maintaining a safe environment and protecting those in our care. An emergency plan is posted within the agency office, to respond to the following situations:

1. Fire 🔥

- Elevators are never to be used during a fire emergency.
 - Know the two stairwells with in the office building and how to access them during a fire.
 - Always feel the door with the back of your hand before opening it.
 - Stay as low to the ground as possible to avoid as much smoke inhalation.
 - Working smoke detectors are outside of the office door and sprinkler system installed in the office and common areas.
 - Treat every alarm as a real emergency.
 - During a fire alarm, team members will meet in the west parking lot of the Mt. Zion Church of God, near the dumpster.
-

2. Tornado 🌪️

- Secure locations in the office include the hallway of SEH Working Suites (no windows) and the men's bathroom on the 5th floor (no windows).
 - Emergency supplies (flashlight, first aid, etc.) are kept in the top drawer of the dresser style cabinet in the agency office as well as the staff break room drawer below the coffee machine.
-

3. Serious Accident or Injury 🚑

- Call 911 for life-threatening injuries.
 - Provide first aid until help arrives.
 - First Aid kit is located in the staff break room in the drawer below the coffee machine.
 - Workmen's compensation will be applied for with the assistance of upper management.
 - CPR and First Aid Certification: All team members are required to complete CPR and First Aid training and obtain certification within six (6) months of their hire date. This ensures that staff are prepared to respond to medical emergencies and provide immediate support when needed.
 - In response to the growing epidemic of overdoses, all team members will receive training in the use of Narcan (naloxone), a life-saving medication that can reverse opioid overdoses.
 - Narcan will be provided to staff to carry while on duty, and team members are expected to be prepared to use it when necessary, as part of their responsibility to promote health and safety in the community.
-

4. Epidemic or Health Emergency 🦠

- Follow the local health department and CDC guidelines.
- Maintain proper hygiene practices in the office.
- Notify the Agency Director of any outbreak or exposure.
- Daily notifications will be sent to team members regarding updates.

Standard Precautions (Universal Precautions) 🧼

Standard precautions are essential at Rooted in Community to protect caregivers, children, and staff from the spread of infections and ensure a safe, healthy environment for all.

- Wear protective masks if you feel ill and still working.
 - Wear protective masks after returning to work after an illness for at least 48 hours from experiencing symptoms.
 - Wear disposable gloves (available in staff break room) if cleaning fluids that may contain blood or other bodily fluids.
 - Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water frequently. Wash hands immediately after removing protective gloves.
 - Protect your skin! Cover any cuts, scrapes or open wounds before working.
 - Avoid touching face, eyes, mouth or nose.
-

Safety for Suspected Pests 🚫

- Avoid wearing loose items such as scarves, to places that are suspected of having insect infestations.
 - Carry minimal items into homes (limit bags, avoid use of fabric bags).
 - Keep bags off floors, beds and furniture.
 - Opt for seating in non-fabric chairs, such as kitchen chairs, during home visits.
 - Avoid scented products or perfumes (strong scented products can increase curiosity of bugs!)
 - Keep hair tied back and/or covered with a hat or head covering.
 - Avoid wool fabrics.
 - Although effectiveness is not guaranteed or regulated, some research has shown that essential oils like tea tree, lavender, peppermint can be used as a mild repellent for life.
 - Vacuum car interior and workspaces regularly.
 - Maintain awareness by looking for signs of pests (brownish stains, bugs, shed skins).
 - If you suspect there was an infestation at a location you were at for work:
 - Inspect your clothing and belongings before entering your vehicle.
 - Place items carried into the location in a plastic bag and tie shut.
 - Launder clothes in hot water and on a high heat dryer setting.
 - If it is suspected that a team member has encountered bed bugs, Green Bean Buddy Bug Killer (or similar brand with effectiveness) will be provided by the agency.
 - If it is suspected that a team member has encountered head lice, LiceLogic Clear and Free Shampoo (or similar brand with effectiveness) will be provided by the agency.
 - Using outdoor bug sprays for lice or bed bugs can create a false sense of security. Research shows that these products with even a high concentration of DEET (over 50%) offer limited circumstance deterrence from bed bugs or lice but it is frequently not effective.
-

Weapons and self-protection on Duty ⚠️

While on duty, Team Members may not carry, possess or store, at any Agency location (including vehicles) firearms, other weapons, or other personal protection items, even if licensed.

