



# Personnel Policies

Southwest Oklahoma Community Action  
Group, Inc.



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***SOUTHWEST OKLAHOMA COMMUNITY ACTION GROUP, INC.***

**PERSONNEL POLICY MANUAL  
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## Policy & Procedures Manual

This policy manual is an overview and summary of the agency's policies and procedures which are presently in effect. As policies and procedures are revised, changes will be communicated through standard channels upon approval of the SOCAG Board of Directors. Advance notice may not always be possible.

The policies and procedures contained in this manual constitute guidelines only. They do not constitute a contract. They are not intended to make any commitment to any employee concerning how individual employment action can, should, or will be handled. Various programs have operating procedures in place to comply with funding sources and/or licensing criteria. Those procedures are provided by program supervisors and are intended to complement the agency policies and procedures.

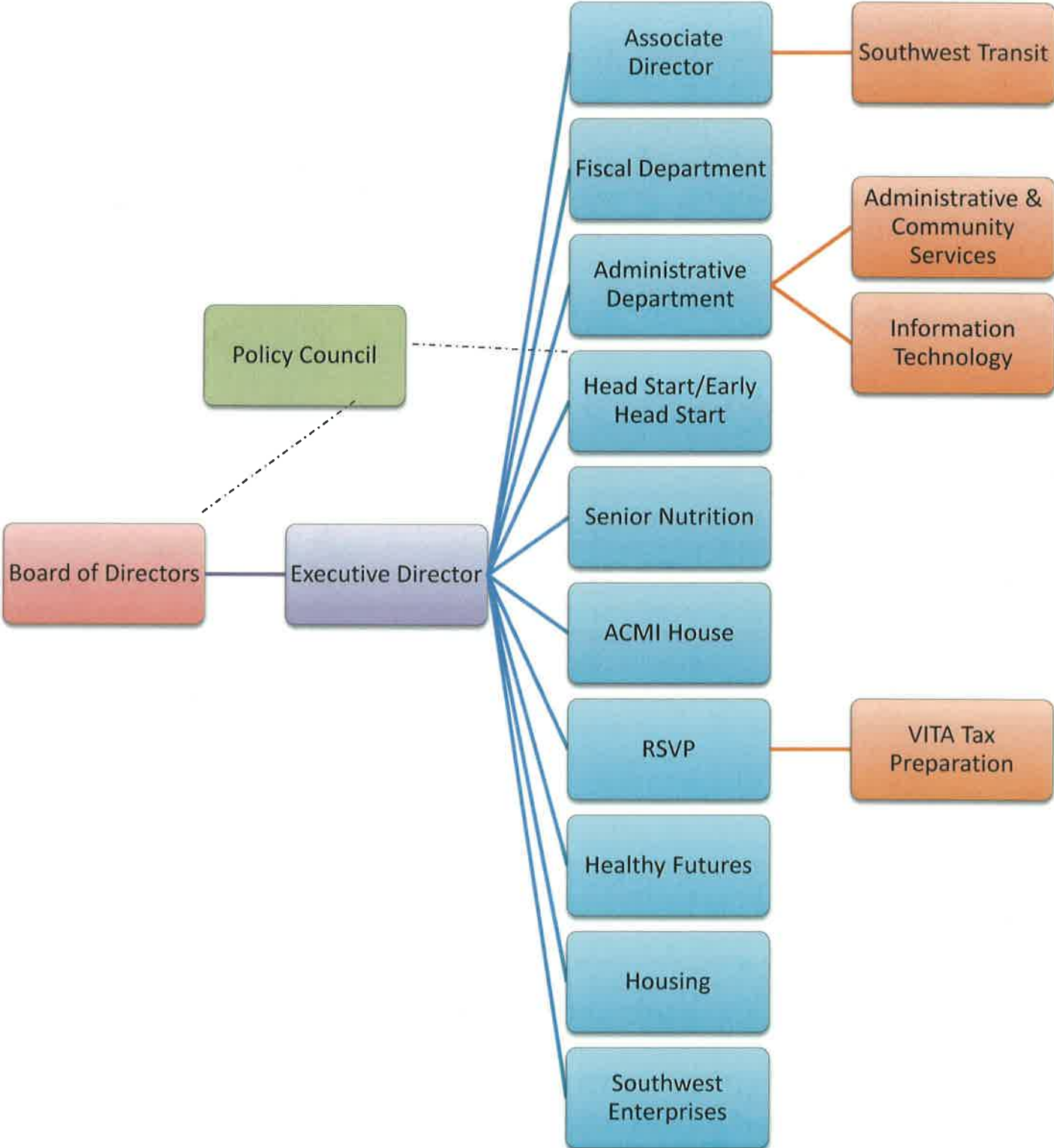
The agency does not guarantee any minimum length of employment. All employment with the Agency is "at-will" meaning that either the employee or the Agency may terminate employment at any time, with or without cause or notice. Further, no supervisor, program director or other representative of the Agency, other than the Executive Director, may make any contracts, promises, or commitments contrary to the foregoing principles. Additionally, any contracts entered into, or promises or commitments made to any employee, shall not be enforceable, unless they are in writing and duly executed by the employee and the Executive Director of the Agency.

If you have any questions or wish to have further information about any particular guideline in this manual, please contact your supervisor or the Administrative Resources Director (Human Resources). You may also send general questions electronically through the EWS system.

It is further noted that these organizational policies are also applicable to trainees, volunteers, consultants, leased employees from temporary agencies, customers, Board members, and vendors when applicable. For example, SOCAG is committed to a harassment-free environment. Therefore, the Harassment Policy applies to all of the above-mentioned classifications.

This policy manual supersedes all previous manuals.

# Agency Organizational Chart



## **History**

Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc. began in 1965 as part of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. We are a community action agency as designated by the Oklahoma State Legislature for the counties of Jackson, Harmon, and Greer. A twenty-seven member Board of Directors governs the agency. We have a long history of meeting the needs of the communities we serve. Our primary focus is to improve the lives of low-income people, although not all of our programs are specifically for low-income. In addition to low-income populations, vulnerable populations such as elderly, disabled, or victims of domestic violence are also served.

## **Role of the Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors is the source of authority for establishing agency policies and procedures. It is understood that this authority rests with directors as a group in formal session and that no single member of the Board holds this authority alone.

The Board delegates the responsibility for drafting new policies and editing existing policies to the Executive Director and other appropriate staff. The Personnel/Equal Opportunity Committee of the Board may be delegated the responsibility of review of policies and procedures to be submitted to the full Board.

## **Role of the Executive Director**

The responsibility for ensuring that the agency has adequate policies and procedures that meeting applicable laws and funding source regulations is delegated by the Board of Directors to the Executive Director and staff as assigned. The Executive Director will be responsible for the interpretation and implementation of these policies. The Executive Director is responsible for the development of detailed procedures and work rules consistent with the intent of these policies. The Director shall see that employees have access to the policies and procedures.

## **Mission**

We provide opportunities to the people of Southwest Oklahoma to overcome poverty and improve our communities.

## **We Value**

1. Working together to end poverty
2. Community involvement and awareness
3. Helping people
4. Expanding resources

## **Vision**

*(A vivid description of SOCAG in 2020 developed 10/06/2015)*

Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc. employees care about people. We believe in our mission and are united by a common goal of empowering people to overcome poverty and improve our communities. We are dedicated to providing excellent community services through teamwork, communication, and friendliness.

We are providing a broad range of comprehensive services that are focused on the needs of our communities. Resources are expended in an effort to have a broader reach.

Our communities join our efforts to overcome poverty. Every person knows and understands what SOCAG is and does. They know how to access and how to contribute to our services.



## Definitions of Employment Status

### I. Purpose

To help provide uniformity and equity in applying personnel policies and benefits.

### II. Scope

These definitions apply to all locations of the agency.

### III. Policy

The Agency maintains standard definitions of employment status and classifies employees for purposes of personnel administration and related payroll transactions according to the following definitions:

Exempt. Employees whose positions meet specific tests established by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and state law and who are exempt from overtime pay requirements.

Non-exempt. Employees whose positions do not meet FLSA exemption tests and who are paid time and a half for hours worked in excess of forty in any work week, as required by federal and state law.

Full-time. A full-time employee is one who has been hired without a pre-determined terminal point of employment; who works 1,560 hours or more per year.

Part-time. A part-time employee is one who has been hired without a pre-determined terminal point of employment; or one who is subject to contract terms of employment dates; who works less than 1,560 hours per year. Any part-time employee that works less than 1,000 hours annually is ineligible for Agency benefits and holiday pay.

Substitutes. These are employees who work on an ongoing basis to fulfill the needs of a program. They work a variety of schedules, and their hours are adjusted as needed. In general, these employees are not eligible for Agency benefits. In the event they have met the required hours necessary under the Affordable Care Act, they will be offered the opportunity to enroll in the health insurance. The coverage will last for the required stability period.

Orientation Period Employee. New employees with less than 180 days of service or an extended orientation up to an additional 90 days. Orientation period may be extended if recommended by the program director and approved by the Executive Director. Employees are ineligible for Paid Time Off during the orientation period.

Regular. Employees who have completed the 180-day orientation period.

Employee Contracts: In certain instances, the agency may choose to contract with employees on an annual basis to help facilitate program needs. Employees will still be defined as exempt or non-exempt, part-time or full-time, and orientation or regular status according to the terms of their position. Employment will still be on an "at-will" basis regardless of said contract.

- A. Birth to Five Schools: Employees within the Birth to Five Schools program that are scheduled off for 6-8 weeks during June and July will be given the option to be on a contract. These employees will be paid on a salary basis calculated by their hourly rate times the number of hours available to work in the contract period divided by 24 payrolls or the remaining number of payrolls for partial year contracts. If staff do not work their scheduled hours and are in a leave without pay status, as non-exempt employees, if the scheduled hours are not worked and the employee is in a leave without pay status, the pay will be adjusted accordingly during the affected pay periods. Staff will receive benefits as described in the Personnel Policies according to their eligibility.

When an employee begins work during the contract period, a determination will be made whether the employee will be placed on a contract and paid on a salary basis or if they will be paid hourly for the remainder of the normal contract period.

Temporary. Employees who are hired for a pre-established period usually during peak workloads or for vacation relief are considered temporary employees. They

may work a full-time or part-time schedule. They are ineligible for Agency benefits and holiday pay.

Consultants. Persons hired as consultants are not considered as employees of SOCAG and are not subject to these personnel policies and procedures.

#### **IV. Job Descriptions**

Purpose. Job descriptions shall define the job responsibilities and skills necessary to fulfill the goals stated for each position. Job descriptions shall be reviewed and revised, if necessary, prior to the end of a program year. Revisions may be made during a program year if such changes are deemed beneficial to the fulfillment of program goals. All revisions will be referred to the Executive Director for approval.

Content. Job descriptions will contain the following:

- Job title
- Listing of essential job responsibilities and their definitions
- Listing of required skills and abilities
- Statement of qualifications including without limitation education and experience requirements
- Description of physical requirements
- Statement concerning equal opportunity and non-discrimination in employment
- Base salary

## Recruiting and Selection

### I. Purpose

To establish the authority and responsibility of Agency personnel in recruiting and selecting employees; to maximize Agency efforts and resources in selecting the best employees available. (Also see Policy No. 021, Equal Employment Opportunity.)

### II. Scope

This policy applies to recruiting and selecting of employees for all positions.

### III. Policy

When a personnel vacancy occurs, the Administrative Resources Director and the Executive Director will conduct a joint recruiting and selection program designed to identify the most suitable individual for the position, and will include careful consideration of those from within the Agency who apply for the position. Advertisement for vacant positions deemed critical or for temporary personnel may be waived by the Executive Director.

The Agency does not guarantee any minimum length of employment. The Agency reserves the right to terminate any employee at any time "at-will", with or without cause. A supervisor or program director has no authority whatsoever to make any contrary representation to any employee.

All applicants selected for employment shall be required to take and pass a drug screening test, as further provided in the Agency's applicable policies and procedures. All applicants selected for employment in the Birth to Five Schools Program or a cook's position in the Senior Nutrition Program will be required to provide medical certification of being Tuberculin-free either through the Tuberculin test or an x-ray, when necessary. Applicants for a driver's position in the

Transportation Program will be required to have the appropriate Oklahoma driver's license for the size vehicle they will drive. These applicants also must have a current DOT medical certification or be able to take and pass the Federal Department of Transportation physical. All applicants must be eligible to work in the United States. As required by law, background checks will be required on all new employees and may include fingerprinting requirements. The Agency will comply with all applicable federal and state notice and release requirements pertaining to background checks.

## IV. Procedure

### A. General Procedures:

The following steps outline the recruiting and selection process:

- Upon receipt of the job description, requirements, rate of pay, and schedule from the Program Director, the Administrative Resources Director will activate the appropriate recruiting methods.
- Consideration will be given to current employees for potential promotion.
- Applications are accepted and reviewed as received. All interested parties will be required to submit a SOCAG Employment Application, including existing employees who want to be considered for the vacancy.
- An employment interview will be conducted. Interviews may consist of a team. Second interviews may also be conducted to select a final candidate.
- The Executive Director will review all interview notes.
- Reference checks will be conducted on the selected candidate and returned to the Executive Director for review.
- A conditional offer is made to the candidate.
- Upon acceptance of the conditional offer, pre-employment drug testing, criminal background checks, and other hiring paperwork is completed as required for the position.
- Arrange for beginning work.
- A letter of employment will be sent confirming pay, scheduled hours, supervisor, primary work site, and any pending conditions of employment.

### B. Birth to Five Schools Procedures:

The following additional procedures will be used for employees in the Birth to Five Schools to meet the requirements of the Head Start Performance Standards:

- Notices of vacancies in the Birth to Five Schools will be sent to current parent Policy Council members.
- A current parent from the Birth to Five Schools will be asked to assist in the interviews of selected candidates.
- Prior to assisting with interviews, the parent team member will be trained on the process and will sign a confidentiality agreement.
- Current and former Birth to Five Schools (formerly Head Start/Early Head Start) parents will be given preference for vacancies in the Birth to Five Schools for which they apply, meet the qualifications, and are the most suitable candidate. To avoid conflict of interest, they must resign from Policy Council prior to applying. A parent cannot assist with interviews for a vacancy for which they have applied.
- The Executive Director retains the authority to promote from within the agency. In the event of this decision, the interview and promotion process is completed by the responsible agency staff.
- The Executive Director is authorized by the Board of Directors to make the final hiring decision for all agency employees except the Executive Director position. The Policy Council will vote on hiring and terminations of employees in the Birth to Five Schools based on a recommendation from the Personnel Committee of the Policy Council.
- In the event a parent does not attend a scheduled interview, the interviews will be conducted as scheduled. Efforts will be made to contact another parent to assist.

## **V. Follow-Up and Documentation**

Applications and related material will be maintained as required by current employment laws and regulations. Applications will only remain active for a period of 3 months. Applicants may request to be considered for other vacancies during that time.

## **VI. Hiring Requirements for Drivers of Agency Vehicles**

Driving records and licenses will be checked on all personnel whose job description requires driving agency vehicles. Those drivers whose records exceed acceptable limits will be disallowed to work for the agency in that capacity. A point system for evaluation of a person's past 2 year's driving record will be used to review on a pre-hire basis and annually on an employee. The point system may be reviewed under Policy #419, Agency Vehicle Policies.

## **VII. Executive Director Selection**

In the case of a vacancy for the position of Executive Director, the Board of Directors will have the option to promote from within the agency, to advertise internally, to advertise externally, or any combination of recruiting methods. A Board-appointed committee will review and interview selected applicants. The committee will make a recommendation to the full Board for a vote on the selection.

External candidates will be subject to the same procedures as other employees with regard to reference checks, pre-employment drug testing, and criminal background checks.

## **VIII. Notice and Selection for Key Positions**

Agency funding sources will be notified as required of vacancies to the Executive Director, Associate Director, Fiscal Officer, and Program Director positions. The Board of Directors will vote on the selection of the Associate Director. The Head Start Policy Council will vote on positions as required by Head Start regulations. Notice of selection of key positions will be provided to funding sources as required.

## **IX. Current Employees**

Current employees may apply for advertised vacancies for which they are interested. They must submit an employment application and be qualified to be considered as an applicant for the vacant position. The Administrative Resources Director will

review the application with the Executive Director for approval to consider for the vacant position.

## **XI. Hiring Employees with Criminal Records**

Responsibility with regard to the employment of persons with criminal records is placed upon the Executive Director. The Executive Director has the responsibility for assuring that the Agency's programs are administered in accordance with federal, state and local laws, as well as the standards of good management. A major part of the responsibility in this area is to assure that the Agency's employees perform their duties with competence and integrity, as well as making every effort to provide a safe environment for Agency employees and clients.

Policy-making bodies for agencies that are federal or state funded also have a responsibility as an equal opportunity employer to expand equal employment opportunity to the poor and to the disadvantaged. In line with this dual set of responsibilities, the Executive Director has a serious obligation to carefully weigh, on an individual basis, the criminal records of all applicants for employment. Final decisions regarding employment of persons with criminal records shall be made by the Executive Director.

Prudent judgment should be exercised by the Executive Director in considering the criminal records of applicants for employment in relation to the position to be held or filled. However, the exercise of prudent judgment should be coupled with an assessment of an applicant's potential for rehabilitation. In recognition of the fact that employment opportunities are essential to the rehabilitative process, equal opportunity should be provided to employ persons with criminal records after the Executive Director has conducted a review of the applicant's case, and to offer (or to assure that other agencies offer) supportive services in the rehabilitation of such employees. Under no circumstances, however, will an applicant be extended an offer if the Executive Director determines that the criminal record disqualifies the applicant for the position under consideration.

Review of Fitness. In all cases of application for employment by a person with a criminal record, the Executive Director shall decide the fitness of each application on their individual merits and take into account the review:

- A. The nature and seriousness of the offense.



- B. The circumstances under which it occurred.
- C. How long ago it occurred.
- D. Whether the offense was an isolated or repeated violation.
- E. The age of the person when they committed the offense.
- F. Social conditions which may have contributed to the offense.
- G. Any evidence of rehabilitation.
- H. The kind of position for which the applicant is applying.

## **Equal Employment Opportunity**

### **I. Purpose**

To preserve an employment environment free from illegal discrimination.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to all employees of the Agency.

### **III. Policy**

The Agency maintains a policy of non-discrimination with employees and applicants for employment. No aspect of employment within the Agency will be influenced in any manner by race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, creed, age, national origin, veteran status, mental or physical disability, genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by statute. This policy covers all employment practices, including hiring, job assignment, compensation, discipline, termination, and access to benefits and training.

All complaints of discriminatory treatment in violation of this policy must be immediately brought to the attention of Equal Opportunity Officer so that an internal investigation may be undertaken promptly. At the conclusion of the investigation and/or within a reasonable time thereafter, the Equal Opportunity Officer will contact the employee(s) and communicate their findings, if appropriate. SOCAG will not tolerate discrimination. Any employee involved in, or condoning, discriminatory practices will be disciplined up to and including termination from employment.

## **Americans with Disabilities Act**

### **I. Purpose**

To comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended and similar state laws.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to all employees of the Agency.

### **III. Policy**

The Agency policy and practice is to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and similar state laws. It is the Agency's policy not to discriminate against any qualified employee or applicant with regard to any terms or conditions of employment because of such individual's disability, or perceived disability, so long as the employee can perform the essential functions of his/her job, with or without reasonable accommodation, and not pose a direct threat to safety.

The Agency is committed to ensuring non-discrimination in all terms, conditions, and privileges of employment; however, employees are not permitted to perform any activities prohibited by their doctor.

The Agency will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless making the accommodation would result in an undue hardship to the Agency. Employees who believe they are in need of a reasonable accommodation or who have questions about this policy, should contact their program director or the Administrative Resources Director.

On receipt of an accommodation request, the Program Director and Executive Director will meet with the requesting employee to discuss and identify the precise limitations resulting from the disability and the potential accommodation that the Agency might make to help overcome those limitations.

The Agency may determine the feasibility of the requested accommodation considering various factors, including, but not limited to, the nature and cost of the accommodation, the availability of outside funding, the Agency's overall financial resources and organization, and the accommodation's impact on the operation of the Agency, including its impact on the ability of other employees to perform their duties and the Agency's ability to conduct business.

## **Employment of Relatives**

### **I. Purpose**

This policy defines the limitations on employing relatives within the Agency.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to all employees of the Agency and Board members.

### **III. Policy**

Applications for employment from close family relatives will be considered with other qualified applications when personnel vacancies occur. Some restrictions in job placement will apply, however, to prevent problems of supervision, safety, security, and morale.

### **IV. Definition - Nepotism**

*Nepotism* shall refer to the employment or supervision of any person who is a relative of a Board member, Executive Director, Associate Director, or appointing authority. Relatives may not be employed, supervised, or contracted when the Board member, Executive Director, Associate Director, or appointing authority exercises jurisdiction or control over said department or program.

Relatives signing contracts with the agency prior to the election or selection of the Board member, Executive Director, Associate Director, or appointing authority may complete the contracted obligation prior to termination. However, such contracts shall not be renewed.

For purposes of this policy, *relative* is defined as follows:

Spouse	
Parents	Spouse's Parents
Children	Spouse's Children
Brother/Sister	Spouse's Brother/Sister
Grandparents	Spouse's Grandparents
Grandchildren	Spouse's Grandchildren
Aunt/Uncle	Spouse's Uncle/Aunt
Nephew/Niece	Spouse's Nephew/Niece
Great Grandparents	Spouse's Great Grandparents
Great Grandchildren	Spouse's Great Grandchildren

Spouse of someone related to Board member by marriage is eligible for employment.

Spouse of someone related to Board member by blood is ineligible for employment.

"Children" includes adopted children and stepchildren.

Cohabitation by staff and/or board members will be considered the same as a marriage contract and, thus, a spouse under the provisions of this policy.

## V. Procedure

- A. Close family relatives will not be hired by the Agency without the prior approval of the Executive Director.
- B. Close family relatives will not be hired into a program where they directly or indirectly supervise or are supervised by another family member.
- C. Relatives will not be placed in positions where they work with or have access to sensitive or confidential information regarding other close relatives or if there is an actual or apparent conflict of interest.
- D. If employees become related after employment and conflict of interest or management problems of supervision, security, or morale result or if reorganization creates such a conflict, reasonable time may be provided to

resolve the matter. If resolution is not possible, the Agency may require one or both of those employees to transfer or resign.

Should a member of the Board or other Agency policy-making body wish to apply for a position which would result in one of the conflicts of interest stipulated in A, B, or C above, he/she may apply for the position provided:

1. He/she does not participate in any way in the nominating, screening, or selection process.
2. The vacancy is widely advertised, and all qualified candidates are duly considered.
3. He/she must resign from the Board or other policy-making body before submitting the application for employment.

Note: An applicant will be considered to have a conflict of interest and, hence, be ineligible for employment with the Agency when:

1. A member of his/her family holds direct or indirect supervisory authority over a job for which he/she applies, or the applicant would hold supervisory authority directly or indirectly over a member of his/her own family.
2. A member of his/her immediate family serves on an Agency policy-making board or committee which has authority to initiate personnel actions affecting his/her job.
3. He/she or a member of his/her immediate family serves on an Agency board, committee, or other major policy-making body which regularly nominates, recommends, screens, or selects candidates for positions within the Agency.

## Employment of Minors

### I. Purpose

To establish guidelines to occasionally hire minors during school breaks, at peak work periods, or on an internship basis.

### II. Scope

This policy applies to all positions in the Agency.

### III. Policy

As a general rule, employees of the Agency must be 18 years of age or older. Occasionally, students or others who are 16 or 17 years old are hired, but this is done only under special conditions and must be approved by the Executive Director. For the purposes of this policy, "Minor Employees" are defined as employees who are 16 or 17 years old. The Agency will not hire anyone under the age of 16.

#### A. Number of Hours Worked.

1. Minors who are 16 or 17 years old and are high school graduates may work the same hours as adults.
2. Minors who are 16 or 17 years old and who have not graduated or achieved a certificate of proficiency may work up to eight hours per day and 40 hours per week when school is not in session. When school is in session, they may work up to four hours per day, unless they have received advance written permission from school authorities to work up to eight hours in addition to school time on any day immediately prior to a non-school day.

#### B. Hours worked. Normal working hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Any other arrangements must receive prior approval of the Executive Director. Minor



Employees may only work during normal working hours unless specifically authorized by the Executive Director.

- C. Wages. Regardless of age, Minor Employees will be paid at least minimum wage. If working the same hours as an adult, high school graduates or minors with a certificate of proficiency must be paid the same rates as an adult.

## **Certification and License Requirements**

### **I. Purpose**

To establish procedures for positions requiring certification, licensing, or education. This policy also includes procedures regarding periodic background checks.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to agency positions requiring certification, licensing, ~~or~~ education, and periodic background checks.

### **III. Policy**

Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc. establishes job qualifications based on skills, abilities, and education necessary to perform the job. In addition, SOCAG requires criteria that are mandated to us by funding source and/or licensing requirements.

Examples of such criteria are National Child Development Associate Credential, Oklahoma Teaching Certificate in Early Childhood, Oklahoma Commercial Driver's License with Passenger Endorsement, Medication Administration Training, CPR, First Aid, associate degree, bachelor degree.

SOCAG complies with programmatic regulations regarding background checks. All employees have the required criminal background check upon conditional hire offer. Programs that require periodic background checks will be performed as required by the grant regulations.

### **IV. Procedure**

Minimum qualifications will be included in the job description. Qualifications that can be obtained after employment will also be included in the job description.

Applicants will be required to provide documentation of any required certification, license, or education.

It is the responsibility of employees to maintain required certifications, licensing, and/or education by ensuring the deadlines are met for renewal and that any requirements are also met. Failure of an employee to maintain required certifications, licensing, and/or education requirements may result in termination from employment. SOCAG may assist in the employee with the cost according to program/agency specifications.

Pre-employment background checks are completed upon conditional offer of employment as required by the grant regulations. Some grants require periodic background checks, and SOCAG obtains them as required. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Southwest Transit drivers have a MVR check annually plus a criminal background check and sex offender registry
- ACMI House has annual sex offender registry check and Mary Rippey Violent Offender Check
- Birth to Five (Head Start/Early Head Start) requires fingerprinting
- RSVP requires a National Sex Offender Registry and FBI fingerprinting
- Navigator requires an annual Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation background check

Employees that transfer from one program to another will have the appropriate background check conducted prior to transfer.

## **New Employee Orientation Period**

### **I. Purpose**

To complete the new employee selection process by providing an orientation period of on-the-job work experience by which the new employee and the Agency may evaluate suitability in terms of knowledge, skill, ability, and interest.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to all positions.

### **III. Policy**

New employees will serve an orientation period of 180 days from date of hire. This period is used to determine whether the employment relationship should continue.

During the orientation period, informal and formal employee performance evaluations will be held. If the Agency determines in its sole discretion that a satisfactory performance level will not be achieved through a reasonable amount of training and coaching, orientation period employees will be released at any time during the 180-day orientation period.

### **IV. Procedure**

- A. Program directors normally will be responsible for the training and evaluation during the employee orientation period. Informal coaching and feedback should be provided on a regular as necessary basis. Orientation to the Agency's policies and procedures will occur during the first 60 days.
- B. During the orientation period, newly hired employees will be appraised informally on an ongoing basis and may be formally appraised in the discretion of management.

- C. Upon satisfactory completion of the orientation period, employees move to regular status and are subject to the standard performance appraisal process and other agency policies.
- D. If, during the orientation period, unsatisfactory performance has been detected and goals for correction have been set but unsatisfactory performance continues, the Executive Director will be advised, and the employee may be released from the Agency. The Executive Director will have the authority to extend the orientation period up to an additional 90 days for a total of 270 days.
- E. If during the orientation period three unexcused absences occur, the employee will be terminated. An absence is defined as a day or a portion thereof. (Refer to Policy No. 310.)
- F. All employees, regardless of status or length of service, are required to meet and maintain Agency standards for job performance and behavior. All employees are considered "at-will" employees meaning either the employee or the Agency can terminate employment at any time, with or without cause or notice.

## Personnel Records & Privacy

### I. Purpose

To establish standards by which information contained in personnel records will be managed to achieve accuracy, privacy, and legal compliance.

### II. Scope

This policy applies to all programs and employees of the Agency.

### III. Policy

- A. Personnel records will be maintained containing information on each Agency employee to meet state and federal legal requirements and to assure efficient personnel administration.
- B. Notification of Changes. Changes of address, telephone number, and/or family's status (births, marriage, death, divorce, legal separation, etc.) must be reported immediately through the EWS payroll system as an employee's income tax status and group insurance benefits may be affected by these changes.
- C. Files Access. Access to personnel files is restricted to the Executive Director, program directors, or their **authorized employees** on a "need to know" basis. Personnel files are the property of the Agency and may not be removed from the personnel department.
- D. Information Requests and Employment References. Requests for information from employee files received from other departments and inquiries from outside the Agency, including requests for references on former employees, will be directed to the Executive Director. Only the Executive Director is authorized to provide personal or employment references on ex-employees or current employees. Program directors and

other employees are prohibited from providing personal or employment references on ex-employees or current employees.

#### IV. Procedure

- A. Personnel File Contents. When an employee is hired at the Agency, a personnel file will be established generally containing the following information:
  1. General Personnel File.
    - a. Application for employment and related hiring documents such as resumes, course transcripts, job description, and letter of appointment.
    - b. Personal information changes and personnel action notices of pay and employment status changes.
    - c. Disciplinary records with supportive information.
    - d. Performance evaluations, including any Staff Training and Development plan.
    - e. Employment and payroll records such as W-4 forms, payroll check release forms, receipt of personnel policies and updates, and any other miscellaneous documents.
    - f. Training and education records.
    - g. An employee organization chart showing the lines of authority and responsibility.
  2. Restricted Personnel Documents. Certain personnel documents are kept in a separate file for the purposes of confidentiality.
    - a. Medical records are maintained in a separate file.

- b. Drug screening records are maintained by the Administrative Resources Director in a locked file cabinet containing only drug screening records.
  - c. Reference checks are maintained by the Administrative Resources Director.
  - d. Benefit forms are retained by SOCAG as required by law. If a third party agent conducts the enrollment, SOCAG only maintains copies of the items they are provided.
  - e. I-9 forms are maintained by the Payroll Accountant.
  - f. Employee time sheets and leave records are maintained by the Payroll Accountant.
  - g. Other Agency investigative documents will be kept in a separate confidential file as assigned by the Executive Director.
  - h. Background checks and fingerprinting checks will be kept in a locked file and only accessed by authorized personnel.
- B. Examination of an Employee's Personnel File. Inspection of an employee's personnel file may be accomplished at reasonable times during office hours under the following conditions:
- 1. Employee. Current employees may examine their files up to two times per year at reasonable times and upon 24-hour notice submitted to Payroll Accountant. This review will take place in the Central Office department with a Payroll representative present. Notes of legal or disciplinary investigations in progress, if any, will be removed before the employee views the file.  
  
Employees may obtain a copy of documents in the file that contain their signature. The company may charge ten cents a page for all copies made.
  - 2. Ex-employees. Separated employees may not examine their files or receive copies of any documents contained in their file.



3. Government Inquiries. The Agency generally will cooperate with federal, state, and local government agencies which, under color of law, request access to personnel files and other records. However, the Agency may first seek advice of legal counsel.
- C. Information Requests and Employment References. If an employee wishes the Agency to verify information requested by outside sources for credit or other purposes, a release form with the employee's signature must accompany the request.

Employment references on former employees will be provided by Executive Director only, as follows:

1. References with Written Approval: Salary history and job chronology may be released with written approval of the employee or ex-employee. This information will be released in writing and a copy retained in the employee's personnel file.
2. Telephone Inquiries: Information will be verified by Executive Director via telephone (after reasonable caller identification) but will be limited to the following:
  - date of hire and date of separation
  - job title(s)
  - confirmation of salary stated by caller
3. Written Inquiries: If the request for information is in writing, salary information will be verified in addition to the above. This verification will be in writing and a copy retained in the employee's file.

## **HIPAA Privacy Policy**

### **I. Purpose**

To establish guidelines to safeguard the privacy of health related records governed by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act ("HIPAA").

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to the use and disclosure of Protected Health Information ("PHI") which is subject to the provisions of HIPAA. PHI under HIPAA is any information about health status, provision of health care, or payment for health care that is created or collected by a covered entity or a business associate of a covered entity and can be linked to a specific individual.

### **III. Policy**

The Agency is a hybrid entity that provides both covered and non-covered entity services. SOCAG provides fully insured employer-sponsored health insurance to eligible employees. Services provided through Advantage Meals, Senior Nutrition, Southwest Enterprises, and Southwest Transit can and do involve PHI and these services involve electronic transactions which are generated to receive reimbursement for the services provided.

Every effort will be made to ensure that information is kept private. Examples of safeguards are locked file cabinets and limited access to computers with confidential information.

A written privacy notice is available and will be distributed as required by HIPAA.

Protected Health Information or PHI will be used and disclosed only in ways described in the privacy notice and permitted by HIPAA. Employees who handle PHI on behalf of the agency will be required to maintain confidentiality of the information and will be trained on how to handle PHI. Employees who violate the

confidentiality of PHI will be disciplined up to and including termination from employment. (See Corrective Action Policy No. 422.)

Violations of privacy rights should be reported immediately to the Executive Director, who is the designated privacy officer for Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc. at 580-482-5040 or by contacting the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services ("DHHS").

To file a complaint with DHHS the address is 200 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20201, HHS.Mail@hhs.gov. All complaints must be in writing and filed within 180 days of when you knew or should have known that the act or omission complained of occurred. Complainants will not be penalized for filing a complaint.

## **Exempt/Non-Exempt Employee Status**

### **I. Purpose**

To define exempt and non-exempt employee status and to provide guidelines for determining this status according to law.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to employees at all locations.

### **III. Policy**

All positions in the agency will be classified as either exempt or non-exempt in compliance with law and for pay administration purposes.

### **IV. Definitions**

Definitions of exempt and non-exempt status are based on provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and state law. These definitions are summarized as follows:

Exempt. Management, supervisory, professional, administrative, and outside sales employees whose positions meet specific requirements established by the FLSA and state laws, if any, and who are exempt from overtime pay requirements.

Non-exempt. Employees whose positions do not meet FLSA exemption requirements and who are paid one-and-one-half times their regular rate of pay for hours worked in excess of 40 in one work week as defined by the Agency.

Employees classified as non-exempt generally occupy non-supervisory positions.

**V. Procedure**

- A. In cases where the exempt/non-exempt status of an employee is in doubt, the Executive Director will review position duties and responsibilities against FLSA exemption tests and reach a provisional decision.

## Salary Program Administration

### I. Purpose

To maintain a program of fiscally responsible salaries which consider agency needs and recognize individual effort and contribution to Agency success. .

### II. Scope

This policy applies to all job positions within the Agency.

### III. Policy

The Agency strives to pay salaries competitive with those in our community and industry, recognizing individual effort and contribution to Agency success. Determination of salary policy is the responsibility of the Agency Board of Directors. Administration is handled by the Executive Director.

### IV. Salary Program Elements

- A. Salary Ranges. Each position has been assigned a salary range. Within this framework, an employee's salary will be related to experience, education, tenure and demonstrated performance. Employees will receive a salary that is within the range limits of the applicable position.
1. Range Minimum. The minimum of the appropriate salary range will be paid to all qualified employees.
  2. Learner's Rate. In cases where the qualifications of a newly hired or newly promoted employee are less than those usually required in the assigned position, the employee may be paid below the minimum of the applicable range (but not more than 5% below minimum) while the employee acquires the necessary minimum qualifications for the position. Learner's Rate will never be below the prevailing minimum

wage. This learning period will be limited to six months, after which the employee will be paid at or above the minimum of the range, if retained in the position.

- B. Salary Reviews. The first salary review after employment may occur at the end of orientation period, if determined appropriate by the Executive Director. Subsequent reviews for salary increases will be conducted when the Executive Director determines such is appropriate for the business needs of the Agency.

Salary increases are not given automatically. First, the program funding must be able to support salary increases. Circumstances allowing for raises are as follows: job-related performance (merit), position duties change that warrants an increase, wage comparability changes to position types, and Cost of Living Allowance (COLA).

- C. Wage Comparability Review. A wage comparability review will be conducted every two years, or more often if the Executive Director determines that there have been significant trend changes in the market. The salary scale is revised based on the results of the wage comparability review and presented to the Board of Directors for review and final approval for implementation.

## **Hours Worked – Breaks**

### **I. Purpose**

To allow rest periods for employees.

### **II Scope**

This policy applies to exempt and non-exempt employees at all locations.

### **III. Policy**

Both exempt and non-exempt employees will be allowed one 10-minute break during a four hour period for a full-time 7.5 to 8 hours a day. Those persons who work 4-5 hours per day without a lunch period will be allowed one 10-minute break, and those working 6 hours a day without a lunch period will be allowed one 15-minute break.

Break time is allowed at the discretion of the Agency. Employees are permitted breaks as time permits.



## Pay Periods

### I. Purpose

To establish pay periods and pay days to administer the payment of wages and salaries.

### II. Policy

- A. Pay Periods. The pay periods shall be semi-monthly ending on the 15th and the last day of the month. The payroll department will issue an annual payroll schedule to include ending date of payroll, due date for time to be complete in EWS, and holidays. The schedule will be posted electronically in EWS.

The agency has established a mandatory direct deposit system for the disbursement of payroll funds to agency employees. Employees must designate the banking institution of their choice. Pay dates are after 9:00 a.m. **four** working days after the 15<sup>th</sup> and last day of the month. *Working* days are defined as Monday-Friday, excluding SOCAG designated holidays. Earnings statements are delivered to all employees who receive direct deposit via e-mail.

The employee is responsible for confirming their payroll deposit with their banking institution. If an employee plans to change their deposit account, they are responsible for notifying payroll 5 business days prior to the work report due date. Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc. assumes no liability for overdraft charges incurred by an employee.

No advance on pay will be made.

- B. Deductions. Deductions from pay checks will include:
- Mandatory -- Federal and state taxes, Social Security, garnishments.
  - Voluntary -- (upon written authorization of employee) current agency group insurance, agency gym membership fees, Section 125K

unreimbursed medical and dependent care deductions, and Tax Sheltered Annuity.

- C. Davis-Bacon Act. The agency will comply with Davis-Bacon rules when required. In such cases, weekly payrolls will be processed for staff engaged in work that meets the Davis-Bacon requirements.

### III. Procedures

- A. Time Reporting. SOCAG has implemented electronic time and attendance reporting. Employees record time for each day worked by program and grant (if needed), along with a description of the work being performed.

Each supervisor approves time electronically in the system. Supervisors will not approve time in advance to ensure that changes do not occur.

Assigned staff in the central office maintain the codes for each employee. When changes are necessary, the supervisor will contact the office to request those changes.

After time is entered and approved, the supervisor prints the reports for the pay period. The employee and the supervisor will each sign. Since electronic PINs have not been established, this report is the employee's verification that the time is correct, as well as the supervisor's certification.

- B. Leave Request and Reporting. Leave time is maintained electronically. Leave includes two parts: the request and the actual use of the time on the time and attendance report.

Employees will request leave by selecting the "leave request" within the "personal" tab. They will enter the date(s) and hours requested. The current leave balance is reflected along with the amount to be accrued each pay period.

The supervisor can select several actions for the leave request: approve, hold, reject, cancel.

Employees may also request "Leave without Pay" in the event an emergency situation arises and the employee does not have PTO that can be used.

Although the employee's supervisor will be responsible for the immediate approval of LWOP, the final determination will be made by the Executive Director as to whether it is excused or unexcused. (Please see Policy #310, "Employee Leave".) A report will be generated by payroll for the Executive Director to review all LWOP entries after payroll has been processed to determine any excessive use of unpaid leave.

When the leave is utilized, it is recorded in the "leave entry" section of the "action" tab. Employees should not record leave prior to the pay period in which it occurs, nor should a supervisor approve the use of leave time in advance.

Hourly employees should record leave without pay as a 0.00 hour entry with the description of "Leave without Pay".

Salaried/contract employees will be docked their daily rate of pay for any days they have been approved as leave without pay at the time of payroll processing.