Situational Awareness and Preparation

- Always be aware of your surroundings when arriving, during visits, and upon leaving.
- Pre-plan and review case history before visits to identify any potential risks.
- Communicate schedules and locations with your supervisor or designated safety contact ("checking in/checking out" within certain timeframes).

- Keep your phone charged and easily accessible at all times.

Environmental Positioning

- Sit closest to exits during home visits to maintain a clear path to leave if necessary.
- Avoid entering or have limited time spent in kitchens or confined spaces where items can be used as weapons.
- Maintain appropriate personal space to avoid physical confrontation or escalation.

Professional and Neutral Demeanor

- Use calm, respectful, and non-threatening communication even during tense moments.
- Avoid arguing or escalating emotional situations; prioritize de-escalation techniques.
- Recognize warning signs of agitation or aggression and end the visit early if needed.

Buddy System and Visibility

- Request to attend visits in pairs if there is known or suspected risk.
- Schedule visits during daylight hours whenever possible.
- Park in a location where you won't be blocked in and can leave easily.

Emergency Preparedness

- Program emergency contacts and 911 on speed dial.
- Know and rehearse exit routes from unfamiliar homes or buildings.
- Carry personal alarms or noise-making devices to deter threats and attract attention.

De-Escalation and Crisis Intervention Training

- Participate in agency-provided trainings on de-escalation, trauma-informed care, and managing volatile situations.
- Trust instincts — if a situation feels unsafe, leave immediately and notify your supervisor.

Unusual and Extreme Circumstances:

Although it is not common, sometimes threats are made toward team members. To address these high-risk situations, including threats of harm or stalking the following will be provided:

- Time off for mental health treatment.
 - Costs covered by Rooted in Community.
 - Team members facing direct threats or significant distress from case-related incidents may be placed on administrative leave or temporarily removed from active case management responsibilities.
- Legal Protection Advocacy
 - The agency or team member will facilitate communication with law enforcement and legal counsel to ensure proper handling of threats.
 - Assessment and assistance with drafting and submitting Personal Protection Orders as needed.
 - Costs covered by Rooted in Community.
 - Charges will be pursued and supported by upper leadership to ensure the safety and security of team members.
 - On a case-by-case basis, overnight accommodation will be sought for team members who are unsafe at home.
- The agency will take proactive steps to mitigate high-risk situations whenever possible to protect all parties involved.

These strategies are considered best practice across child welfare, mental health, and social service fields and avoid the liability and risk of carrying weapons.

SECTION 4

Standards of Conduct, Integrity in Action

At Rooted in Community, we expect all team members to uphold the highest standards of professionalism, integrity, and care in every aspect of their work. These standards protect the well-being of the children and families we serve, maintain trust within the community, and ensure the safety and integrity of the agency. All employees are expected to review and adhere to the following guidelines:

Privacy and Confidentiality

- Team members must protect the confidentiality of all case-related information.
 - Case information should not be shared outside of authorized professional communication channels.
 - No case information or details that could be interpreted as case-related may be shared on social media.
 - Negative or disparaging remarks about Rooted in Community or its services are prohibited on social media and other public forums.
-

Agency Assets

- Agency property and resources, including equipment, keys, ID Badges, vehicles, and technology, must be used responsibly and respectfully.
 - While accidents may occur, repeated damage or negligence may result in repair or replacement costs being the responsibility of the employee.
 - All agency property must be returned within 24 hours of separation of employment.
 - Assets not returned will have a calculated cost that will be withheld from the team members' final paycheck.
-

Personal Appearance

Rooted in Community values individuality and recognizes that personal appearance and clothing are often forms of self-expression. Team members are welcome to reflect on their personal style, provided that attire is generally socially appropriate and does not interfere with the professional and welcoming environment we aim to provide.

- When attending court, professional meetings, or representing the agency in formal settings, team members are expected to dress in a professional manner that reflects the agency's values and upholds the credibility of our work.
 - a. Slacks or dress pants, skirts/dresses with appropriate length, collared shirts or blouses.
 - b. Blazers or professional cardigans (highly encouraged for court appearances).
 - c. Dress shoes or clean, professional footwear.
 - d. Shoulders, chest, midriff, at least above knees are required to be covered.
 - e. Not acceptable: Jeans, leggings (okay if leggings are worn under a dress or like item), T-shirts, sneakers, flip flops.
- In everyday roles, attire should remain respectful, clean, and suitable for engaging with children, families, and community partners.
 - Generally socially appropriate and not offensive or disruptive.
 - Suitable for working with children, families, and professional peers.
 - Safe and practical for the tasks being performed (e.g. no unsafe footwear during visits or transports).
 - Not acceptable: clothing with offensive language or graphics, revealing clothing that exposes chest, midriff, limited coverage of buttocks, pajamas.