- C. Due Dates/Times. All time and leave entries are to be recorded in the system no later than 8:30 a.m. the 1<sup>st</sup> working day after payroll ends.
- D. Personal Changes. Employees can request changes to their personal information in the electronic system. For instance, if an address change occurs, they select the "personal" tab, then "address". Next they would edit the address as needed, and then select the button "request change".
- E. Time Corrections. Employees are responsible for entering their time correctly. Employees and supervisors are encouraged to review their timesheet closely prior to the deadline for submission.

If an employee does not record all of their time, the time will be included on the next timesheet, and will be paid on the next payroll. If an employee is not paid for all of their time, and it is determined to be a SOCAG error, a supplemental payroll will be processed.

- F. Mileage Reimbursement. Mileage reimbursement can be claimed electronically in EWS. Employees are encouraged to use this method when possible. The due date is the same as in C. Please refer to Policy No. 910 for specific details.

## Overtime: Non-Exempt Employees

### I. Purpose

To provide guidelines to administer overtime pay to comply with applicable federal and state wage and hour regulations.

### II. Scope

This policy applies to non-exempt employees at all locations.

### III. Policy

Agency overtime pay policy conforms to overtime provisions of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act and applicable state laws. Exemption from these provisions will be claimed for an employee only when it can clearly be established that the employee's duties and responsibilities meet the requirements for such exemption. (See Policy No. 110, Exempt/Non-exempt Employee Status.)

Overtime pay policy for employees includes the following principal elements:

The Agency has established the *work week* as 12:00 a.m., Monday through 11:59 p.m., Sunday for the purpose of calculating hours worked during a week.

- B. Non-exempt employees will be paid straight time for all hours worked through forty in one work week.
- C. Non-exempt employees will be paid time-and-one-half for hours worked in excess of forty in one work week. However, it is the Agency's policy that non-exempt employees should not work in excess of forty hours in any work week. Thus, non-exempt employees may not work overtime without prior written authorization of the Executive Director. Flex hours may occur within the same work week to allow for scheduling variances.

- D. Employees who are eligible for holiday leave and who are required to work on an Agency holiday will be allowed to take an alternate day off as approved by their supervisor. The alternate day chosen shall be in the same week of the holiday if possible.
- E. Only hours actually worked will be used to calculate overtime pay. Paid time off for holidays, jury duty, vacation, sick leave, or any leave of absence will not be considered "hours worked".
- F. Overtime worked by non-exempt employees must be authorized in writing in advance by the Executive Director.
- G. Exempt employees are those in positions that meet the exemptions established by the FLSA and state law, if any. Each employee will be informed as to whether the position he or she occupies is exempt or non-exempt, as being subject to the provisions of the FLSA.

## Hours Worked and Compensation – Travel Time

### I. Purpose

To provide guidelines for compensation for hours worked and travel time as set forth in the Fair Labor Standards Act and the Code of Federal Regulations.

### II. Scope

This policy applies to NON-EXEMPT employees at all locations.

### III. Policy

Whether travel time is compensable depends entirely on the kind of travel involved. Compensable and Non-Compensable Travel Time:

- A. Traveling by an employee from one job site to another job site during the work day is compensable.
- B. Traveling by an employee to an outlying job site at the beginning of a scheduled work day, or traveling from an outlying job site at the end of the day to the employer's premises is compensable.
- C. Out of Town Travel - One Day.
  - 1. An employee who is sent out of town for one (1) day will be paid for travel time from the work site and the return to the work site (except for any time spent in eating while traveling). Employees who drive overnight are considered working all the time they are driving.
- D. Out of Town Travel - Overnight.
  - 1. Employees who travel overnight on agency business (i.e. for more than 1 day) will be paid for time spent in traveling (except for meal

periods) during their normal working hours on their non-working days, such as Saturday, Sunday, and holidays, as well as on their regular working days.

2. Travel time as a passenger on an airplane, train, boat, bus, or automobile outside of regular working hours is not considered work time.

E. Transportation Furnished by Agency.

1. An employee who chauffeurs other employees to work or training at the direction of the agency, however, is entitled to compensation for hours outside of regular working hours.
2. An employee who is entrusted with an agency vehicle to drive home at night is not entitled for compensation for that time to and from the work site.

## **Employee-Employer Relations**

### **I. Purpose**

To promote a positive relationship between the Agency and its employees.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to eligible employees.

### **III. Policy**

It is the intent of SOCAG to foster an environment of positive interactions with employees. To achieve this goal, several methods are used. A number of benefits are offered to eligible employees such holiday pay, Paid Time Off, group insurance, and retirement. Benefits and eligibility are outlined in individual policies within the 300 section of the Personnel Policies.

Other items that are used to promote employee-employer relations are recognition of service years and may include nominal value items such as t-shirts, pins, and plaques; floral/plant/balloon arrangements for get well, bereavement, or recognition purposes; and recognition of employment-related achievements such as CCAP designation, CDA credential, and college degrees. This list is not intended to be all inclusive but rather to provide examples.



## Employee Leave – Paid Time Off, Banked PTO, Unpaid Leave

### I. Purpose

This policy outlines the Agency’s attendance goals and leave policies. SOCAG provides a paid leave benefit which is designed to allow eligible employees paid time away from work for vacations, illness, personal time, bereavement, and other needs that employees have. This policy also provides guidance to employees that need unpaid leave that is not covered under the Agency’s Family Medical Leave or Pregnancy Leave policies.

### II. Scope

This policy applies to all employees. Paid Time Off is only available to eligible employees.

### III. Definitions

Leave Without Pay (LWOP) is defined as an absence from work without pay. Unpaid leave may be deemed excused or unexcused.

Paid Time Off (PTO) is the paid leave benefit provided by SOCAG for employees.

Banked PTO is the portion of PTO that an employee may set aside based on the chart below. Banked PTO is maintained separately.

### IV. Policy

#### **Attendance Goal:**

Every employee has a responsibility to maintain a good attendance record. The goal is for each employee to have an overall 98% annual attendance record for scheduled

working hours. Employees are encouraged to schedule appointments in advance and outside of working hours when possible.

Supervisors will have the primary management-level responsibility to monitor employee attendance and will be held accountable, along with the employees supervised, for addressing employee attendance issues. Excessive employee absence or lateness are unacceptable performance factors and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination from employment.

**Unscheduled Absences:**

Absences that are not scheduled one week in advance are considered unscheduled. The Executive Director will determine based on the supervisor's recommendation whether the unscheduled absence is excused or unexcused. If the leave is unexcused, the employee may not use any accrued paid time for the absence.

Three unexcused absences within a 1-year period will be cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination from employment. Each day, or a portion thereof, will be considered one unexcused absence.

In the event an employee is absent from work without any notice – a no-call, no-show -- he or she will be terminated from employment after two consecutive days of absence without notice. The employee will be eligible for reinstatement only if there were exceptional circumstances, in the sole discretion of the Agency, to justify why the employee could not have made contact.

**Leave Without Pay (LWOP):**

- A. Leave Without Pay. Leave without pay is discouraged; however, situations may arise in which an employee has a pressing need to be away from work and does not have PTO available. Supervisors are required to monitor the amount of time an employee is absent from work and to recommend whether the time should be excused or unexcused. Employees have a responsibility to provide proper notice and any required documentation of the need for absence. The Executive Director will receive Leave Without Pay reports on a routine basis.
- B. Personal Leave of Absence. A personal leave of absence up to 30 consecutive calendar days without pay may, in the sole discretion of the Agency, be granted to allow an employee time away from work for

compelling personal needs that are not covered by the Family Medical Leave policy or the Pregnancy Leave policy. To be eligible, an employee must be a regular, full-time or part-time employee with at least one year of continuous service to the Agency. All Paid Time Off and/or Banked PTO available to the employee must be used. The personal leave of absence must be approved by the Executive Director.

No loss of service credit with the Agency will occur as a result of the leave of absence. PTO will not accrue during the leave of absence since the employee will not have paid time.

When on leave of absence, the employee will be responsible for timely payments of the entire cost to the Agency of his/her group health insurance coverage and that of his/her dependents.

**Paid Time Off:**

- A. **Eligibility.** All regular full-time and those part-time employees that work at least 1,040 hours annually are eligible for benefits under the Paid Time Off program.
- B. **New Employees.** Newly hired employees will accrue PTO, but are not eligible to use the PTO until the completion of the orientation period. Employees who terminate employment for any reason and do not complete the orientation period will forfeit all accrued PTO. Employees that have not completed the orientation period and cannot use Paid Time Off are subject to providing their supervisor with appropriate verification for leaves of absence without pay (LWOP).
- C. **Schedule of Benefits.**  
PTO will accrue each payroll pro-rated on a percentage basis of hours (work time, PTO, holiday hours) reported in EWS for the pay period. The accrual of PTO leave will be stated as hours available. The effective monthly and annual accrual rate is based on years of service as shown in the chart below.

The chart below shows the minimum usage per year along with the maximum bank and carry forward. At the end of the calendar year, the carry forward allowance and the Banked PTO allowance is subtracted from the balance of PTO. If an employee has PTO remaining in excess of the allowable roll/bank maximums, they will forfeit the unused PTO. The only exception to

this will be an arrangement pre-approved in writing by the Executive Director to meet Agency business needs, in which case the Program Director will work with the employee to take the leave within a designated time period.

The monthly and annual accrual rates and usage requirements are based on FTE annual hours. Example 1: employee works four 8-hour days per week for 52 weeks. Their carry forward will be calculated as follows: 4 days X 8 hours X 52 weeks = 1,664 hours annually / 2,080 (FTE annual work hours) = 80%. 40 hours (maximum rollover for 8 hours) X .80 (FTE rate) = 32 hours (allowable rollover based on FTE rate). Example 2: employee works five 8-hour days per week for 40 week. Their carry forward will be calculated as follows: 5 days X 8 hours X 40 weeks = 1,600 hours annually / 2,080 (FTE annual work hours) = 77%. 40 hours (maximum rollover for 8 hours) X .77 (FTE rate) = 30.8 hours (allowable rollover based on FTE rate). Annual Banked PTO maximum is calculated by the same method.

Service Years	Monthly Accrual	Annual Accrual	Minimum Required Annual Use	Annual Bank Maximum	Annual Carry Forward Maximum
Less than 1 year	1.25 days (5.77%)		0	2 days	5 days
1-3 years	1.25 days (5.77%)	15 days	5 days	5 days	5 days
4-5 years	1.5 days (6.93%)	18 days	7 days	6 days	5 days
6-10 years	1.75 days (8.08%)	21 days	10 days	6 days	5 days
11-15 years	2.0 days (9.23%)	24 days	12 days	7 days	5 days
16-20 years	2.5 days (11.54%)	30 days	12 days	13 days	5 days
Over 20 years	2.75 days (12.7%)	33 days	14 days	14 days	5 days

- D. Usage Requirements. Employees are required to use accrued and/or banked Paid Time Off whenever they are on excused leave. Hourly staff must take a minimum of 30 minutes PTO and may take PTO in days, hours, or increments of 15 minutes. Exempt staff must take PTO in whole day increments equal to their standard daily hours.
  
- E. Accounting Staff  
All accounting staff (after their first year of employment) will be required to have one consecutive week (5 business days) per year away from the accounting department. This time could include PTO, training time, and all other times away or a combination thereof.
  
- F. Workers Compensation  
Employees that are on leave designated through a Workers Compensation claim are expected to remain in contact with their supervisor to provide updates. Furthermore, the employee is required to provide status updates to Payroll following each medical appointment.
  
- G. Family Medical Leave  
Employees that are designated to be on FMLA leave are required to use any accrued paid leave available simultaneously with the FMLA leave. Employees are expected to maintain contact with their supervisor throughout the FMLA as agreed upon. See Policy No. 324 for policies and procedures.

## V. Procedures

- A. Leave Without Pay. Employees may request an unpaid leave referred to as “Leave without Pay” in the event an emergency situation arises and the employee does not have PTO that can be used. All requests for LWOP must be submitted to the employee’s manager for approval in EWS. Once the manager has approved or disapproved the request, the manager will complete the approval process in EWS. If the request has been approved, the manager must contact the Accounting department to have the number of hours of LWOP requested added to the employee’s LWOP balance. LWOP should be recorded through the Leave Entry section of EWS using the “Leave – Without Pay” cost center, leave code, & earning code.
  
- B. Use of Paid Time Off. All Paid Time Off must be scheduled and approved at least one week in advance (except time used for sickness or emergencies).

Approval will be granted by the employee's supervisor depending upon the needs of the program such as training, monitoring, work schedules, and deadlines. Leave requests will be submitted in EWS electronically. The supervisor will approve, reject, cancel, or hold the leave. The leave request is the Leave Authorization Form. The leave is recorded by the employee in the timesheet when it occurs by selecting the Leave Entry section in EWS. Video links are available in EWS to demonstrate how to properly enter leave time.

- C. Use of Paid Time Off for Illness and Personal Emergencies. Although sudden illness and personal emergencies cannot be planned in advance, such needs must be communicated as soon as practical. When an employee cannot report to work at their scheduled start time, they are expected to personally communicate with their supervisor prior to the start of the shift, but not later than 15 minutes after the start of the shift. In the event that an employee is absent due to illness for three days or more, the employee will need to provide a release from a healthcare provider upon return to work.

Employees should not come to work when they are contagious or ill and unable to perform their job duties. Supervisors will send employees home that pose a health risk to others or are not able to perform their work. The employee will be paid if they have accrued paid leave available; otherwise, they will not be paid for the absence.

- D. Personal Leave of Absence.
1. Requests for personal leave of absence should be submitted in writing to the Executive Director, with an explanation of the need for such absence, two weeks prior to the commencement date, or as early as practical for the situation.
  2. The Executive Director will approve or deny the request for personal leave of absence. Any conditions of the personal leave of absence will be established at that time, such as the expected return date, whether the employee will return to the same job, whether a healthcare provider release will be needed to return, and the expected contact schedule with the supervisor.
  3. Employees will record personal leave days in the EWS timesheet. The method will be the same as for Leave Without Pay (LWOP).

4. Employees on leave of absence must maintain contact with their supervisor as scheduled. Failure to maintain contact can result in termination of employment.
  5. An employee's failure to return from leave of absence without contact to his or her supervisor within two days after the scheduled date of return will be considered a voluntary resignation.
- E. Maximum Banked Paid Time Off Accumulation. An employee may accumulate up to 60 days of Paid Time Off after taking required time off as stated below. FTE rates are used; see Section C for methodology to calculate. Time is banked in January after the final calendar year payroll for the previous year.

Employees will be responsible for notifying the payroll department of the amount of time they want to bank up to the allowable amount listed in Section C. Required Time Off. PTO will be banked by hours at the employee's base rate of pay per hour at the time of accumulation. The number of hours accumulated will be converted to cash value and recorded as a payable due to the employee as further provided in the Agency's policies and procedures. The hours available will be recorded in EWS under Banked PTO and will be adjusted if the employee's hourly pay rate changes. When an employee uses the banked hours for leave, the hours will be expended at their current rate of pay. When an employee terminates, the entire cash balance left in their banked account will be paid to them, less any required deductions. If the bank account receives interest, the interest will be divided and paid on individual accounts and added to PTO at least once a year on or before January 15<sup>th</sup> of the following calendar year.

Employees with Banked PTO in excess of allowable amount due to reduced hours or reduced pay will be trued up at the annual reconciliation by a payment to the employee of Excess Banked PTO.

- F. Excess Banked Paid Time Off. At the end of each calendar year, employees that have 10 years of consecutive service and have Banked PTO cash equivalent of at least 30 days (based on 2,080 X employee FTE rate) will have three options:
- Contribute additional time to the banked accrual up to a maximum of 60 days.

- Receive a check for the PTO hours remaining up to the maximum amount allowed to bank (Example: 10-yr. employee works 8 hours day, earns 1.75 days per month (14 hours) for 12 months would accrue 168 hours during the year. They would be required to use 10 days or 80 hours, leaving 88 hours. They could roll 5 days or 40 hours to the next year, leaving 48 hours. They could be paid for the 48 hours less any required deductions.
  - A combination of contributing leave to the Banked PTO and receiving a check up to the maximum allowable to bank based on the employee's length of service.
- G. Banked PTO Loans. Employees who have reached three years of employment may request a loan of their banked balance. The loan will be fully secured by the current value of the employee's PTO bank account. Payment will be made through semimonthly payroll deduction with duration of 6 payrolls minimum to 60 payrolls maximum based on the amount of the loan. An administrative fee will be charged to process the Banked PTO loan. Administrative fees will be charged at a rate of \$25 for each tier of \$500 requested. For example: Loan requests for \$1-\$500 will be charged \$25, requests of \$501-\$1,000 will be charged \$50, requests of \$1,001-\$1,500 will be charged \$75, and will increase incrementally based on the loan amount. Should an employee separate employment prior to repayment of the loan, the paid leave balance will be reduced by the remaining loan and required deductions. Employees are limited to one loan at a time on their PTO bank. Two working days' worth of time is set aside and not available to be used as collateral in the event that the loan applicant should need some time off before the loan is repaid and available for use. Employees must sign and date a written payroll deduction agreement as a precondition of receiving a loan.

## **VI. Conversion of Previous Sick Leave Accumulation to Short Term Disability**

This conversion is only for persons employed by SOCAG before January 1, 1997 when the new PTO policy was adopted and that had time accumulated for the purpose of sick leave. These sick leave hours were converted hour for hour to a new category entitled Short Term Disability.



Short Term Disability is used in the same manner as sick leave with exception of the following additional requirements.

- A. No new Short Term Disability time will be accrued.
- B. Short Term Disability may not be used until the third day of illness or injury. This requirement is waived effective the day of:
  - 1. Inpatient hospitalization
  - 2. An outpatient surgical procedure
  - 3. Establishment of a recurring treatment regime for a particular illness (e.g. cancer chemotherapy or radiation)
- C. A health provider's statement is required before Short Term Disability may be used unless the employee is a hospital inpatient.
- D. Illness of an immediate family member that requires the attention of an employee. Immediate family includes spouse, child, or parent.
- E. Death of an immediate family member.
- F. Individual exceptions may be allowed for unusual circumstances if approved by the Executive Director.

Short-term disability days will not be paid to employee upon termination.

## Holidays

### I. Purpose

To provide a competitive paid-time-off benefit to recognize traditional holidays.

### II. Scope

This policy applies to regular, full-time and those regular, part-time employees who work at least 1,040 hours annually.

### III. Policy

A. The following days are recognized as company-paid holidays:

Holidays

New Year's Day  
Martin Luther King Day  
Presidents Day  
Memorial Day  
Juneteenth  
Independence Day  
Labor Day  
Columbus Day  
Veterans' Day  
Thanksgiving Day & Day After  
Christmas Eve  
Christmas Day  
\*Floating Holiday

B. Floating Holiday: The SOCAG Board of Directors authorizes the Executive Director to designate one additional holiday per calendar year. The floating holiday will be agency-wide according to the rules listed below and will be announced by December 31<sup>st</sup> for the upcoming year.

- C. For employees who work a Monday through Friday schedule, Agency paid holidays which fall on a Saturday will be observed on the preceding Friday; paid holidays which fall on a Sunday will be observed on the following Monday.
- D. If an Agency paid holiday falls during an employee's scheduled Paid Time Off, the holiday will not be counted as PTO taken.
- E. An employee that separates employment on the last scheduled workday preceding a holiday will not receive holiday pay.
- F. Holiday pay will be pro-rated for employees that work non-standard schedules (Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.). The holiday hours will be based on the annual hours scheduled divided by 260 days to arrive at the pro-rated daily value of hours. For example –  $1,560 \text{ annual hours} / 260 = 6$  hours of holiday pay.
- G. Employees must work or be on paid leave both the regularly scheduled day before and the regularly scheduled day after the holiday to receive holiday pay. Employees who use unpaid leave in conjunction with a holiday will not be paid for the holiday, except in the case of an Agency designated furlough.
- H. The agency may adjust the days taken for holiday to meet program needs. For example, Head Start classroom staff can be designated to receive Columbus Day in conjunction with the school's Fall Break. Employees will be notified when changes are made to the holiday schedule.
- I. Additionally, some employees are scheduled to work on holidays to meet agency business needs. These employees are paid for their working hours, and they are either paid for the holiday time or given another day off for the holiday within the same work week based on the business needs of the agency. If an employee is scheduled to work on the holiday and does not report to work, they will not be eligible to use accrued paid leave for the day, and they will only be paid for the holiday if the absence is determined to be excused and they have worked or been on paid leave the regularly scheduled day both before and after the holiday.