Driving 🚗

- Employees who drive as part of their job duties must maintain a valid driver's license and safe driving record.
- Seat belt use is mandatory.
- All traffic laws and agency vehicle policies must be followed to ensure the safety of staff and those we serve.
- Any team member who has duties to regularly transport participants are encouraged to contact their vehicle insurance company to review policy information regarding their job duties.
 - If there is an additional rider or umbrella policy that will provide extended coverage for the transportation of participants, team members may provide this quote to the agency for review. Reimbursement is available for reasonable extended policy coverage up to \$100/month.
 - It is the responsibility of the team member to contact their insurance and provide coverage and quote details to the agency for reimbursement.

Ethical Conduct 🌱

- Team members are to demonstrate honesty, integrity, and professionalism at all times.
- Conduct must reflect the agency's mission and values, especially when interacting with children, families, colleagues, and community partners.
- Conflicts of interest must be disclosed and managed in accordance with agency policies.

Attendance 🍎

- Regular and punctual attendance is essential to fulfilling job responsibilities and supporting children and families.
- Absences or tardiness must be communicated to direct supervisor as soon as known.
- Excessive unexcused absences or patterns of tardiness may result in disciplinary action.
- Court hearings are required for attendance unless arrangements with supervisor have been approved in advance.
 - Missing or being late for a court hearing is grounds for review of employment.
- All staff meetings, community meetings, visits with youth and families are scheduled by the team and/or individual team members, and once it is scheduled it is expected that attendance will occur.
 - Frequent rescheduling of work duties will result in disciplinary action.

Personal and Professional Life ⚖️

Rooted in Community respects the individuality and autonomy of each team member, including the right to engage in personal activities, social media use, and expressions of personal beliefs, including political views, outside of work. We recognize that team members bring their whole selves to the important work they do, and that personal expression is part of a healthy and balanced life.

However, it is essential to maintain a clear distinction between personal life and professional responsibilities. As representatives of Rooted in Community, team members are expected to ensure that personal activities and posts do not conflict with the agency's mission, values, or the confidentiality and integrity of the work we do.

Key expectations include:

- Personal social media activity, political expressions, and personal views should not be

- connected to or appear to represent Rooted in Community unless officially authorized.
- Case information, agency matters, and work-related issues must not be shared or discussed on personal platforms.
- Personal views and activities should not interfere with professional responsibilities or workplace conduct.
- When participating in public forums, social media, or political activities, team members should take care to avoid creating the impression that they are speaking or acting on behalf of the agency.

By keeping personal and professional boundaries clear, we protect the privacy of those we serve, maintain public trust, and foster a respectful and inclusive work environment.

Substance and Alcohol Use

Rooted in Community is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and productive work environment. To support the well-being of our team members, participants, and community, the agency maintains a zero-tolerance policy for the use, possession, or being under the influence of illegal drugs, controlled substances (without a valid prescription), or alcohol while performing job duties or while on agency premises or in vehicles used for work duties.

Prohibited Conduct

- Team members may not consume, use, possess, distribute, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances during work hours, while on duty, or while representing the agency in any capacity.
- This prohibition extends to all agency properties, vehicles, off-site locations during work hours, and during any work-related responsibilities unless an exception, as outlined below, applies.

Approved Exceptions: Agency-Sponsored Events

- Alcohol may be available at certain agency-sponsored events (e.g. donor receptions, holiday gatherings) when expressly approved by agency leadership.
- During such events, team members are expected to consume responsibly and in moderation. Excessive consumption or impairment is strictly prohibited.
- In no event should a team member operate a vehicle or perform any work duties after consuming alcohol at an agency-sponsored event.

Prescription Medications

- Team members using prescribed or over-the-counter medications that may impair their ability to perform their job safely are required to notify their supervisor prior to beginning work duties.
- Possession or use of prescribed medication must always comply with applicable laws and agency policies.

Policy Enforcement and Consequences

- Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
- Team members who are impaired or in violation of this policy may be removed from the workplace immediately for safety reasons.
- Rooted in Community reserves the right to investigate any suspected violations and expects full cooperation from team members.
- The agency also retains the right to notify law enforcement where required by law or if necessary to protect the safety of individuals or the community.