## Agency Emergency Loan Policy

### I. Purpose

To set forth the policies and procedures for administering an Employee Emergency Loan Program.

### II. Policy

An Emergency Loan Fund has been established to assist regular full-time and regular part-time staff in meeting short-term financial emergencies.

- A. Eligibility: All regular full-time and regular part-time staff that have worked at S.O.C.A.G. for at least twelve consecutive months and have completed their orientation period are eligible to apply for an emergency loan.
- B. Application process: All employees must complete an Emergency Loan Request Form, sign a Promissory Note and submit both documents to the Executive Director. Only the Executive Director may approve Emergency Loans.

Loan limitations: Emergency Loans must be for a minimum of \$100 and shall not exceed \$500. No employee may have more than one Emergency Loan outstanding at any one time.

Emergency loans will be limited to no more than 3 in a calendar year time period.

Loan collateral: Loan applicants must use their Paid Time Off (PTO) as collateral for any loaned monies. All PTO time used as collateral becomes unavailable for use as paid time off from work until the Emergency Loan is repaid. No Emergency loan may exceed the \$500 maximum request limit or the aggregate value of the applicant's regular and banked PTO minus one working day's worth of time, whichever is less. One working day's worth of time is set aside and not available to be used as collateral in the event that the loan applicant should need some time off before more PTO time is accrued and available for use.

- E. Loan fees and repayment schedule: All Emergency loans will be processed for an Administrative fee of \$25. The maximum term of any Emergency Loan shall not exceed one year. All repayments must occur through payroll deduction, with repayments commencing within two payrolls after the funds are loaned. Employees must sign and date a written payroll deduction agreement as a precondition of receiving a loan as set out in this policy.
  
- F. Separation of Employment: An employee's accrued Paid Time Off is held in collateral for any Emergency Loan. Should an employee separate employment prior to repayment of the loan, the paid leave balance will be reduced by the remaining loan and required deductions.

## **Court and Jury Duty**

Employees of Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc. will be released from their job duties for the time required for jury duty. This time will not be chargeable to leave. The employee is required to supply summons of jury duty for documentation of such in employee's personnel records. Any funds paid to the employee by the court for this service shall be retained by the employee in addition to his/her regular salary.

## **Military Leave**

### **I. Purpose**

To establish guidelines for regular employees who serve in the military.

### **II. Scope**

This applies to all employees eligible for military leave under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

### **III. Policy**

Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc. will fully comply with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), or subsequent amendments.

- A. Who's Eligible for Reemployment? Regular employees who have been absent from their employment position because of "service in the uniformed services". Reemployment rights do not apply to employees classified as temporary employees. "Service in the uniformed services" means the performance of duty on a voluntary or involuntary basis in a uniformed service, including:
- Active duty
  - Active duty for training
  - Initial active duty for training
  - Inactive duty training
  - Full-time National Guard duty
  - Absence from work for an examination to determine a person's fitness for any of the above types of duty
  - Funeral honors duty performed by National Guard or reserve members
  - Duty performed by intermittent employees of the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS), which is part of the Department of Homeland

Security – Emergency Preparedness and Response Directorate (FEMA),  
when activated for a public health emergency.

The “uniformed services” consist of the following:

- Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard.
- Army Reserve, Naval Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Air Force Reserve, or Coast Guard Reserve.
- Army National Guard or Air National Guard.
- Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service.
- Any other category of persons designated by the President in time of war or emergency.

B. Advance Notice. Unless otherwise set forth in this policy or under the law, employees are required to given an advance notice. The notice may be written or oral. Notice may be provided by the employee or an appropriate military officer. Advance notice requirement will be waived if military necessity prevents giving notice or if given notice is otherwise impossible or unreasonable.

C. Duration of Leave. Leave may not exceed five years cumulatively, unless it is due to one of the exceptions to the five-year limitation recognized by USERRA. Exceptions include:

- Service required beyond five years to complete an initial period of obligated service
- Service from which a person, through no fault of the person, is unable to obtain a release within the five-year limit
- Required training for reservists and National Guard members
- Service under and involuntary order to, or to be retained on, active duty during domestic emergency or national security related situations
- Service under an order to, or to remain on, active duty (other than for training) because of a war or national emergency declared by the President or Congress
- Active duty (other than for training) by volunteers supporting “operational missions” for which Selected Reservists have been ordered to active duty without their consent
- Service by volunteers who are ordered to active duty in support of a “critical mission or requirement” in times other than war or national emergency and when no involuntary call up is in effect



- Federal service by members of the National Guard called into action by the President to suppress an insurrection, repel an invasion, or to execute the laws of the United States

D. Disqualifying Service. Service will be disqualified for the following circumstances:

- Separation from the service with a dishonorable or bad conduct discharge
- Separation from the service under other than honorable conditions
- Dismissal of a commissioned officer in certain situations involving a court martial or by order of the President in time of war
- Dropping an individual from the rolls when the individual has been absent without authority for more than three months or is imprisoned by a civilian court

E. Reporting Back to Work. Employees will be expected to return to work, with the exception of fitness-for-service examinations, as follows:

- Service of 1 to 30 days. Employees must report by the beginning of the first regularly scheduled work period that begins on the next calendar day following completion of the service and allowing for safe travel home from the military duty location and an 8-hour rest period.
- Fitness Exam. The same time limit applies as in “service of 1 to 30 days”.
- Service of 31 to 180 days. Employees must submit an application for reemployment within 14 days after completion of a person’s service.
- Service of 181 or more days. Employees must apply for reemployment no later than 90 days after completion of the military service.
- Disability. The reporting and application deadlines are extended for up to two years for employees who are hospitalized or convalescing because of a disability incurred or aggravated during the period of military service.
- Exceptions to Reporting Times. If due to no fault of the employee, timely reporting back to work is impossible or unreasonable, the employee must report back to work as soon as possible.
- Unexcused Delay. Employees who have an unexcused delay will be subject to the unexcused absence policy in Policy No. 322, Section VI.

F. Return Documentation. Employees who are absent for a period of service of 31 days or more will be required to provide documentation showing that:

- The application for reemployment is timely
- That the five-year service limitation has not been exceeded

- The person's separation was not disqualified  
Should documentation be unavailable or delayed, employees will still be promptly reemployed. Once documentation is available, if it does not meet requirements, the employee may be terminated.

G. Job Placement. Except in circumstances of a disability incurred in or aggravated by military service, the position into which a person is reinstated will be based on length of service.

- 1 to 90 days. Employees will be promptly reemployed
  1. In the job the person would have held, so long as qualified or can become qualified with reasonable efforts
  2. In the position held on the date of commencement of the uniformed service only if not qualified for the position in the above paragraph.
  3. If not qualified for either position, reemployment will be in a position that is nearest to the positions as prioritized above.
- 91 or more days. Employees will be promptly reemployed as prioritized below:
  1. In the job the employee would have held with continuous employment, or a position of like seniority status and pay if qualified or can become qualified with reasonable efforts.
  2. In the same position held at commencement of uniformed service, or a position of like seniority, status, and pay for which the employee is qualified to perform.
  3. If not qualified for positions detailed above, the employee will be placed in another position that most nearly approximates the above positions as prioritized. The employee will be given full seniority.
- Disabilities Incurred or Aggravated by Military Service. The following reemployment efforts will be used:
  1. SOCAG will make reasonable efforts to accommodate a person's disability so that they can perform the position they would have held if continuously employed.
  2. If not qualified due to disability even with reasonable accommodation, the person will be employed in a position of equivalent seniority, status, and pay, as long as the employee is qualified or can become qualified with reasonable efforts.
  3. If not qualified for either scenario above, the employee will be placed in a position that most nearly approximates the position in terms of seniority, status, and pay.

- H. Qualification Efforts. SOCAG will make reasonable efforts to qualify returning service members who are not qualified for reemployment positions that they otherwise would be entitled to hold for reasons other than a disability incurred or aggravated by military service.

Unless it poses an undue hardship, SOCAG will provide refresher training and any training necessary to update a returning employee's skills.

- I. Seniority Rights. Employees returning from uniformed service are entitled to the seniority and all rights and benefits based on seniority that they would have attained with continuous employment.
- J. Retirement Plan. A reemployed person will be treated as not having incurred a break in service. Military service will be considered service with an employer for the purpose of vesting and benefit accrual. The reemployed person must repay the employee contributions to be eligible for employer contributions. The employee will have three times the period of military service but no longer than five years to repay the employee contributions. Contributions will be based on the rate of pay the employee would have received from the employer.
- K. Paid Time Off. Service members will be permitted to use accrued PTO, but will not be required to do so.
- L. Health Benefits. If the military leave is less than 30 days, the employee will pay the normal employee share of the premium. For service 31 days and over, the employee will be given the option to continue health benefits under COBRA for up to 24 months after the absence begins or for the period of service (plus the time allowed for reemployment), whichever period is shorter.
- M. Discharge Protection. Under USERRA, a reemployed person may not be discharged without cause as follows:
- For one year after the date of reemployment if the person's military service was for more than 180 days.
  - For six months after the date of reemployment if the military service was for 31 to 180 days.
- N. Forfeiture of Rights. If, prior to leaving for military service, an employee knowingly provides clear written notice of an intent not to return to work

after military service, the employee waives entitlement to leave-of-absence rights and benefits not based on seniority. Should an employee provide such notice, SOCAG will advise the employee of specific rights and benefits to be lost. Employees cannot surrender reemployment rights or other rights.

O. Discrimination. Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc. will not discriminate because of past, current, or future military obligations.

## **Pregnancy Leave**

### **I. Purpose**

To enable female employees to receive extended time away from work due to medical disabilities associated with pregnancy and/or childbirth.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to regular, full-time and regular, part-time employees.

### **III. Policy**

As a general policy, an employee will be permitted to work at all times during pregnancy as long as she is able to perform her job.

Pregnancy leave is leave without pay granted for medical disabilities associated with pregnancy and/or childbirth for a period of time to be determined by the attending healthcare provider. The Agency's policy is for employees to use accrued PTO and/or Banked PTO that is available before entering a Leave without Pay status.

If the employee is eligible for Family Medical Leave, the Pregnancy leave will be designated as FMLA. The employee will remain responsible for their share of premiums for benefits in which they are enrolled.

## Family and Medical Leave

### I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set forth procedures, in compliance with the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, as amended ("FMLA"), to provide eligible employees with unpaid leave as required by the FMLA.

### II. Scope

This policy applies to eligible employees. To be eligible for FMLA leave, an employee must:

- A. Work for SOCAG;
- B. Have worked for SOCAG for a total of at least 12 months;
- C. Have worked at least 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months; and
- D. Work at a location where at least 50 employees are employed by the SOCAG within 75 miles. The distance is to be calculated by using the most direct route available through use of any form of regular ground transportation, or as otherwise required by law.

### III. Procedure

- A. Entitlement to Leave. SOCAG will grant an eligible employee up to a total of 12 workweeks of unpaid leave during any 12 month period for one or more of the following reasons:
  - 1. For the birth or placement of a child for adoption or foster care;
  - 2. To care for an immediate family member (spouse, child, or parent) with a serious health condition; or

3. To take medical leave when the employee is unable to work because of a serious health condition.
  4. Because of any qualifying exigency (as determined by the Secretary of Labor) arising out of the fact that the spouse, child, or parent of the employee is on active duty (or has been notified of an impending call to order to active duty) in the Armed Forces in support of a contingency operation. Armed Forces include National Guard or Reserves.
- B. Service Member Family Leave. An eligible employee who is the spouse, child, parent, or next of kin (nearest blood relative) of a covered service member shall be entitled to a total of 26 workweeks of leave during a 12-month period to care for the service member. This leave is only available during a single 12-month period.
- C. Expiration of Entitlement. The entitlement to leave for birth or placement for adoption or foster care expires at the end of the 12-month period beginning on the date of birth or placement.
- D. Combined Leave Total. During the single 12-month period described in paragraph B above relating to Service Member Family Leave, an eligible employee shall be entitled to a combined total of 26 workweeks of leave for all purposes allowable under the FMLA.
- E. Intermittent Leave. Under some circumstances, employees may take FMLA leave intermittently -- which means taking leave in blocks of time, or by reducing their normal weekly or daily work schedule.
1. Whenever medically necessary, FMLA leave may be taken intermittently for the serious health condition of a family member or the employee's own serious health condition as described in items 2 and 3 under paragraph A and for the care of a covered service member as described in paragraph B.
  2. FMLA leave may also be taken intermittently for the purposes of active duty of a service member as described in item 4 under paragraph A. Request for leave must be supported by certification.

3. If FMLA leave is for the birth or placement for adoption (item 1, paragraph A), the use of intermittent leave is subject to SOCAG's prior written approval based on the business needs of the Agency in its sole discretion.
  4. SOCAG may temporarily transfer employees on intermittent leave to an alternative position for which the employee is qualified and that has equivalent pay and benefits and better accommodates recurring periods of leave than the regular position.
- F. Special Rule for Spouses Employed by SOCAG. Spouses employed by SOCAG are jointly entitled to a **combined** total of 12 workweeks of family leave for the birth or placement of a child for adoption or foster care, and to care for a parent (but not a parent-in-law) who has a serious health condition. The combined total is 26 workweeks when leave includes FMLA for the care of a service member as described in paragraph B, and leave in this category is limited to a single 12-month period.
- G. Status of Leave.
1. Employees will be required to use accrued Paid Time Off or any Banked PTO in conjunction with any FMLA leave. SOCAG is responsible for designating if an employee's use of paid leave counts as FMLA leave, based on information from the employee. FMLA leave will be designated by the Agency as required by federal law and regulations.
  2. For exempt employees, according to the Fair Labor Standards Act, the use of unpaid FMLA will not affect the exempt status.
  3. Employees are not permitted to perform any activities prohibited by their health care provider.
- H. Maintenance of Health Benefits. SOCAG is required to maintain group health insurance coverage for an employee on FMLA leave whenever such insurance was provided before the leave was taken and on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work. If applicable, arrangements will need to be made for employees to pay their share of health insurance premiums while on leave. In some instances, SOCAG may recover premiums



it paid to maintain health coverage for an employee who fails to return to work from FMLA leave.

- I. Job Restoration. Upon timely return from FMLA leave, an employee will be restored to his or her original job, or to an equivalent job with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms and conditions.

In addition, an employee's use of FMLA leave will not result in the loss of any employment benefit that the employee earned or was entitled to before using the FMLA leave.

However, an employee will not be entitled to more favorable employment terms because of taking FMLA leave than he or she would have had if no FMLA leave had been taken. Thus, an employee who takes FMLA leave will be subject to any pay or benefit reductions or other adverse actions, including layoff that the employee would have experienced if he or she had not been on a FMLA Leave.

Under specified and limited circumstances where restoration to employment will cause substantial and grievous economic injury to its operations, SOCAG may refuse to reinstate certain highly-paid *key* employees after using FMLA leave during which health coverage was maintained. In this instance, SOCAG will:

1. Notify the employee of his/her status as a *key* employee in response to employee's notice of intent to take FMLA leave. A *key* employee is a salaried *eligible* employee who is among the highest paid ten percent of employees within 75 miles of the work site.
2. Notify employee as soon as SOCAG decides it will deny job restoration and explain the reasons for this decision;
3. Offer the employee a reasonable opportunity to return to work from FMLA leave after giving this notice; and
4. Make a final determination as to whether reinstatement will be denied at the end of the leave period if the employee then requests restoration.

- J. Notice and Certification. Employees seeking to use FMLA leave will be required to provide the following items, as appropriate, in a timely manner:
1. 30-day advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable. When advance notice is not possible, employees must follow SOCAG's usual call-in procedures for reporting an absence, barring unusual circumstances;
  2. Medical certifications supporting the need for leave due to a serious health condition affecting the employee or an immediate family member;
  3. Second or third medical opinions and periodic recertification (as allowed by FMLA laws and regulations and at SOCAG's expense); and
  4. Periodic reports during FMLA leave regarding the employee's status and intent to return to work.
  5. Request for leave related to active duty or call to active duty will be supported by certification issued.
  6. At the end of an employee's leave, SOCAG will have a discussion with the employee about their employment status. SOCAG will require a fitness-for-duty certification before an employee returns to work. The fitness-for-duty certification will address the employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the job. Where there is reasonable job safety concerns, SOCAG may require a fitness-for-duty certification from an employee when they take intermittent leave.

When leave is needed to care for an immediate family member or the employee's own illness, and is for planned medical treatment, the employee must try to schedule treatment so as not to unduly disrupt SOCAG's operation.

- K. Employer Notice.
1. SOCAG will notify employees in writing within five business days after acquiring enough information to determine if leave is eligible or not eligible for FMLA. Notice will occur each time an eligibility notice is

required and if any information changes thereafter, notice will reference prior notice and information that has changed.

2. If there is not enough information to determine that leave is FMLA-qualifying, SOCAG will notify the employee in writing what information is lacking. The employee will have seven calendar days to cure the deficiency.

L. Definitions. Terms used in this policy are to be construed consistent with the FMLA and the regulations issued pursuant to the FMLA.

1. *Serious health condition* means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves:
  - a. any period of incapacity or treatment connected with inpatient care (i.e., an overnight stay) in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical-care facility; or
  - b. any period of incapacity requiring absence of more than three calendar days from work, school, or other regular daily activities that also involves continuing treatment by (or under the supervision of) a health care provider; or
  - c. any period of incapacity due to pregnancy, or for prenatal care; or
  - d. any period of incapacity (or treatment therefore) due to a chronic serious health condition; or
  - e. a period of incapacity that is permanent or long-term due to a condition for which treatment may not be effective; or
  - f. any absences to receive multiple treatments (including any period of recovery therefrom) by, or on referral by, a health care provider for a condition that likely would result in incapacity of more than three consecutive days if left untreated.

2. Health care provider means:

- a. doctors of medicine or osteopathy authorized to practice medicine or surgery by the state in which the doctor practices; or
- b. podiatrists, dentists, clinical psychologists, optometrists and chiropractors (limited to manual manipulation of the spine to correct a subluxation as demonstrated by X-ray to exist) authorized to practice, and performing within the scope of their practice, under state law; or
- c. nurse practitioners, nurse-midwives and clinical social workers authorized to practice, and performing within the scope of their practice, as defined under state law;
- d. Christian Science practitioners listed with the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, Massachusetts;
- e. any health care provider recognized by the Agency or the Agency's group health plan's benefits manager; and
- f. a health care provider listed above who practices in a country other than the United States and who is authorized to practice under the laws of that country.

3. Covered Service Member means:

- a. A current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness; or
- b. A covered veteran who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for a serious injury or illness. Covered veteran means an individual who was a member of the Armed Forces (including a member of the National Guard or Reserves), and was discharged or released under conditions

other than dishonorable at any time during the five-year period prior to the first date the eligible employee takes FMLA leave to care for the covered veteran.

- c. For a current service member, a serious injury or illness is one that may render the service member medically unfit to perform his or her military duties. For a veteran, a serious injury or illness is one that rendered the veteran medically unfit to perform his or her military duties or an injury or illness that qualifies the veteran for certain benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs or substantially impairs the veteran's ability to work. For veterans, it includes injuries or illnesses that were incurred or aggravated during military service but that did not manifest until after the veteran left active duty.
- d. The term "outpatient status", with respect to a covered service member, means the status of a member of the Armed Forces assigned to a military medical treatment facility as an outpatient or a unit established for the purpose of providing command and control of members of the Armed Forces receiving medical care as outpatients.

## **Education Assistance Program**

### **I. Purpose**

To help employees obtain additional education or training to increase their competence in present jobs and to prepare for advancement within the Agency.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to regular, full-time and part-time employees in programs where funds are available.

### **III. Policy**

The Agency may reimburse the cost of tuition, enrollment fees, and books for courses which employees take at a recognized institution. These courses must, in the opinion of management, increase employees' competence in their present jobs or prepare them for advancement in the Agency.

Normally, an employee must be employed with the agency when the course is completed in order to qualify for reimbursement. However, an employee who separates during enrollment because of reduction-in-force or elimination of the job, or who is unable to complete the course because of relocation within the Agency, will be reimbursed for all costs incurred up to the date of separation.

Class attendance and completion of study assignments must be accomplished outside of the employee's regular working hours. Unsatisfactory job performance or non-attendance during enrollment will result in forfeiture of educational reimbursement. In the instance of pre-payment, reimbursement from the employee to the Agency will result in payroll deduction.

Records of educational programs completed by each employee will be maintained by the personnel officer.

#### **IV. Procedure**

- A. An applicant must be employed for at least six months before he/she will be considered for participation.
- B. Applicant cannot be on probation when making application.
- C. Only tuition, enrollment fees, and books will be paid.

## Insurance Programs

### I. Purpose

To summarize group insurance and other insurance programs the Agency offers.

### II. Policy

The Agency provides insurance programs as mandated by state and federal regulations for all employees. Group coverages, such as life and health, are offered as a fringe benefit. Health insurance and other insurance benefits are subject to the terms and conditions of the agreements between the Agency and the insurance carriers, as well as the plan documents. For additional information about your rights and obligations under the Plan and under federal law, you should review the Plan's Summary Plan Description or contact the Plan Administrator.

The following are brief summaries of these programs.

- A. Group Health Insurance. SOCAG has elected to participate in the Oklahoma State & Education Employee's Group Health Insurance. Participation in basic health insurance is mandatory for eligible regular employees that work at least 1,000 hours annually. Employees will pay a portion of the premium for their coverage. Other coverages may be available according to the plan. The employee will pay the additional premiums for other coverages selected. The employee pays the full amount for dependent coverages. Premiums chargeable to the employee will be deducted on a per payroll basis. Employees will enroll according to plan guidelines. Employees will have the option to enroll upon start of employment. Employees beginning by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month will be enrolled for the current month. Employees that start the 16<sup>th</sup> or later, will start the first day of the following month. See chart for examples:



<u>Start Date</u>	<u>Enroll Date</u>	<u>Coverage Start</u>
<u>10/26/xx</u>	<u>10/26/xx</u>	<u>11/01/xx</u>
<u>3/04/xx</u>	<u>3/04/xx</u>	<u>3/01/xx</u>

- B. Cafeteria Plan. SOCAG has a Cafeteria Plan authorized under Section 125 of the Internal Revenue Service code. This plan provides several benefits.
1. Health Plan Premiums. Employees that are enrolled in SOCAG’s health, dental, or vision plans will also enroll in the Cafeteria Plan. The premiums for health insurance plans are on a pre-tax basis, as allowed by IRS law and the plan document.
  2. AFLAC Plans. Employees may purchase supplemental policies through AFLAC. Examples include policies such as cancer, accident, intensive care, short-term disability. The premiums are paid through payroll deduction, and are on a pre-tax basis where allowed by law. The employee pays 100% of the premiums. Policies purchases are optional.
  3. Flexible Spending Accounts. Employees may elect to use a Flexible Spending Account (FSA) to pay for unreimbursed medical expenses and unreimbursed dependent care expenses. Employee pre-tax contributions to FSAs are limited to annual amounts prescribed by federal law. Funds placed in the account must be obligated by December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. Claims for reimbursement must be submitted before March 31<sup>st</sup> following the end of the plan year. Participation in FSAs is optional.
- C. Social Security and Medicare Taxes. All employees are covered by the Federal Social Security Act. A required percentage of an employee's salary is deducted to pay the employee's portion of this protection, and the Agency matches this deduction dollar for dollar. This plan was designed for an employee's future security and that of his or her dependents by providing retirement, disability, death survivor, and Medicare benefits.
- D. State Unemployment Insurance. This program is funded entirely by employers in this state. The program provides weekly benefits to employees who become unemployed through no fault of their own or circumstances described in the law.
- E. Workers' Compensation. The Agency carries insurance to cover the cost of work-incurred injury or illness. Benefits help pay for an employee's medical

treatment and for part of the income lost while recovering. Specific benefits are prescribed by law depending on the circumstances in each case. To be assured of maximum coverage, all work-related accidents must be reported immediately to supervisors and the Payroll Accountant so the Agency can file a timely claim. Failure to timely report work related injuries or conditions may affect coverage.

- F. Life Insurance. The Agency offers basic group life insurance to all regular employees that work at least 1,000 hours annually. The premiums are paid by the Agency. Additional coverage may be available according to plan guidelines. The employee pays the premium for any additional coverage selected. The employee pays the full amount for dependent coverage through a per payroll deduction. Employees will be enrolled according to plan requirements. Enrollment will be done with other group coverage as described in A above.
  
- G. Pre-Paid Legal Service Plan. The Agency offers a pre-paid legal membership for the Executive Director, Program Directors, and Fiscal Officer.

## **Retirement Plan**

Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc. provides an employee Retirement Plan. The Retirement Plan is subject to the terms and conditions of the plan documents. For additional information about your rights and obligations under the plan and under federal law, you should review the Plan's Summary Plan Description or contact the Plan Administrator.

The minimum requirements for an employee to participate in the retirement plan is to have attained the age of 18 and to be a regular employee scheduled to work at least 20 hours weekly or 1,040 hours annually.

Beginning April 1, 2001, a 403-B plan was adopted by the SOCAG Board of Directors. This plan allows for the agency to match dollar for dollar up to a board approved percentage 10% of an employee's gross wages. To receive matching contributions, employees must complete the enrollment process with the MetLife representative, and they must have completed one year of employment with SOCAG. Employees may participate in the plan themselves in excess of the 10% agency matching portion, but only to the maximum the IRS allows.

Employees will become vested in the employer contribution to the Retirement Plan 20% for each year of service to a maximum of 100%. Loans from the 403-B plan are permissible as allowed by the plan.

Consumers employed through the Southwest Enterprises program, contracted employees who are hired to work on specific projects, and non-contracted employees who are considered temporary and work on an on-call basis, are not eligible for the retirement plan.

The current matching percentage adopted by the Southwest Oklahoma Board of Directors is ten percent (10%).

## **Workplace Wellness Benefit**

### **I. Purpose**

To create an environment that supports and encourages health living for Agency employees.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to all SOCAG facilities.

### **III. Introduction**

Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc. cares about the health and well-being of our employees and strives to create an environment that supports and encourages healthy living. We acknowledge that people who are inactive, overweight, or obese have a higher risk for many serious health conditions, including diabetes, heart disease, stroke, certain types of cancer, and premature death. We recognize that we can help improve the health and wellness of our employees, and members of the community, by providing and promoting healthy food options, physical activity opportunities, and tobacco free environments.

Therefore, Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc. commits to creating a workplace environment that is conducive to eating healthy, being physically active, and living tobacco free by doing the following:

- Providing support for a wellness committee as needed for the implementation of the wellness policy.
- Promoting healthy behaviors and choices through appropriate communication resources, such as brochures, posters, and wellness information at meetings.
- Expanding wellness programs to be available to family members of employees.
- Conducting ongoing evaluations of wellness policies and programs.
- Hosting, sponsoring, or promoting community health events, such as health fairs, races

- Hosting, sponsoring, or promoting community health events, such as health fairs, races and festivals.

Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc. adopts this wellness policy, which includes the following Nutrition and Physical Activity elements. The Tobacco Policy is Policy #416.

**Effective Date** 02/21/2019

**Name and Title** Neil Montgomery, Executive Director

**Signature** 

Approved at a regularly scheduled SOCAG Board of Directors meeting on February 21, 2019.

## IV. Nutrition

SOCAG commits to making healthy food options available and accessible by doing the following:

Selling beverages throughout the workplace, including in the vending machines and offering foods and beverages during meetings and events that follow these guidelines:

- 100 percent of foods contain 0 grams of trans fat per serving
- 100 percent of snack foods contain no more than 230 mg of sodium per serving (excluding refrigerated meals)
- 100 percent of individual meal items will contain no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving.
- 75 percent of packaged foods contain no more than 200 calories per package, no more than 10 percent of total calories from saturated fat, and no more than 35 percent of total calories from sugar (excluding nuts and seeds without added fats, oils, or sweeteners and fruits or vegetables without added caloric sweeteners.)
- 100 percent of milk products will be unsweetened and non-fat or low-fat (1%)
- 75 percent of beverages contain no more than 40 calories per serving (excluding 100 percent fruit juice and unsweetened milk)
- 100 percent of juice will be unsweetened and 100 percent juice
- 100 percent of vegetable juice will contain no more than 230 mg of sodium per serving
- 100 percent of foods are cooked without frying (i.e. steaming, grilling, roasting, broiling, baking, poaching, or sautéing)

Promoting good nutrition and healthy eating habits through these activities and services:

- Providing employees with access to a refrigerator, microwave, and sink with a water faucet.

- Encouraging employees to bring healthy foods to special occasions like birthdays and retirement parties, or celebrating with non-food items.
- Ensuring access to a private space (other than a restroom) that has an electrical outlet, and providing flexible paid or unpaid break times to allow mothers to express breast milk.
- Prohibiting the marketing of foods and beverages that do not meet the requirements of the wellness policy.
- Making cool drinking water available throughout the day at no cost.
- Providing nutritional information on foods and beverages sold and offered in the workplace.
- Identifying healthy food and beverage menu items with signs, symbols, and/or colors.
- Offering smaller portion sizes.
- Promoting the purchase of healthy foods and beverages through practices such as pricing strategies or posting flyers, or using other communication tools.
- Providing nutrition education through activities such as seminars, workshops, classes, meetings, and newsletters.
- Hosting, sponsoring, or promoting a farmers' market on company property or nearby that is open to community members.

## **V. Physical Activity**

SOCAG commits to making physical activity opportunities available and accessible by doing the following:

- Incorporating 10-minute physical activity breaks into every hour of sedentary meetings, trainings, and other workplace gatherings.
- Promoting physical activity through education, such as providing information at meetings.
- Promoting walking meetings.

- Providing flexible work arrangements to accommodate paid physical activity breaks.
- Using posters, pamphlets, and other forms of communication to promote physical activity.
- Promoting employee participation in physical activity by creating exercise clubs or groups and sponsoring employee sports teams.
- Providing access to an on-site changing room or locker rooms.
- Providing employees, and their families, with access to an off-site fitness facility, including, but not limited to, purchasing corporate memberships as part of the employee's benefit package, subsidizing membership expenses, or negotiating a discounted family rate for staff. Refer to Policy No 371 for details.
- Providing safe and secure bicycle parking for employees and community members.
- Providing information about local resources and facilities, such as walking trails, community parks, and recreational facilities.
- Promoting physical activity through activities such as seminars, workshops, classes, newsletters, and meetings.



## Wellness Benefit

### I. Purpose

To summarize the Wellness Benefit offered by the Agency.

### II. Scope

This policy applies to all regular employees who work a minimum of 20 hours a week.

### III. Policy

#### A. Gym Membership

To promote health and wellness among Agency staff, the Agency provides a Wellness Benefit to eligible staff. Part one of the benefit is discounted access to participating exercise facilities. The benefit may vary as funding allows and as access to wellness programs and activities vary over time and by location.

The Agency will contribute up to a maximum of 50% of the cost of the Wellness Benefit ~~to~~ for each employee. Employees working 37.5 hours per week or more will be eligible for the maximum Agency contribution being offered. Those staff working more than 20 hours per week, but less than 37.5 hours per week will receive a pro-rated benefit.

Enrollment is conducted quarterly and announced on EWS. Participation is optional. Employees who choose to participate in the Wellness Benefit will sign and date a salary deduction agreement to have their portion of the cost of the Wellness Benefit withheld from their paychecks over six consecutive pay periods for each quarter enrolled.

#### B. Wellness Days

The Agency recognizes the importance of caring for employees' well-being. To promote self-care, the Agency will provide two days of time to be available to regular employees on January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. The amount of time will be calculated by taking an employee's annual hours divided by 260 days for the pro-rated leave

amount. The Wellness days replaces the safety days that are being eliminated. Any wellness leave time that is not used within the calendar year expires and cannot be rolled over.

## Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc.

### *Code of Ethics*

As an employee of Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc., I will dedicate myself to eliminating poverty in the midst of plenty in this nation by promoting respect for cultural diversity and the opportunity for all to live in decency and dignity. I will commit myself to:

- Accepting as a personal duty the responsibility to keep up-to-date on emerging issues and to conduct myself with professional competence, fairness, impartiality, efficiency, and effectiveness;
- Conducting my organization and operational duties with open communication, creativity, dedication, and compassion;
- Exercising whatever freedom I have to promote the interest of the poor;
- Serving Community Action with respect, concern, courtesy, and responsiveness, recognizing that service to the poor is beyond service to oneself;
- Demonstrating the highest standards of personal integrity, truthfulness, honesty, and determination in all my Community Action activities in order to inspire confidence and trust in Community Action;
- Serving Community Action in such a way that I do not realize unfair personal gain from the performance of my professional duties;
- Avoiding any interest or activities which are in conflict with my official duties;
- Respecting and protecting privileged information to which I have access in the course of official duties; and
- Striving for personal and professional excellence and encouraging the professional development of my co-workers.

I have read the SOCAG Code of Ethics carefully and agree to abide by it.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Standards of Conduct

### I. Purpose

To assure safe, efficient, and harmonious operations and to inform employees of the standards of conduct.

### II. Scope

This policy applies to all employees.

### III. Policy

The standards of employee conduct normally required in any place of employment (such as cooperation, coordination, honesty, friendliness, dependability) will be the standards of employee conduct of this Agency whether or not such are in writing.

An employee will exercise the utmost discretion in regard to all matters of official business and records. Any information which has been received by the employee on a confidential basis must be maintained in confidence. Employees publicly displaying behavior and actions in contradiction to the agency as determined by the Executive Director will be considered in violation of this policy statement. Public statements through news media, public appearances with outside organizations, and communication with state, regional, and national agency offices concerning the work of the Agency will have prior knowledge and approval of the Executive Director. An employee may not speak as an official spokesman of the Agency without prior written clearance from the Executive Director.

#### A. Employee's Duties and Responsibilities.

1. Employees are expected to perform their duties to the best of their ability so as to achieve optimum productivity concerning any duties to which they may be assigned.
2. Each employee will be individually responsible to arrive at his/her assigned work location or facility in sufficient time to assume the responsibilities of his/her job at the scheduled starting time. It is the responsibility of agency supervisors to make sure that employees are arriving at the work site at the

appropriate times. Non-supervisory employees shall sign in upon arrival at the scheduled work site and shall sign out upon leaving. Failure to comply with these provisions will constitute grounds for discipline up to and including discharge. It will be left to the discretion of the Executive Director as to which work stations sign in sheets will be used.

3. Any employee who is unable to report to work at his/her scheduled starting time shall personally notify their supervisor, or the program director or Executive Director in their absence, as far in advance as possible, and, in any event, no later than 15 minutes after employee's regular reporting time of that same day or furnish a satisfactory reason for not doing so. Such notice, with explanation, or the reason for not giving such notice, shall not in itself constitute permission for excused leave. Failure to notify supervisor will result in discipline up to and including discharge. Such employee, when again able to return to work, shall notify their supervisor, program director, or the Executive Director. The Agency will then notify the employee when and where to report, if work is available for him/her. Time off due to chronic tardiness may be accumulated and totaled on a weekly basis, rounded to the nearest hour and counted as leave without pay. Chronic tardiness will result in disciplinary action.
4. Each employee will use Agency work time, supplies, tools, and equipment carefully and productively.

The Agency's standards of conduct are established for the guidance of all employees. The following represents only a partial list of unacceptable behaviors and conduct; a complete list of all possible violations would be impossible to write.

Infractions will lead to corrective action up to and including discharge. (See Policy No. 422, Corrective Action.)

#### BREACHES OF STANDARDS OF CONDUCT (Partial List)

- Falsifying employment application, time and attendance, daily activity, travel, personnel, or other Agency documents or records. Falsifying reasons for Excused Leave or PTO.
- Unauthorized possession of Agency or employee property, gambling on Agency property or off Agency premises while on duty, carrying weapons into Agency buildings, carrying or possessing explosives or other unauthorized or dangerous weapons or materials onto Agency property, or violating criminal laws.

- Fighting, throwing things, horseplay, practical jokes, willful destruction, or other disorderly conduct which may endanger the well-being of any employee or Agency operations.
- Engaging in acts of dishonesty, fraud, theft, or sabotage.
- Threatening, intimidating, coercing, using abusive or vulgar language, or interfering with the performance of other employees.
- Insubordination or refusal to comply with instructions or failure to perform reasonable duties which are assigned.
- Unauthorized use of Agency material, time, equipment, or property including without limitation Agency telephones, tablets and computers.
- Damaging or destroying Agency property through careless or willful acts.
- Conduct which the Agency feels reflects adversely on the employee or Agency.
- Unsatisfactory performance which, in the Agency's opinion, does not meet the requirements of the position.
- Use or possession of intoxicating liquids, the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance, or illegal substance on Agency premises, and/or a criminal drug conviction or working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Violating Agency policies or procedures, attempting to influence a Board member to change Agency policy for personal benefit, participation or solicitation of bribery or kickbacks relating to Agency programs.
- Engaging in such other practices as the Agency determines may be inconsistent with the ordinary and reasonable rules of conduct necessary to the welfare of the Agency, its employees, or clients.
- Negligence in observing fire prevention and safety rules.
- Unexcused absences for 2 or more successive work days, 3 unexcused absences in 1 year, tardiness, and absenteeism.
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information including without limitation HIPAA protected materials and Agency proprietary information.

- Other circumstances for which the agency feels that corrective action is warranted.

This list is intended to be representative of the types of activities which may result in corrective action. It is not intended to be comprehensive and does not alter the employment "at-will" relationship between employees and the Agency.

## **Conflict of Interest**

### **I. Purpose**

To prevent situations that create a conflict of interest.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to all employees.

### **III. Policy**

Employees are expected to devote their best efforts to the interests of the Agency and the conduct of its affairs. The Agency recognizes the right of employees to engage in activities outside of the Agency work hours, which are of a private nature and unrelated to Agency business. However, a policy of full disclosure will be followed to assess and prevent potential conflicts of interest from arising.

### **IV. Duty of Loyalty**

Employees have a duty of loyalty to the agency and must not engage in activities that would harm SOCAG's business, such as:

- Degrading the agency's reputation, service, or products,
- Diverting a business opportunity of SOCAG or not dealing with the agency at arm's length,
- Inducing employees or potential employees to leave,
- Inducing customers or potential customers to terminate their relationship with SOCAG,
- Using or disclosing confidential customer information and/or proprietary information.



## **V. Other Conflicts**

The following represents some common areas that represent a conflict of interest for employees:

- A. Employees may not engage in activities that are adverse to the mission of SOCAG.
- B. No employee of the agency or members of their immediate family may accept gifts or favors from customers or contractors. Employees may accept token gifts such as pens, note pads, coffee mugs, t-shirts, tote bags that may be included with conference registrations or marketing promotions.
- C. No employee or members of their immediate family may benefit directly or indirectly because of SOCAG's relationship with a potential customer, client, or supplier.
- D. Employees must not associate their private outside work with their work for SOCAG.

## **VI. Procedure**

- A. Employees are required to immediately discuss known conflicts of interest with the Executive Director.
- B. Any questions regarding a possible conflict of interest or outside employment should be discussed with the immediate supervisor and/or with the Executive Director.
- C. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in corrective action up to and including discharge from employment with SOCAG.

## Harassment, Including Sexual Harassment

### I. Purpose

To establish the Agency's position on the subject of harassment, to set forth guidelines for handling violations of the policy, and to specify the related complaint-handling procedure.

### II. Scope

This policy applies to all employees.

### III. Policy

Harassment, including sexual harassment, is contrary to basic standards of conduct between individuals and is prohibited by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, as well as other federal and state laws. Any employee who engages in any of the acts or behavior defined below violates Agency policy, and such misconduct will subject an employee to corrective action up to and including immediate discharge.

Employees ~~who~~ that feel they have been discriminated against or harassed on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, creed, age, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by statute, should immediately report such incidents, following the procedure described below, without fear of reprisal. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent permitted by the circumstances.

### IV. Definitions

- A. Harassment. Verbal, physical, or visual conduct based on racial, ethnic, religious, disability, age or other status which, in the employee's opinion, impairs his or her ability to perform the job.