Disclaimer Regarding Alcohol Consumption at Work-Related Events

- While Rooted in Community may occasionally permit alcohol to be served at approved work-related social functions, the agency does not assume responsibility for the actions of employees who choose to consume alcohol.
 - Employees who consume alcohol at such events are expected to do so responsibly and in moderation.
 - Employees remain personally responsible for their behavior, conduct, and decision-making, including refraining from driving or engaging in unsafe activities after consuming alcohol.
- The agency strongly encourages the use of designated drivers, ride-sharing services, or other safe transportation alternatives.
- Any employee who violates agency policies or engages in unsafe, illegal, or inappropriate behavior after consuming alcohol at an agency-sponsored event may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

By choosing to consume alcohol at any work-related event, employees acknowledge their personal responsibility for any consequences that may arise and agree to hold Rooted in Community harmless to the fullest extent permitted by law.

By adhering to this policy, team members help Rooted in Community maintain a safe, healthy, and professional environment for all.



SECTION 5

Compensation, Reimbursements, & Benefits, Investing in YOU

(See also Employee Hiring Policy & Procedure #12212 attached to this handbook)

Compensation

Child welfare stands at a crossroads. Nationwide, the workforce is facing overwhelming workloads, burnout, turnover, and systemic instability, increasing risk for families.

Data shows that children placed in foster care who had one worker in a year achieved permanency 74.5% of the time, while those who had a change in workers which resulted in two workers per year achieved permanency 17.5% of the time, and those who had three social workers in a year achieved permanency 5.2% of the time. (National Center for Child Welfare Excellence (NCCWE) / University of Minnesota study (Flower, McDonald, & Sumski, 2005).

The resilience of the child welfare workforce hinges on a sense of connection and belonging to one another and their organization. According to Gallup, having a positive work culture is key to employee engagement and job success, reducing the intent to leave and increasing overall workplace satisfaction. The intent of this is to provide a high life of professional satisfaction which will in turn, allow for exceedingly high achievements for community families.

- A. It is RIC's objective to have a compensation program that enables the organization to hire highly qualified and talented team members needed to further the organization's mission and values. The comprehensive compensation is intended to:
 - 1. Provide for fair treatment of all employees
 - 2. Be efficient to administer
 - 3. Comply with all applicable laws and regulations.
- B. To accomplish its objective, RIC has adopted specific compensation program goals to:
 - 1. Provide base compensation above or at market median.
 - 2. Approval for overtime pay (assessed through Hardship Pay Request form) will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
 - Ensuring that overworked hours were a result of an emergency or no reasonable accommodation was available for team members to accomplish tasks that were prioritized and not a result of poor planning on team members' part.
 - 3. Provide suitable working conditions that promote a high degree of morale and job satisfaction.
 - 4. A team member culture that allows all team members to provide input, submit ideas and be heard.
 - 5. Offer team members competitive, cost-effective medical and mental health benefits, including vision, dental, disability, FMLA, life insurance, and umbrella policy options.
 - 6. Local benefits such as providing team members with local gift certificates or memberships for gyms, shopping and dining and/or community park passes.
 - 7. Paid RIC holidays, up to 19 paid holidays per year will be granted. These may change from year to year but generally will include:
 - New Year's Day (January 1st)
 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day (3rd Monday in January)
 - Employee Appreciation Day (1st Friday in March)
 - Monday following Easter
 - Memorial Day (last Monday in May)
 - Juneteenth (June 19th or the Monday following if falls on a weekend)

- Independence Day (July 4th, or Monday following if falls on a weekend)
 - July 5th (if falls during a business workday only)
 - Labor Day (first Monday in September)
 - Indigenous Peoples Day (second Monday in October)
 - Halloween (October 31st half day of business if falls on weekday only)
 - Election Day (first Tuesday following the first Monday in November)
 - Veterans Day (November 11th if falls during a business workday only)
 - National Day of Thanks (NDT) (4th Thursday in November)
 - Day after National Day of Thanks
 - Winter Holiday (December 24-26) if 1 or 2 days fall on a weekend day, the next business day will be closed)
 - New Years Eve (December 31st)
8. Flexible work schedules: with approval from supervisor, team members can arrange work schedules to meet the needs of their personal life including choosing to work generally eight hours anytime between 6am through 9pm, choosing to work a weekend day with a weekday off, home based work for majority of what would be office time.
- A high level of trust is needed for flexibility. If work begins to falter, approved flexible work schedules can be revoked until work returns to meet high quality standards.
 - See Section 4, Standards of Conduct, Attendance.
9. Universal Paid Time Off: team members can take as much time off as they need, whenever they need it, if they fulfill their work responsibilities (see below).
- C. Position Descriptions: RIC maintains a job description for each of its direct-employed positions.
- D. Intentionally review current team members for available promotions.
- E. Position Evaluations: Position evaluation will be conducted within the first six months of a team member accepting a position or promotion.
1. Further evaluations will be conducted yearly.
 2. RIC will undergo a confidential organizational survey at least yearly for all team members to participate in.
 3. Any negative trends in culture or negative leadership performance will be corrected through a leadership corrective action plan, monitored by the Board of Directors.
- F. A cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will be provided to all employees each year based on the consumer price index for urban wage earners and clerical workers (CPI-W).
- G. Additional raises for exceeding performance standards will also be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- H. Benefits such as retirement, childcare reimbursement, agency vehicle usage, education and professional development shall be made a priority to secure once financial stability is obtained within the agency.
- I. Vehicle insurance rider reimbursement (see Section 4, Standards of Conduct, Driving).