B. Sexual Harassment. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances or visual, verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. This definition encompasses many forms of offensive behavior, including gender-based harassment of a person of the same sex as the harasser; conduct of a sexual nature that creates an offensive, intimidating or hostile work environment; and coerced sexual conduct by a person in a position of authority in the workplace. Examples of prohibited sexual harassment include:

- unwelcome sexual flirtation or advances
- offering employment, promotions, or other benefits in exchange for sexual favors
- making or threatening reprisals for refusing sexual advances
- visual conduct such as leering; making sexual gestures; displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures; cartoons or posters; suggestive or obscene letters, notes, or invitations.
- verbal conduct such as derogatory comments; epithets; slurs; sexual innuendo; sexual jokes; graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body; sexually degrading words used to describe an individual
- physical conduct such as unwanted, suggestive, or offensive touching; assault; impeding or blocking movement

Sexual or other forms of harassment of an employee by any Agency employee or supervisor will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment by a non-employee, for example, a customer, vendor/contractor, supplier, or Board member, is also prohibited.

C. Employee. Any employee of the Agency including officials and supervisors.

## V. **Complaint Procedure**

Each employee is responsible for creating an atmosphere free of discrimination and harassment, sexual or otherwise. Further, employees are responsible for respecting the rights of their co-workers. If an employee experiences or witnesses any job-related harassment based on race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, disability, age or other factor, or believes that the employee or another have been treated in an unlawful, discriminatory manner, the employee should immediately report the incident(s) to his or her supervisor, the next higher level of management above the immediate supervisor, the Administrative Resources

Director (Human Resources) or the Executive Director. In cases involving complaints against the Executive Director, the employee should report the complaint immediately to the Chair of the Board of Directors.

The Agency takes complaints of discrimination and harassment very seriously. Thus, there is no need to follow any formal chain of command when reporting such complaints, and employees may bypass anyone in their direct chain of command and file their complaint directly with the Executive Director at any time.

The Agency will undertake an investigation of each complaint. All complaints will be kept confidential to the maximum extent possible. If the Agency determines that an employee is guilty of harassing another individual, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against the offending employee, up to and including termination of employment.

The Agency prohibits any form of retaliation against any employee for filing a bona fide complaint under this policy or for assisting in a complaint investigation. However, if, after investigating any complaint of harassment or unlawful discrimination, the Agency determines that the complaint was not made in good faith or that an employee has intentionally provided false information regarding the complaint, disciplinary action may be taken against the individual who filed the complaint or who gave the false information.

## **DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE**

SOCAG is committed to being a drug-free workplace. All employees are absolutely prohibited from unlawfully manufacturing, selling, distributing, dispensing, receiving, transporting, possessing or using controlled substances or alcohol in the workplace. You may use legally prescribed drugs on the job only if they do not impair your ability to perform the essential functions of your job effectively and safely without endangering yourself or others.

If you violate this policy, it will lead to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination of your employment, including for a first offense. Please also see SOCAG's Workplace Substance Abuse and Testing Policy (non-DOT) and Southwest Transit Drug and Alcohol Policy (DOT) for information regarding drug and alcohol testing.

Employees have the right to know the dangers of drug abuse in the workplace, SOCAG's policy about them, and what help is available to combat drug problems. To assist employees in overcoming drug abuse problems, SOCAG offers an Employee Assistance Program. See a Designated Employer Representative (DER) (Executive Director, Associate Director, or Administrative Resources Director) for details.

Employment on all federal government contracts and grants is conditioned on the employee abiding by the terms of SOCAG's drug-free policy and notifying the employer within five days of any criminal drug statute conviction, including no contest or nolo contendere pleas, for a workplace violation. Failure to inform SOCAG subjects the employee to immediate termination.

### **Employee Assistance Program**

SOCAG has contracted with a company to provide confidential counseling to employees and employees' families to help employees when personal problems are getting out of hand, and also to help supervisors when employees are having trouble at work due to problems at home. The costs for these services are the sole responsibility of the employee. While there is no guaranty of such, some costs may be covered under an employee's health insurance. Please contact your healthcare insurance provider for more information. If you would like additional information about the Employee Assistance Program, please contact a Designated Employer Representative (DER) (Executive Director, Associate Director, or Administrative Resources Director). Inquiries to the Employee Assistance Program are kept strictly confidential.

## *Southwest Transit*

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# Drug and Alcohol Policy

Effective as of 03/28/2024

Adopted by: Southwest Oklahoma Community  
Action Group, Inc. Board of Directors

Date Adopted: 03/28/2024

*Previous Versions:*

Revised: 11/30/2017

Revised: 01/28/2016

Revised: 9/24/2015

Revised: 8/22/2013

Revised: 6/28/2007

Revised: 3/22/2007

Revised: 10/26/2006

Revised: 10/28/2004

Revised: 1/23/2003

Revised: 1/20/2000

Revised: 1/20/1997

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## Attachments

1. Acknowledgement of *Southwest Transit* Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy
2. Copy of Board Resolution (signed)
3. Safety-Sensitive Positions and Functions
4. Contact Person(s) for *Southwest Transit*, Medical Review Officer and Substance Abuse Profession

# I. Purpose of Policy

This policy complies with 49 CFR Part 655, as amended and 49 CFR Part 40, as amended. Copies of Parts 655 and 40 are available in the drug and alcohol program manager's office and can be found on the internet at the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Drug and Alcohol Program website <http://transit-safety.fta.dot.gov/DrugAndAlcohol/>.

**The *BOARD OF DIRECTORS/TRUSTEES* have approved and adopted the *SOUTHWEST TRANSIT* Policy on Anti-Drug and Alcohol Misuse at its board meeting on 03/28/2024, and revisions of the original policy on 1/1/1996 AND REVISIONS, IF ANY, as listed on the cover page of this document.** A copy of the latest board approvals is included in this policy as Attachment 2.

All covered employees are required to submit to drug and alcohol tests as a condition of employment in accordance with 49 CFR Part 655.

Portions of this policy are not FTA-mandated, but reflect *SOUTHWEST TRANSIT's* policy. These additional provisions are identified by **bold text**.

In addition, the Department of Transportation (DOT) has published 49 CFR Part 29, implementing the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, which requires the establishment of drug-free workplace policies and the reporting of certain drug-related offenses to the FTA.

**All *SOUTHWEST TRANSIT* employees are subject to the provisions of the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1998.**

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the covered workplace. An employee who is convicted of any criminal drug statute for a violation occurring in the workplace shall notify their **direct supervisor and the Executive Director** no later than five days after such conviction.

***SOUTHWEST TRANSIT'S* intention is to fully comply with the regulations of the US DOT and FTA (49 CFR, Part 32, Part 40 and Part 655). If any omissions or contradictions occur between this policy and the federal regulations, the federal regulations shall apply.**

**If the regulations of the US DOT or the FTA change, this policy will be amended to reflect those changes and to remain consistent with regulations and US DOT requirements. When such changes occur, *SOUTHWEST TRANSIT* will notify all affected employees.**

Once the governing board has adopted this policy, all safety sensitive employees shall be made aware of the policy and subsequent changes, and the effect it will have on them. The *SOUTHWEST TRANSIT* shall provide written notice to every covered employee and to representatives of employee organizations explaining the drug and alcohol misuse policies and procedures. (§655.16) See Attachment 1.



## 2. Covered Employees

This policy applies to every person, including an applicant or transferee, who performs or will perform a “safety-sensitive function” as defined in Part 655, section 655.4.

You are a covered employee if you perform any of the following:

- Operating a revenue service vehicle, in or out of revenue service
- Operating a non-revenue vehicle requiring a commercial driver’s license
- Controlling movement or dispatch of a revenue service vehicle
- Maintaining (including repairs, overhaul and rebuilding) of a revenue service vehicle or equipment used in revenue service
- Carrying a firearm for security purposes

A volunteer is a covered employee if:

- (1) the volunteer is required to have a commercial driver’s license to operate the vehicle; or
- (2) the volunteer performs a safety-sensitive function and receives remuneration in excess of his or her actual expenses incurred

See Attachment 3 for a list of covered positions by job title.

## 3. Prohibited Behavior

Use of illegal drugs is prohibited at all times. All covered employees are prohibited from reporting for duty or remaining on duty any time there is a quantifiable presence of a prohibited drug in the body defined in Part 40. Prohibited drugs include:

- marijuana
- cocaine
- phencyclidine (PCP)
- opioids
- amphetamines

All covered employees are prohibited from performing or continuing to perform safety-sensitive functions while having an alcohol concentration of 0.04 or greater.

All covered employees are prohibited from consuming alcohol while performing safety-sensitive job functions or while on-call to perform safety-sensitive job functions. If an on-call employee has consumed alcohol, they must acknowledge the use of alcohol at the time that they are called to report for duty. If the on-call employee claims the ability to perform his or her safety-sensitive function, he or she must take an alcohol test prior to performance.

All covered employees are prohibited from consuming alcohol within four (4) hours prior to the performance of safety-sensitive job functions.

All covered employees are prohibited from consuming alcohol for eight (8) hours following involvement in an accident or until he or she submits to the post-accident drug and alcohol test, whichever occurs first.

## 4. Consequences for Violations

Following a positive drug or alcohol (Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) at or above 0.04) test result or test refusal, the employee will be immediately removed from safety-sensitive duty and referred to a Substance Abuse Professional (SAP).

Following a BAC of 0.02 or greater, but less than 0.04, the employee will be immediately removed from safety-sensitive duties for at least eight hours unless a retest results in the employee's alcohol concentration being less than 0.02.

### Zero Tolerance

**Per *SOUTHWEST TRANSIT* policy, any employee who tests positive for drugs or alcohol (BAC at or above 0.04) or refuses to test will be referred to a SAP and immediately terminated from employment.**

## 5. Circumstances for Testing

### Pre-Employment Testing

Pre-employment alcohol tests may be conducted after making a contingent offer of employment or transfer. All pre-employment alcohol tests will be conducted using the procedures set forth in 49 CFR Part 40.

A negative pre-employment drug test result is required before an employee can first perform safety-sensitive functions. If a pre-employment test is cancelled, the individual will be required to undergo another test and successfully pass with a verified negative result before performing safety-sensitive functions.

If a covered employee has not performed a safety-sensitive function for 90 consecutive calendar days, and has not been in the random testing pool during that time, the employee must take and pass a pre-employment test before he or she can return to a safety-sensitive function.

A covered employee or applicant who has previously failed or refused a DOT pre-employment drug and/or alcohol test must provide proof of having successfully completed a referral, evaluation, and treatment plan meeting DOT requirements.

### Reasonable Suspicion Testing

All covered employees shall be subject to a drug and/or alcohol test when *SOUTHWEST TRANSIT* has reasonable suspicion to believe that the covered employee has used a prohibited drug and/or engaged in alcohol misuse. A reasonable suspicion referral for testing will be made by a trained supervisor or other

trained company official on the basis of specific, contemporaneous, articulable observations concerning the appearance, behavior, speech, or body odors of the covered employee.

Covered employees may be subject to reasonable suspicion drug testing any time while on duty. Covered employees may be subject to reasonable suspicion alcohol testing while the employee is performing safety-sensitive functions, just before the employee is to perform safety-sensitive functions, or just after the employee has ceased performing such functions.

## Post-Accident Testing

Covered employees shall be subject to post-accident drug and alcohol testing under the following circumstances:

### Fatal Accidents

As soon as practicable following an accident involving the loss of a human life, drug and alcohol tests will be conducted on each surviving covered employee operating the public transportation vehicle at the time of the accident. In addition, any other covered employee whose performance could have contributed to the accident, as determined by *SOUTHWEST TRANSIT* using the best information available at the time of the decision, will be tested.

### Non-fatal Accidents

As soon as practicable following an accident not involving the loss of a human life, drug and alcohol tests will be conducted on each covered employee operating the public transportation vehicle at the time of the accident if at least one of the following conditions is met:

- (1) The accident results in injuries requiring immediate medical treatment away from the scene, and the covered employee may have contributed to the accident
- (2) One or more vehicles incurs disabling damage and must be towed away from the scene, and the covered employee may have contributed to the accident

In addition, any other covered employee whose performance could have contributed to the accident, as determined by *SOUTHWEST TRANSIT* using the best information available at the time of the decision, will be tested.

A covered employee subject to post-accident testing must remain readily available, or it is considered a refusal to test. Nothing in this section shall be construed to require the delay of necessary medical attention for the injured following an accident or to prohibit a covered employee from leaving the scene of an accident for the period necessary to obtain assistance in responding to the accident or to obtain necessary emergency medical care.

## Random Testing

Random drug and alcohol tests are unannounced and unpredictable, and the dates for administering random tests are spread reasonably throughout the calendar year. Random testing will be conducted at all times of the day when safety-sensitive functions are performed.

Testing rates will meet or exceed the minimum annual percentage rate set each year by the FTA administrator. The current year testing rates can be viewed online at <http://www.dot.gov/odapc/random-testing-rates>.

The selection of employees for random drug and alcohol testing will be made by a scientifically valid method, such as a random number table or a computer-based random number generator. Under the selection process used, each covered employee will have an equal chance of being tested each time selections are made.

A covered employee will only be randomly tested for alcohol misuse while the employee is performing safety-sensitive functions, just before the employee is to perform safety-sensitive functions, or just after the employee has ceased performing such functions. A covered employee may be randomly tested for prohibited drug use anytime while on duty.

Each covered employee who is notified of selection for random drug or random alcohol testing must immediately proceed to the designated testing site.

### Random Testing – End of Shift

Random testing may occur anytime an employee is on duty so long as the employee is notified prior to the end of the shift. Employees who provide advance, verifiable notice of scheduled medical or child care commitments will be random drug tested no later than three hours before the end of their shift and random alcohol tested no later than 30 minutes before the end of their shift. Verifiable documentation of a previously scheduled medical or child care commitment, for the period immediately following an employee's shift, must be provided at least 4 hours before the end of the shift. **In the event the shift is less than 4 hours long, the employee must provide notice within one hour following the start of the shift.**

All testing under the *SOUTHWEST TRANSIT'S* own authority will be conducted as a Non-DOT test, using Non-DOT custody and control forms.

## 6. Testing Procedures

All FTA drug and alcohol testing will be conducted in accordance with 49 CFR Part 40, as amended.

### Dilute Urine Specimen

**If there is a negative dilute test result, *SOUTHWEST TRANSIT* will accept the test result and there will be no retest,** unless the creatinine concentration of a negative dilute specimen was greater than or equal to 2 mg/dL, but less than or equal to 5 mg/dL.

Dilute negative results with a creatinine level greater than or equal to 2 mg/dL but less than or equal to 5 mg/dL require an immediate recollection under direct observation (see 49 CFR Part 40, section 40.67).

## Split Specimen Test

In the event of a verified positive test result, or a verified adulterated or substituted result, the employee can request that the split specimen be tested at a second laboratory. *SOUTHWEST TRANSIT* guarantees that the split specimen test will be conducted in a timely fashion, **and *SOUTHWEST TRANSIT* will be responsible for the costs associated with this test.**

## 7. Test Refusals

As a covered employee, you have refused to test if you:

- (1) Fail to appear for any test (except a pre-employment test) within a reasonable time, as determined by *SOUTHWEST TRANSIT*.
- (2) Fail to remain at the testing site until the testing process is complete. An employee who leaves the testing site before the testing process commences for a pre-employment test has not refused to test.
- (3) Fail to attempt to provide a breath or urine specimen. An employee who does not provide a urine or breath specimen because he or she has left the testing site before the testing process commenced for a pre-employment test has not refused to test.
- (4) In the case of a directly-observed or monitored urine drug collection, fail to permit monitoring or observation of your provision of a specimen.
- (5) Fail to provide a sufficient quantity of urine or breath without a valid medical explanation.
- (6) Fail or decline to take a second test as directed by the collector or *SOUTHWEST TRANSIT* for drug testing.
- (7) Fail to undergo a medical evaluation as required by the Medical Review Officer (MRO) or *SOUTHWEST TRANSIT*'s Designated Employer Representative (DER).
- (8) Fail to cooperate with any part of the testing process.
- (9) Fail to follow an observer's instructions to raise and lower clothing and turn around during a directly-observed test.
- (10) Possess or wear a prosthetic or other device used to tamper with the collection process.
- (11) Admit to the adulteration or substitution of a specimen to the collector or MRO.
- (12) Refuse to sign the certification at Step 2 of the Alcohol Testing Form (ATF).
- (13) Fail to remain readily available following an accident.

As a covered employee, if the MRO reports that you have a verified adulterated or substituted test result, you have refused to take a drug test.

As a covered employee, if you refuse to take a drug and/or alcohol test, you incur the same consequences as testing positive and will be immediately removed from performing safety-sensitive functions, and referred to a SAP.

## 8. Voluntary Self-Referral

**Any employee who has a drug and/or alcohol abuse problem and has not been selected for reasonable suspicion, random or post-accident testing or has not refused a drug or alcohol test may voluntarily refer her or himself to the Administrative Resources Director, who will refer the individual to a substance abuse counselor for evaluation and treatment.**

**The substance abuse counselor will evaluate the employee and make a specific recommendation regarding the appropriate treatment. Employees are encouraged to voluntarily seek professional substance abuse assistance before any substance use or dependence affects job performance.**

**Any safety-sensitive employee who admits to a drug and/or alcohol problem will immediately be removed from his/her safety-sensitive function and will not be allowed to perform such function until successful completion of a prescribed rehabilitation program.**

## 9. Prescription Drug Use

**The appropriate use of legally prescribed drugs and non-prescription medications is not prohibited. However, the use of any substance which carries a warning label that indicates that mental functioning, motor skills, or judgment may be adversely affected must be reported to *SOUTHWEST TRANSIT* supervisor. The misuse or abuse of legally prescribed drugs while performing transit business is prohibited.**

**Medical advice should be sought, as appropriate, while taking such medication and before performing safety-sensitive duties. The employee must also obtain a written release from the attending physician that releases the employee to perform their job duties whenever they are using a performance-altering substance.**

**NOTE: Legally prescribed drugs, for purposes of this policy, do not include, regardless of the circumstances, any illegal drug, including marijuana or illegally obtained prescription drugs.**

## 10. Education and Training

**Every covered employee will receive a copy of this policy and will have ready access to the corresponding federal regulations including 49 CFR Parts 655 and 40, as amended. In addition, all covered employees will undergo a minimum of 60 minutes of training on the signs and symptoms of drug use including the effects and consequences of drug use on personal health, safety, and the work environment. The training also includes manifestations and behavioral cues that may indicate prohibited drug use.**

**All supervisory personnel or company officials who are in a position to determine employee fitness for duty will receive 60 minutes of reasonable suspicion training on the physical, behavioral, and performance indicators of probable drug use and 60 minutes of additional reasonable suspicion training on the physical, behavioral, speech, and performance indicators of probable alcohol misuse.**

## II. Confidentiality

Confidentiality will be applied to every aspect of the anti-drug program according to the following criteria:

- (1) After the MRO contacts the employee to discuss a positive confirmatory test result, and a final decision is released regarding the positive result, the listed contact person of *SOUTHWEST TRANSIT* shall serve as the sole point of contact.
- (2) Information regarding an individual's test results or rehabilitation may be released under the following circumstances: (§40.331)
  - a) A specific, written consent from an employee authorizing the release of information about that employee's drug or alcohol tests to an identified person
  - b) Upon request of DOT agency representatives:
    - 1) Access to facilities used for this part and DOT agency drug and alcohol program functions.
    - 2) All written, printed, and computer-based drug and alcohol program records and reports, files, materials, data, documents/documentation, agreements, contracts, policies, and statements that are required by this part and DOT agency regulations.
  - c) If requested by the National Transportation Safety Board as part of an accident investigation, information concerning post-accident tests administered after the accident.
  - d) If requested by a Federal, state or local safety agency with regulatory authority, drug and alcohol test records.
- (3) All records relating to drug and alcohol testing will be kept in a separate, locked file from other employee records.

## 12. Contact Person

For questions about *SOUTHWEST TRANSIT's* anti-drug and alcohol misuse program as well as the name of the MRO and SAP, see Attachment 4.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF *SOUTHWEST TRANSIT*  
DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING POLICY

I \_\_\_\_\_, the undersigned, hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the drug and alcohol testing policy and procedures mandated by the U. S. DOT and FTA for all covered employees who perform a safety-sensitive function. I understand this policy is required by 49 CFR Part 655, as amended, and has been duly adopted by the governing board of *SOUTHWEST TRANSIT*. Any provisions contained herein which are not required by 49 CFR Part 655 or 49 CFR Part 40, as amended, that have been imposed solely on the authority of the employer are designated as such in the policy document. I am aware that I may be required to undergo a drug and/or alcohol screen as outlined by *SOUTHWEST TRANSIT* policy requirements and that I may be referred to an education and treatment program depending on the results of the drug/alcohol screen. I agree to abide by all provisions of the drug and alcohol testing policy and procedures as a condition of my continued employment with the company.

I further understand that receipt of this policy constitutes a legal notification of the contents, and that it is my responsibility to become familiar with and adhere to all provisions contained therein. I will seek and get clarifications for any questions from the employer contact person listed in the policy. I also understand that compliance with all provisions contained in the policy is a condition of my employment.

I further understand the information contained in the approved policy dated 03/28/2024, is subject to change, and that any such changes, or addendum, shall be given to me in a manner consistent with the provision of 49 CFR Part 655, as amended.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
*SOUTHWEST TRANSIT* Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



BOARD RESOLUTION

Be it resolved, the Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc. Board of Directors has adopted the Drug and Alcohol Testing Program Policy for all safety-sensitive employees. The policy is number as 414B of the SOCAG Personnel Policies. The policy effective 3/28/2024 was reviewed and approved at a regularly scheduled meeting of the SOCAG Board of Directors on March 28, 2024.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kim Rumschlag", written over a horizontal line.

Board Chairman

March 28, 2024

Date of Approval

## SAFETY-SENSITIVE FUNCTIONS

A safety-sensitive function, as defined by FTA 49 CFR, Part 655, is any specified duty performed by *SOUTHWEST TRANSIT* employees related to the safe operation of mass transit service. These duties include the following activities:

- Operating a revenue service vehicle, including when not in revenue service;
- Operating a non-revenue service vehicle, when required to be operated by a holder of a Commercial Driver’s License (CDL);
- Controlling dispatch or movement of a revenue service vehicle;
- Maintaining (including repairs, overhaul, and rebuilding) a revenue service vehicle or equipment used in revenue service;
- Carrying a firearm for security purposes.

The following specific job titles identify those employees who perform safety-sensitive job functions at *SOUTHWEST TRANSIT*:

- *Driver (CDL and non-CDL)*
- *Substitute Driver(CDL and non-CDL)*
- *Dispatcher*
- *Dispatcher/Clerk*
- *Route Supervisor*
- *Safety/Maintenance Coordinator*

CONTACT PERSON(S)

Any questions regarding this policy or any other aspect of *SOUTHWEST TRANSIT* substance abuse program should be addressed to the following transit system representative(s):

Name: *Ingrid Gifford*

Title: *Executive Director*

Address: *900 S. Carver Road, Altus, OK 73521*

Telephone Number: *580-482-5040*

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Name: *Stephen Iken*

Title: *Program Director*

Address: *900 S. Carver Road, Altus, OK 73521*

Telephone Number: *580-482-5040*

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Name: *Amy Reyes*

Title: *Administrative Resources Director*

Address: *900 S. Carver Road, Altus, OK 73521*

Telephone Number: *580-482-5040*

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Name: *Industrial Medical Testing*

Title: *Medical Review Officer (MRO)*

Telephone Number: *888-808-4676*

General Fax: *941-753-9975*

CCF Fax: *941-462-4408*

RX Submission: *941-926-6097*

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Policy #414B FTA Drug and Alcohol Policy – *Southwest Transit*

Name: *TMHC Services, Inc.*

Title: *Substance Abuse Professional (SAP)*

Address: *2121 SW Chelsea Dr., Topeka, KS 66614*

Telephone Number: *1-800-999-1196 (Toll-free)*

**SOUTHWEST OKLAHOMA COMMUNITY  
ACTION GROUP, INC.  
ALTUS, OKLAHOMA**

**Approved May 26, 2022**

**WORKPLACE  
SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND TESTING POLICY**

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## **SOUTHWEST OKLAHOMA COMMUNITY ACTION GROUP, INC.**

### **Substance Abuse and Testing Policy**

#### **I. Purpose**

As a part of its commitment to safeguard the health of its employees and provide a safe place for its employees to work Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc. (hereinafter "Company") has established this policy on the use or abuse of alcohol and illegal drugs by its employees. Substance abuse, while at work or otherwise, seriously endangers the safety of employees and creates a variety of workplace problems, including increased injuries on the job, increased absenteeism, increased health care and benefit costs, increased theft, decreased morale, decreased productivity, and a decline in the quality of products and services provided by the Company. The Company has established this policy to detect and remove those who are under the influence of illegal drugs and alcohol while working. It is also the policy of the Company to prevent the use and/or presence of these substances (including medical marijuana) in the workplace in accordance with the following guidelines.

Employment with the Company is at-will. Company policies, procedures, and/or employee assistance programs are not intended to create any implied or express contracts, written or verbal, between the Company and its employees, independent contractors, or job applicants. The Company reserves the right to alter this or any other policy, procedure, or program at its discretion and without notice to its employees, independent contractors, or job applicants. The Company creates no promises with any of its policies, procedures, and programs, and remains free to change wages and all other working conditions without having to consult employees or anyone else and without anyone's agreement. The Company reserves the right to terminate an employee with or without cause or notice and to refuse to hire any job applicant, as is consistent with existing law.

## II. Scope

This policy is intended to be in compliance with and follow the provisions of the Oklahoma Standards for Workplace Drug and Alcohol Testing Act. As a condition of employment, employees are required to abide by the terms of this policy. This Substance Abuse and Testing Policy governs drug and alcohol tests that are **not** mandated by federal and state laws and regulations. Thus, this policy does not apply to drug and alcohol testing required by and conducted pursuant to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), along with the Department of Transportation (DOT). All such testing will be conducted pursuant to the Southwest Transit Drug and Alcohol Policy, Policy No. 414B, as well as applicable laws and regulations. **Certain employees may be subject to additional requirements under state and/or federal regulations.**

## III. Definitions

### A. "ALCOHOL"

"ALCOHOL" means ethyl alcohol or ethanol.

### B. "APPLICANT"

"APPLICANT" means a person who has applied for a position with Company and received a conditional offer of employment.

### C. "COMPANY PROPERTY"

The term "Company Property" includes work sites; parking lots; vehicles; offices owned, rented, utilized or serviced by the Company or by any customer of the Company; employee-owned or employee-rented vehicles on the property of the Company or of any customer of the Company while on Company business; and locations where the employee represents the Company in any capacity.

### D. "EMPLOYEE"

"Employee" means any person who supplies labor for remuneration to Company, but does not include an independent contractor, subcontractor or employees of an independent contractor.

### E. "ILLEGAL DRUGS"

"Illegal drugs" are drugs or controlled substances that are (1) not legally obtainable or (2) legally obtainable but not obtained or used in a lawful or lawfully prescribed manner. Examples include, but are not limited to, cocaine, marijuana, opiates, amphetamines, and phencyclidine (PCP) as well as prescription drugs that are not lawfully obtained and/or not properly utilized. The term "illegal drugs" also includes mind-altering and/or addictive substances that are not sold as drugs or medicines but are used for the mind- or behavior-altering effect (e.g. glue, peyote).

F. LEGAL DRUGS

"Legal drugs" are those lawfully prescribed or over-the-counter drugs that are legally obtained by the employee and used for the purpose for which they were prescribed and sold.

G. MEDICAL REVIEW OFFICER (MRO)

Medical Review Officer means a person, qualified by the State Board of Health, who is responsible for receiving results from a testing facility which have been generated by Company's drug or alcohol testing program, and who has knowledge and training to interpret and evaluate an individual's test results together with the individual's medical history and any other relevant information.

H. SAFETY SENSITIVE

"Safety-sensitive" means any job that includes tasks or duties that Company reasonably believes could affect the safety and health of the employee performing the task or others including, but not limited to, any of the following:

- a. the handling, packaging, processing, storage, disposal or transport of hazardous materials,
- b. the operation of a motor vehicle, other vehicle, equipment, machinery or power tools,
- c. repairing, maintaining or monitoring the performance or operation of any equipment, machinery or manufacturing process, the malfunction or disruption of which could result in injury or property damage,
- d. the handling, packaging, storage, disposal, treatment or transport of potentially volatile, flammable, combustible materials, elements, chemicals or any other highly regulated component,
- e. direct patient care or direct child care.



I. ON DUTY

The term "On Duty" includes all working hours as well as meal periods and break periods, regardless of whether on premises, and all hours when the employee represents the Company in any capacity.

IV. **SUBSTANCES**

A. Drugs and Alcohol

The Company's drug and alcohol testing program is designed to test for drugs and alcohol as defined in this Program.

B. Marijuana

Although marijuana may be permitted by some states for "medicinal" or "recreational" purposes, Company prohibits employees from possessing, consuming, or being under the influence of marijuana components or metabolites (including medical marijuana) while on Company Property, during the fulfillment of employment obligations for Company, while working in a position involving Safety-Sensitive job duties, or as otherwise required by federal law or required to obtain federal funding.

V. **Prohibited Drug Use and Activities**

- A. The unlawful use, sale, purchase, possession, manufacture, distribution or dispensing of controlled substances on Company property or while on duty is against Company policy. The unlawful use, sale, purchase, possession, manufacture, distribution or dispensing of controlled substances of legal or illegal drugs away from the Company or customer premises, is also against Company policy if such activity or involvement adversely affects the employee's work performance, the safety of the employee or of others, or puts at risk the Company's reputation. A violation of this policy is cause for immediate termination from employment.
- B. The presence of any detectable amount of prohibited substances in the employee's system while at work, while on the premises of the Company or its customers, or while

on Company business or performing work is against Company policy. "Prohibited substances" include illegal drugs or prescription drugs not taken in accordance with a lawful prescription given to the employee. A violation of this policy is cause for immediate termination from employment.

- C. It is also against Company policy to be impaired or under the influence of legal or illegal drugs away from the Company or customer premises, if such impairment or influence adversely affects the employee's work performance, the safety of the employee or of others, or puts at risk the Company's reputation. A violation of this policy is cause for immediate termination from employment.
- D. The appropriate use of legally prescribed drugs and non-prescription medications is not prohibited. However, the use of any substance which carries a warning label that indicates that mental functioning, motor skills, or judgment may be adversely affected must be reported to a supervisor. In addition, the employee must obtain a written release from a licensed medical practitioner releasing the person to perform their job duties any time they obtain a performance-altering prescription. A failure to do so may result in disciplinary action. Improper use of "legal drugs" is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination from employment.
- E. Refusal to submit to, efforts to tamper with, or failure to pass a drug test will result in immediate termination from employment and referral to the Company's EAP.
- F. Company prohibits employees from possessing or using marijuana on Company Premises or while working. Company also prohibits employees from being under the influence of marijuana while working. Employees who possess, consume, or are under the influence of marijuana or marijuana product (including medical marijuana) while on Company Premises or during the fulfillment of employment obligations will normally be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge, and such discharge will be considered misconduct for purposes of unemployment compensation.
- G. Employees who are not in possession of a valid Oklahoma medical marijuana license and who test positive for marijuana components or metabolites will normally be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge, and such discharge will be considered misconduct for purposes of unemployment compensation. An applicant who is not in possession of a valid Oklahoma medical marijuana license and who tests positive for marijuana components or metabolites may be refused employment.

- H. Employees in Safety-Sensitive positions who possess a medical marijuana license and who test positive for marijuana components or metabolites will normally be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge, and such discharge will be considered misconduct for purposes of unemployment compensation. An applicant for a safety sensitive position who possesses a valid Oklahoma medical marijuana license and who test positive for marijuana components or metabolites may be refused employment.
- I. Company will not make adverse employment decisions regarding or otherwise penalize an applicant or employee solely on the basis of their status as the holder of a lawfully issued medical marijuana license. Nor will Company take adverse employment action against non-Safety-Sensitive employees or applicants who possess a lawfully issued medical marijuana license solely on the basis of a positive test for marijuana components or metabolites.

## **VI. Prohibited Alcohol Use and Activities**

- A. The consumption, possession or being under the influence of alcohol on Company property or while on duty is prohibited and will result in termination. There may be occasions, however, removed from the usual work setting, at which it is permissible to consume alcohol in moderation (e.g., Company picnics, receptions, civic activities, sporting events).
- B. Notwithstanding the exception mentioned above, it is always against Company policy to report to work or to work under the influence of alcohol and such action will result in termination of employment.
- C. Employees asked to submit to an alcohol test and the test result is .02 or higher will be considered positive or as further specified by applicable state laws and regulations.
- D. Refusal to submit to, efforts to tamper with or failure to pass an alcohol test will result in immediate termination of employment.

## **VII. Testing Events**

- A. TESTING OF APPLICANTS

1. Applicants will be advised of the Company's pre-employment testing requirements prior to referral for a physical and/or drug and testing.
2. All applicants considered final candidates and who have received an offer for a position will be tested for the presence of illegal drugs and must receive negative test results as a part of the hiring process.

B. POST-ACCIDENT TESTING

Employees who are involved in an accident will be tested for the presence of drugs and/or alcohol following an accident or other occurrence if the employee or another person has sustained an injury while at work or property has been damaged while at work, including damage to equipment. For the purposes of Worker's Compensation, an employee who tests positive for alcohol, illegal drugs, or illegally used chemicals, or refuses to take a drug or alcohol test required by the Company shall not be eligible for such compensation.

C. RANDOM TESTING

1. All employees are subject to random, unannounced drug and/or alcohol testing.
2. Selection of employees for random testing shall be conducted through the use of a computerized random number generator.

D. FOR CAUSE TESTING

SOCAG can require an employee to be tested for drugs and/or alcohol if at any time it reasonably believes that the employee may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, including, but not limited to, the following circumstances:

- Drugs or alcohol on or about the employee's person or in the employee's vicinity;
- Conduct on the employee's part that suggests impairment or influence of drugs or alcohol,
- A report of drug or alcohol use while at work or on duty,
- Information that an employee has tampered with drug or alcohol testing at any time,
- Negative performance patterns, or
- Excessive or unexplained absenteeism or tardiness.

Any supervisor or employee who believes another employee is violating this policy should report his or her belief to the Designated Employee Representative (DER).

E. POST REHABILITATION TESTING

SOCAG will require an employee to undergo drug testing for a period of up to two (2) years commencing with the employee's return to work, following participation in a drug dependency treatment program. SOCAG may require an employee to undergo alcohol testing for a period of up to two (2) years commencing with the employee's return to work, following participation in an alcohol dependency treatment program if SOCAG has a reasonable belief that the employee will pose a direct threat in the absence of periodic testing.

F. ADDITIONAL TESTING

Additional testing may also be conducted as required by applicable state or federal laws, rules or regulations, or as deemed necessary by the Company. Upon initial implementation of this substance abuse policy, all current employees will be subject to testing.

## VIII. Testing Procedures

1. All employees are subject to testing for drugs and/or alcohol. The Company will determine for which drugs and/or alcohol testing will be performed.
2. After an employee or applicant has been identified for drug testing, samples of the tested individual's urine, hair, or saliva may be collected and tested. The collection of specimen samples will be performed and analyzed by an appropriately licensed or certified laboratory, all as further required by applicable state laws and regulations.
3. Initial and confirmation tests for Alcohol may be performed using any type of sample from which a measurement of Alcohol content in the person's body can be made, including without limitation, breath, saliva, blood, or urine samples, or as otherwise provided by the Oklahoma State Department of Health. The collection of specimen samples will be performed and analyzed by an appropriately licensed or certified laboratory, all as further required by applicable state laws and regulations.

4. Employees will be informed of the results by the Designated Employee Representative (DER) or other appropriate Company official.
5. The testing laboratory will report the finding of a confirmed positive test result to a designated Medical Review Officer (MRO). The MRO will contact the employee to verify the positive result. Following the verification of a positive result by the MRO, the Designated Employee Representative (DER) will be informed of the positive test result.
6. An employee may request and receive from the Company a copy of the test result report.
7. An applicant or an employee will have the opportunity to explain to the MRO, in confidence, the test results.
8. If an employee challenges the validity or accuracy of the verified positive result, he/she may request a confirmation test within twenty-four (24) hours of the employee receiving notice of the positive result or as otherwise required by law.
9. SOCAG will pay for the cost of a confirmation test.
10. Negative Dilute tests will not be retested. Employees who have a test that is not verified positive, negative dilute, or is not completed within the allotted time due to "shy bladder" will be asked to submit to a another test paid for by SOCAG. If the second test does not receive a verified negative result, negative dilute, or positive result, the employee will be asked to see their physician at their cost.

## **IX. Disciplinary Action**

- A. **Acknowledgement.** Employees and applicants will be asked to acknowledge, by means of signing a statement, that they have received and read, or will read, the Company's Substance Abuse and Testing Policy, that they agree to abide by the terms and conditions of the policy, and that they agree to be tested for drugs and/or alcohol if requested to do so. Employees who refuse to sign the acknowledgment form may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination from employment. Applicants who refuse to sign the acknowledgment will not be hired.

- B. Applicants. Any applicant who refuses to undergo testing or has a positive result will be ineligible for employment with the Company for ninety (90) days and then only upon the prior written approval of the Executive Director.
- C. Employees. Any employee who violates any portion of this policy is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination from employment, even for the first offense. This includes, without limitation, refusing to undergo testing, having a positive result, and/or engaging in the unlawful use, sale, purchase, possession or distribution of controlled substances on duty or on Company property. An employee discharged on the basis of a refusal to undergo drug or alcohol testing or a positive drug or alcohol test shall be considered to have been discharged for misconduct for purposes of unemployment compensation benefits and such employee will be disqualified for unemployment benefits.

## **X. Investigation**

- A. To ensure that illegal drugs and alcohol do not enter or affect the workplace, the Company reserves the right to search all vehicles, containers, lockers or other items on Company property in furtherance of this policy. Individuals may be requested to display personal property for visual inspection upon Company request.
- B. Failure to consent to a search or to display personal property for visual inspection will be grounds for termination or denial of access to Company premises.
- C. The Company will turn over all confiscated drugs to the proper law enforcement authorities. Further, the Company will cooperate with and may enlist the services of the proper law enforcement authorities in the course of any investigation.

## **XI. Arrest or Conviction for Drug-Related Crime**

- A. If an employee is arrested or convicted of a drug-related crime, the Company may investigate the circumstances and Company officials may require a drug test.
- B. As a condition of employment, an employee shall notify the Company's Designated Employee Representative (DER) of any criminal drug statute conviction or for any plea of

guilty, nolo contendere or suspended imposition of sentence that has been entered on a criminal drug statute charge. The employee must give notice in writing to the Company within five (5) days of such conviction, plea or imposition.

- C. SOCAG will notify OKDHS within ten (10) days of an employee drug or alcohol related conviction when said employee is covered by OKDHS rules.

## **XII. Confidentiality**

The Company's Designated Employee Representative (DER) will maintain all drug and alcohol Test results and related information as confidential records, separate from other personnel records of employees and applicants. In order to carry out the provisions of this policy, it will be necessary for the DER to consult with other persons in the process including without limitation the Executive Director and any other member of management with a need to know. However, such results will be disseminated within the Company only on a need-to-know basis. The Company may also release this information to the employee, the applicant, and the Company's Medical Review Officer. Drug and alcohol test results and related information may also be released as follows: 1) to be used as admissible evidence in proceedings before a court or administrative agency to which the Company or the employee or applicant is a named party; 2) in order to comply with a valid judicial or administrative order; or 3) to the employee's agents or representatives who need access to such records in the administration of this policy in compliance with Oklahoma's Standards for Workplace Drug and Alcohol Testing Act and/or applicable federal and state privacy laws. Upon written request to the DER, the Company will provide an employee or applicant access to their own testing documentation for inspection and copying. Further, upon notification or knowledge of a Southwest Enterprises/Southwest Adult Day Health Center employee's drug conviction, Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc. will notify Developmental Disabilities Services Division's state office within 10 days. Drug and alcohol test results and related information will not be released to any other individual or entity, or for any other reason unless otherwise required by law.

Employees are encouraged to approach their supervisor or Designated Employee Representative (DER) at any time with any questions they have about the Company's substance abuse policy as stated herein.