Universal Paid Time Off (PTO)

Rooted in Community believes that a healthy, balanced team is essential to providing exceptional care and support to the children and families we serve. To promote wellness, flexibility, and trust, Rooted in Community offers Universal Paid Time Off (PTO) that allows eligible team members to take paid time away from work as needed, without a predetermined limit, subject to the guidelines below.

Eligibility

- Universal PTO is available to all team members after successful completion of their introductory period (typically 60 days).
- PTO is available for newly hired team members if approval is provided at beginning of hire.

Guidelines for Use

- Universal PTO is intended for personal, vacation, family, wellness, and other planned absences.
- Team members are trusted to use PTO responsibly while ensuring the agency's operational and service needs are met.
- All PTO must be pre-approved by a supervisor, except in emergency or illness situations.
- A minimum of two weeks (10 business days) will be required to be used per team member each year either at once or separately.
- Once approved, PTO will be posted to the general outlook calendar for full visibility.
- PTO may not be used to avoid performance issues or during periods of performance management.

Accountability and Fair Use

- Use of PTO is monitored to ensure fairness, prevent abuse, and maintain adequate staffing and coverage for essential duties.
- Excessive unscheduled absences, patterns of use that impact performance, or failure to meet job expectations may result in review and corrective action.
- PTO may not be approved if there are performance issues, late documentation or scheduled court hearings.
- Universal PTO does not accrue, has no cash value upon separation, and is not eligible for payout.

Holidays, Leaves of Absence, and Other Policies

- Universal PTO does not replace agency-observed holidays, bereavement leave, sick time leave, jury duty, or statutory leaves of absence (e.g., FMLA, disability).
- Team members requesting leave for medical, parental, or other protected reasons should coordinate with their supervisor to ensure proper documentation and legal compliance. (see sick leave below).

Philosophy of Trust and Balance

Rooted in Community is proud to offer a PTO policy based on mutual trust and responsibility. This policy is designed to empower team members to care for themselves and their families while remaining committed to the agency's mission and the children and families we serve.

Paid Sick Leave

- Team members will be "front loaded" with 40 hours of paid sick leave annually.
 - For new employees this is offered on the first date of hire.
 - Renews every January 1st.
 - Unused sick leave is carried over into the next year.
 - Records of paid sick leave use and balances will be maintained in the employee's file.
 - For absences of more than 3 consecutive days, Rooted in Community may request reasonable documentation.
 - Any costs associated with obtaining documentation will be covered through the reimbursement process of the agency.
- Team members can use earned sick time for:
 - Their own or family member's physical or mental illness, injury, or health condition.
 - Medical diagnosis, care, or treatment, including preventive care.

- Issues related to domestic violence or sexual assault, including medical care, counseling, relocation or legal proceedings.
 - Meetings at a child's school related to the child's health or disability or the effects of domestic violence or sexual assault.
 - Closure of a child's school/place of care due to a public health emergency.
-

Hardship Pay 🛠️

Rooted in Community recognizes that positions in child welfare often exceed normal business hours during times of crisis. A hardship pay request can be made for any excessive hours worked to ensure fair and equitable pay.

- Hardship pay requests must be submitted within 14 days of the hardship hours worked.
 - Requests submitted after 14 days will not be authorized.
 - A Hardship Pay Request form must be completed in its entirety before being accepted for review.
 - Hardship was discussed and reviewed prior with supervision to ensure that all avenues of safety were explored before requiring after hours work of team member(s).
 - Hardship hours must be above and beyond a 40 hour work week.
 - Hardship hours must have been required for the safety and well-being of a participant after typical business hours.
 - Attending an emergency for a youth in care while a caregiver or other safe adult is also able to be present for the youth will not constitute as approved hardship.
 - Flex time can be used in lieu of hardship pay.
-

Reimbursement ✅

RIC follows section 2 Code of Federal Regulations 200 Subpart 404 "Reasonable Costs" which defines reasonable cost as "A cost is reasonable if it does not exceed an amount that a prudent person would incur under the circumstances prevailing when the decision was made to incur the cost." Compliance with tax laws regarding the provision of reimbursements and meals will be ensured.

Team Member In-Person Meals:

RIC will provide an in-person meal, on average, once per month, at a reasonable cost. Sharing meals with others symbolizes community, provides opportunities for social interactions, information exchange, and supportive relationships (Andersen & Brunner, 2020; Kushida et al., 2020). RIC holds the view that providing food and/or meals to team members promotes employee productivity, supports wellness, and fosters team collaboration.

These in-person meals are covered by RIC Spend and Expense business credit card or the Director. No reimbursement will be provided if additional food items are purchased at the team member's expense.

Additional Food Purchases:

Additional food purchases may be made to accommodate unexpected extended work hours or when team members are at a distance from the local office to be without reasonable accommodation for meal planning during the workday. Any participant or registered volunteer with team members during

the accommodation will also be approved to seek reimbursement from the agency. The cost structure below will be followed.

Extended Hours:

After a team member has worked more than 12 hours in a day, a meal will be provided at the cost structure below, which includes reimbursement for tips. No more than three meals will be reimbursed per team member per day.

It is encouraged, but not required, to seek local food vendors for the purchase of food items and meals.

A full itemized receipt with location, time, date and full cost will be required for submission for expense reimbursement with the RIC expense reimbursement form.

Breakfast work hours between 1:00am-10:30am allowable up to \$10 per person.

*Breakfast will not be reimbursed for team members with overnight accommodation that also includes a continental breakfast option.

Lunch work hours between 10:30am-4:00pm allowable up to \$15 per person.

Dinner work hours between 4:00pm-1:00am allowable up to \$25 per person.

Milage:

Milage reimbursement shall be calculated as one way or round trip from the local office address using google maps or equivalent. No milage reimbursement will be allowed for the milage from the employee's residence to the office.

Appreciation:

Reimbursements for participant needs when with a team member or small gifts of appreciation for caregivers will be allowable within reason.

Time Frame:

Reimbursement requests will be paid only if submitted to payroll no more than 30 days past the expense date.

Not Allowed:

Reimbursements are not allowable for team member individual alcoholic beverages, traffic tickets, accident or insurance deductibles for accidents during work travel.

Board Members:

Board Members shall not receive monetary compensation from RIC. Purchase of meals may occur for board members on a reasonable basis along with appreciation tokens.



A Heartfelt Thank You ❤️

To each team member — thank you for all that you bring to Rooted in Community. Your dedication, compassion, and everyday efforts shape the heartbeat of our agency. Whether supporting children and families directly or working behind the scenes, your commitment ensures that our mission comes to life in meaningful ways.

The work you do is not always easy, but it matters deeply. Because of you, children find safety, families find support, and our community grows stronger. We are grateful for your partnership, your perseverance, and the heart you put into everything you do.

Thank you for being part of the Rooted in Community family and for standing with us in service of hope, healing, and connection.

Please ensure thorough review of the attached policies that are attached to this handbook:

- Program Statement Policy & Procedure
- Employee Hiring Policy & Procedure
- Employee Orientation and Training Policy & Procedure
- File Management and Privacy of Records Policy & Procedure
- Grievance Handling and Compliance
- Ongoing Recruitment and Retention Plan

Please ensure thorough review of the Team Member Benefits Package which includes:

- Financial Planning- no retirement yet
- Child Care Assistance- not yet
- Universal Paid Time Off
- Paid Sick Leave
- Reimbursement Standards
- Medical
- Mental Health Plan
- Gym- \$40
- Vision
- Dental
- Health Savings Account HSA
- Disability
- FMLA
- Life Insurance
- Umbrella Policies
- Local Benefits: shopping, dining and community membership passes
- Cost of living compensation adjustments
- Performance compensation adjustments
- Reimbursement payments
- Agency use vehicle
- Education and professional development
- Personal Vehicle Rider Reimbursement