**SOUTHWEST OKLAHOMA COMMUNITY ACTION GROUP, INC.**

**SUPPLEMENT**

**DILUTE SPECIMEN NEGATIVE**

**DILUTE NEGATIVE DRUG TEST RESULTS**

**This Supplement explains what happens when an employer receives a report from the MRO of a negative dilute specimen and what options the employer has.**

A negative dilute specimen (5mg/dL to <20, Specific gravity between 1.001 & 1.003) is a specimen that contains an unusually high level of water concentration. Some of the ways this can occur are outlined below:

1. Donor may consume large amounts of water as part of their regular routine.
2. In the case of "shy bladder" collector may offer extra fluids in order to obtain a specimen.
3. Donor may consume large amounts of water in effort to intentionally dilute the specimen causing drug concentrations to fall below the cutoff levels.
4. Donor may conceal additional water on their person and add to the specimen in an effort to deliberately dilute the sample.

As an employer you may establish different policies regarding dilute negative specimens based on different types of tests.

- a. Accept a negative dilute specimen as a valid drug test.
- b. Require one recollection of the specimen.

Please check below the different types of tests (if any) your company will require a repeat drug test for a negative dilute specimen.

Pre-Employment

Random

Post-Accident

Post Rehabilitation

For Cause

You must treat all employees the same for this purpose. For example, you must not retest some employees and not others for each test type.

You are required to inform your employees in advance of your decisions on these matters.

You must ensure that the employee is given the minimum possible advance notice that he or she must go to the collection site.

You must treat the result of the recollected test as the test result of record.

**SOUTHWEST OKLAHOMA COMMUNITY ACTION GROUP, INC.**

**PO Box 1088, 900 S Carver Road**

**Altus, Oklahoma 73552-1088**

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## Dress and Personal Appearance

### I. Purpose

To establish guidelines for appropriate dress and appearance during normal business hours at the Agency.

### II. Scope

This policy applies to all employees.

### III. Policy

Employees are expected to maintain an appropriate appearance that is businesslike, neat and clean as determined by the requirements of the area in which the employee works.

- A. Apparel. Generally, employees should wear appropriate, clean attire. Skirts and shorts should meet appropriate business attire standards and be no shorter than 3 inches above the knee. Clothing that is considered inappropriate for the workplace consists of items such as bike pants, cut-off jeans, sweat outfits, low cut shirts, and graphic shirts with obscene, suggestive, lewd, political, racial, or other improper words or pictures.
- B. Shoes. Appropriate shoes shall be worn at all times.
- C. Hair. Hair should be clean, combed, and neatly trimmed or arranged. This pertains to sideburns, moustaches, and beards. Shaggy, unkempt hair is not permissible.
- D. Personal Hygiene. Good personal hygiene habits must be maintained. Employees should be considerate of others when wearing perfumes, colognes, or body sprays.

- E. Jewelry. Business appropriate jewelry is acceptable.
- D. Agency Apparel. Any agency-branded apparel will be treated as a uniform. The expectation is that employees will maintain the uniform in excellent condition free from stains, holes, etc. When uniforms have outlived their useful life, they should not be worn to work or in public.

#### **IV. Procedure**

The supervisor is responsible to evaluate the dress and appearance of employees under his or her supervision. If an employee is not dressed appropriately and/or does not have proper hygiene, the following steps should be taken by the supervisor:

- A. On the first occasion, an oral warning should be given to the employee, and the Agency's dress and appearance standards should be reviewed with the employee. The employee may be asked to go home and change.
- B. On the second occasion, the employee will be sent home to change clothes immediately as well as given a written warning. Pay for the day that the employee is sent home begins when employee returns to work.
- C. Further violations may result in further discipline up to and including discharge.

## **Tobacco in the Workplace**

### **I. Purpose**

To comply with applicable health codes, state laws, and funding source requirements. Tobacco use is the number one cause of preventable death in the United States, killing more than 7,500 Oklahomans every year. In recognition of the fact that all forms of tobacco products are hazardous to human health and that there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke, it shall be the policy of Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc. to prohibit all use of tobacco products.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to every Employee, visitor, vendor and any other person present on SOCAG property or at SOCAG-sponsored meeting and events.

### **III. Definitions**

- a. **Company Property** means any real property that is owned, leased, manage, or otherwise controlled by Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc., including outdoor areas such as parking lots.
- b. **Employee** means any person who performs work or services for Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc., including but not limited to, full-time employees, part-time employees, temporary employees, independent contractors, subcontractors, volunteers, and interns.
- c. **Tobacco Product** means any product made or derived from tobacco that is intended for human consumption, including any component, part, or accessory of a tobacco product (except for raw materials other than tobacco that are used in manufacturing a component, part, or accessory of a tobacco product). The term Tobacco Product does not include any product approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration for sale as tobacco cessation product (this includes e-cigarettes and vapor products).

#### **IV. Prohibitions**

- a. The use of Tobacco Products is prohibited at all times on SOCAG Property.
- b. The use of Tobacco Products is prohibited at any off-site SOCAG-sponsored meeting or event.
- c. Employees are prohibited from using Tobacco Products during the hours of their employment, except off the premises during regularly scheduled breaks, if applicable. This prohibition applies during all hours of employment.
- d. The use of Tobacco Products is prohibited in SOCAG-owned leased vehicles at all times.
- e. The use of Tobacco Products is prohibited in personal vehicles while such vehicles are on SOCAG Property.
- f. SOCAG will not accept any sponsorship from a tobacco company and will not allow tobacco advertising or promotion on Company property or at any off-site Company-Sponsored meeting or event.

#### **V. Communication**

- a. Employees, at SOCAG will be informed of this policy through signs posted in facilities and in company vehicles, the policy manual, orientation, and/or training provided by staff. All new staff will receive a copy of this policy and information about the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline for cessation services.
- b. Customers, clients, visitors, vendors, and others on SOCAG's property will be informed of the policy through signs posted at minimum, at all entrances to the property and/or locations.
- c. Tobacco Free \*This includes e-cigarettes and vapor products.

#### **VI. Employee Cessation Support**

SOCAG will assist employees who wish to quit tobacco use. Employees and family members interested in quitting tobacco use will be referred to the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline and other cessation resources, if available. The Company will

promote the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline (1-800-QUIT-NOW or OKHelpline.com) to ensure awareness of the statewide services that are available.

- The Company will provide insurance benefits and access to the following types of assistance with no prior authorization or out-of-pocket cost to the employee:
  - Group, individual, and phone counseling
  - A minimum of four counseling sessions of at least 10 minutes each per attempt
  - Two quit attempts per year Free cessation counseling is also offered by the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline (1-800-QUIT-NOW)
  - All seven Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved cessation aids

The Company will communicate and promote the available tobacco cessation benefits and insurance coverage for employees to all prospective employees, new employees at the time of hire, and all existing employees on an annual basis.

## **VII. Enforcement**

- Employee compliance with this policy is mandatory. Any violations of this policy by any employee will be handled through the standard disciplinary procedure.
- Violations by any other person other than an employee shall be handled by asking the person to stop using the Tobacco Product on SOCAG property.

## **VIII. Policy Effective Date**

Update Date: January 17, 2020  
Revision Date: February 21, 2019  
Original Effective Date: February 23, 2015

Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_



Original Date Policy Passed: January 22, 2015  
Policy Review Date: January 28, 2016  
Date Revision Passed: July 21, 2016

Policy Review Date: February 14, 2019  
Date Revision Passed: February 21, 2019  
Update Approved: January 17, 2020



## **Telephone/Voice Mail/Cell Phone Use**

### **I. Purpose**

To provide guidelines for using Agency telephones, voice mail system, and cellular phones (personal and agency-issued).

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to all employees.

### **III. Policy**

Efficient telephone service is vital to Agency business. Employees must adhere to the following guidelines:

- A. Answer all calls promptly, courteously, and always identify yourself to the caller.
- B. Hold personal calls, both incoming and outgoing, to emergencies or essential personal business and keep them as brief as possible. All personal toll and long distance calls will be charged to the employee's home telephone number.
- C. Employees are to limit the use of personal cellular phones to break periods. The use of personal cellular phones must not interfere with an employee's job responsibilities being performed in a safe and efficient manner. Excessive use of personal cellular phones or use which may result in a safety hazard will result in disciplinary action.
- D. During the conduct of agency business whether in an agency vehicle or a personal vehicle, drivers must take care to adhere to the motor vehicle laws regarding cell phone usage. SOCAG has established the rules:
  - 1. The use of handheld cellular telephones while driving for agency business is prohibited.
  - 2. Texting while driving is banned.
  - 3. Drivers should park in a safe area before using a cell phone.

4. Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

## Information Technology Resources Policy

### I. Purpose

To protect against the unauthorized use of Agency technology resources including but not limited to equipment, software, voicemail, e-mail, and Internet.

### II. Scope

This policy applies to all employees in all locations.

### III. Policy

The Agency's information technology resources are valuable corporate assets. Employees should not use the IT resources to send, receive, or store any information that they wish to keep private. Unauthorized use of these assets will result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate discharge.

- A. Equipment. Computer and office automation equipment leased or owned by the Agency and purchased time sharing services may be used only to conduct Agency business. Agency computers may not be used to develop programs for outside use, and word processors may not be used to prepare documents for outside use, without prior approval by the employee's supervisor.
- B. Agency Developed Software. Computer software developed by employees or contract personnel on behalf of the Agency, or purchased for the use of the Agency, is Agency property and may not be distributed to outsiders unless authorized in writing by the Executive Director.
- C. Software. Contracts with vendors of proprietary software packages clearly define the limits of their use. Employees are forbidden to copy or use software contrary to the provisions of the contract.

Products purchased and/or leased to run on a specific central processor may not be copied or run on additional processors until an agreement which provides for such usages is obtained from the vendor.

Personal computer software products may not be copied except to the limit provided by the vendor's contracts (e.g., a backup copy for protection).

Employees should not install software without permission.

- D. Internet & E-mail. The Agency Internet/web access and corporate e-mail accounts are for business use only. Employees are expected to use a corporate e-mail account for official business. Employees have no expectation of privacy when they use Agency computers or corporate e-mail accounts.
- E. Monitoring. SOCAG reserves the right to monitor, access, review, copy, modify, or delete all such information and to disclose it to any party if legally compelled to do so, or if SOCAG deems appropriate.
- F. Prohibited Uses. The list of prohibited uses of IT resources is for illustration purposes only and it not intended to be all-inclusive. Individuals may be disciplined, or subject to civil or criminal liability for matters not listed below.
  - 1. Distribution of offensive, harassing, or discriminatory statements, transmission of defamatory, obscene, offensive or harassing messages, or messages that disclose the personal information of other employees or customers without authorization.
  - 2. Distribution of incendiary statements which may incite violence or describe or promote the use of weapons or devices associated with terrorist activities.
  - 3. Distribution or solicitation of sexually oriented messages or images. Any sexually explicit use, whether visual or textual.
  - 4. Any use of employer-provided IT resources for illegal purposes or in support of such activities.
  - 5. Any use of IT resources for commercial purposes, product advertisement, or for-profit personal activity.
  - 6. Any use for religious or political lobbying.

7. Duplicating, transmitting, or using software which is not in compliance with software licensing agreements and/or unauthorized use of copyrighted materials or other person's original writings.
8. Wasting IT resources by, for example: place a program in an endless loop, printing unnecessary amounts of paper, disrupting the use of IT resources, storing unauthorized information.
9. Security violations including, but not limited to: accessing accounts within or outside the Agency's computers and communications facilities for which you are not authorized or do not have a business need; unauthorized copying, disclosing, transferring, examining, renaming, or changing information or programs belonging to another user; knowingly spreading computer viruses; distributing "junk mail"; transmitting confidential information without proper authority.

G. Personal Devices.

1. Exempt employees may have the opportunity to use their personal electronic devices for work purposes when authorized in writing, in advance, by the employee and the Executive Director. Personal electronic devices include personally owned cellphones, smartphones, tablets, laptops and computers. The use of personal electronic devices is limited to certain employees and may be limited based on compatibility of technology, as well as the particular job duties of the employee. Employees should contact their program director or the Administrative Resources Director (Human Resources) for more details.
2. While at work, employees are expected to exercise the same discretion in using their personal devices as is expected for the use of Agency devices. SOCAG policies pertaining to harassment, discrimination, HIPAA, confidential information, conduct and ethics apply to employee use of personal devices for work-related activities.
3. Excessive personal calls, e-mails or text messaging during the workday, regardless of the device used, can interfere with employee productivity and be distracting to others. Employees must handle personal matters on nonwork time and ensure that friends and family members are aware of the policy. Exceptions may be made for emergency situations and as approved in advance by management.

4. The Agency reserves the right to request employees' cellphone bills and use reports for calls and messaging made during working hours to determine if use is excessive or otherwise to determine whether there are other policy violations. No employee using his or her personal device should expect any privacy except that which is governed by law. The Agency has the right, at any time, to monitor and preserve any communications that use the SOCAG's networks in any way, including data, voice mail, telephone logs, Internet use and network traffic, to determine proper use. The Agency also reserves the right to review or retain personal and Agency-related data on personal devices or to release the data to government agencies or third parties during an investigation or litigation.
5. Nonexempt employees may not use their personal devices to receive work related email under any circumstance. If authorized in advance in writing by the Executive Director, nonexempt employees may use their personal cell phones or smart phones to receive/send work related texts and respond to or make work related phone calls during regular working hours. Nonexempt employees may not use their personal devices for work purposes outside of their normal work schedule. This includes reviewing, sending and responding to text messages, responding to phone calls, or making phone calls.
6. Employees may not use their personal devices for work purposes during periods of unpaid leave without advance written authorization from the Executive Director.
7. Employees are expected to follow applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations regarding the use of electronic devices at all times. As required by Oklahoma law, employees whose job responsibilities include regular or occasional driving are expected to refrain from using their personal devices while driving. Employees who are charged with traffic violations resulting from the use of their personal devices while driving will be solely responsible for all liabilities that result from such actions.
8. Upon termination of employment for any reason, or at any time on request, the employee may be asked to produce the personal device for inspection. All Agency data on personal devices will be removed by the Agency upon termination of employment.
9. Employees who have not received advance authorization in writing from the Executive Director are not allowed to use personal devices for work

purposes. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## Agency Vehicle Policies

- A. Use of Agency Vehicles. Gas and oil for the vehicle must be purchased at a designated contractor (supplier) using the assigned card and pin number system. ***In the event of an accident, first notify police no matter how minor the damage.*** Do not sign any statements of accident responsibility. Verbal notice to the Supervisor must be given immediately following the accident. Within 24 hours following the accident, a full written report by the driver including any charges filed must be submitted to the Program Director via the Supervisor. All vehicles for which SOGAG is responsible must have a state certified inspection at least every twelve months. In the event of mechanical failure, notice should be given immediately to the Program Director so that proper steps can be taken.
- B. Agency Vehicle Policies. Driving records of all personnel who drive agency vehicles may be checked annually or as often as the Program Director deems necessary. Driver's licenses may also be verified on an annual basis.

A point system will be used to evaluate the acceptable limits of violations of an employee's driving record. The time period for incurring points is the previous two years. Any driver that incurs six points within the two-year limit is unacceptable, and driver will be terminated.

1. Points and Violations.

<u>Points</u>	<u>Violations</u>
6	DWI Conviction
6	Possession of Controlled Substance
6	License Suspended Due to Driver Improvement Action
6	License Revoked
6	Reckless Driving/Racing
6	Accident B at Fault due to Recklessness or Negligence
3	Accident -- At Fault
3	License Suspended Due to Financial Responsibility Action
3	Speeding in Excess of 15 MPH over Posted Speed
3	Traffic Control Device
3	Careless Driving



2	Mechanical
2	Speeding
2	Any Moving Violation Not Listed Above
1	Any Non-Moving Violations Not Listed Above

- C. Agency Vehicle Violations. Any agency vehicle involved in a violation of agency, local, state, or federal regulations or laws, a minor or major accident must be reported ***immediately*** to the Program Director and Executive Director. The Program Director and the Executive Director will determine in the investigation of the Police Report, accident report, and witnesses if agency staff was at fault. Upon determination of cost of human suffering, cost to the agency or future insurance exclusions concerning the driver, insurance surcharges or rate increases, the Executive Director of SOCAG shall have the authority to reprimand, suspend without pay, transfer or terminate any employee of the agency who in the judgement of the Executive Director is found to be at fault in the involvement of any traffic violation or accident involving any motor vehicle of the agency. Failure to report any violation or accident could result in immediate termination. This failure to report to the Supervisor includes drivers, program employees, or supervisors in any agency program. ***Employees found to be in violation of agency accident reporting policy may be immediately terminated.***
- D. Care of Agency Vehicles. Drivers of agency vehicles are responsible for completing a walk around inspection prior to driving the vehicle. Any issue must be reported on the inspection form. Drivers may have beverages in the vehicles as long as they are in containers with lids. Food should not be eaten in the vehicles.
- E. Distracted Driving. Drivers are to refrain from any activity while the vehicle is in motion that causes distractions. This includes talking on a cell phone, adjusting radio, mirrors, seats, or other items. Adjustments to vehicle settings should be made while the vehicle is in park.
- F. Seat Belts. All drivers and passengers are expected to wear seat belts. Mobility devices will be secured using vehicle restraint systems.

## **Weapons Policy**

The possession, transfer, or use of concealed or unconcealed weapons such as firearms, handguns, switchblade knives, dangerous chemicals, explosives or other objects or any other device which may be used to injure or intimidate other people is strictly prohibited. This policy applies to employees in or on Agency premises or property and while they are on duty off Agency premises and to customers and visitors in or on Agency property. However, consistent with Oklahoma law, individuals who are not convicted felons may transport or store ammunition and an **unloaded** rifle, shotgun or pistol in their locked personal vehicle on Agency premises.

## **Criminal Charges**

### **I. Purpose**

To establish guidelines regarding employees who are arrested and/or charged with criminal acts.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to all employees.

### **III. Policy**

This policy provides guidelines for dealing with employees that are arrested and/or charged with a misdemeanor or felony.

Employees who are arrested or charged with a criminal act, whether misdemeanor or felony, must report the arrest or criminal charge(s) to their supervisor or Administrative Resources Director (Human Resources) within 24 hours of the arrest or charges being filed.

Failure to timely report the arrest or charges being filed or misrepresentation of the circumstances of the arrest or charges may result in discipline up to and including termination from employment.

Misdemeanor. If an employee is arrested for or formally charged with a misdemeanor punishable by confinement, he/she may be suspended without pay for up to three (3) months pending final disposition, depending on the gravity of the pending charge in relation to his/her position and the impact of such charges on program operations.

Felony. If an employee is arrested in connection with an alleged felony or felony charges are filed against an employee, he/she will either be immediately suspended

without pay for up to three (3) months pending final disposition or immediately terminated from employment.

Employees who are unavailable for work due to incarceration will be suspended without pay or terminated from employment, depending upon the circumstances and the needs of the Agency.

In keeping with the principles outlined in Policy No. 020, IX, Hiring Employees with Criminal Records, the Executive Director has a responsibility to carefully review an employee's fitness for continued employment within the Agency in light of the criminal proceedings against the employee. Items to be considered are as follows:

- A. The nature and seriousness of the offense and whether the offense is related to the kind of work that the employee does.
- B. The circumstances under which it occurred.
- C. Social conditions which may have contributed to the offense.
- D. The funding source rules of the program in which the employee works.

## **Corrective Action**

### **I. Purpose**

To set forth general supervisory guidelines for a corrective action process aimed to document and correct inappropriate employee behavior. The Agency believes it is not possible to identify in advance all of the various types of conduct which could conceivably result in disciplinary action, or the desired response to such conduct. Accordingly, this general statement of the Agency's policies concerning disciplinary action should not be construed as an assurance by the Agency that its employees are entitled to, or will receive, any warning prior to being terminated. Nor does this policy create a contract of employment. All employment with the Agency is "at will" and can be terminated at any time, with or without notice or cause.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to all employees in all locations.

### **III. Policy**

The Agency seeks to establish and maintain standards of employee conduct and supervisory practices which will, in the interest of the Agency and its employees, support and promote effective business operations. Such supervisory practices include administering corrective action when employee conduct or performance problems arise. Major elements of this policy generally include:

- A. Constructive effort by the supervisor to help employees achieve fully satisfactory standards of conduct and job performance.
- B. Correcting employee performance deficiencies or inappropriate behavior to the extent required.
- C. Notice to employees through communicating this policy that discharge will result from violation of employee standards of conduct or unsatisfactory job performance.

- D. Written documentation of disciplinary warnings given and corrective measures taken.
- E. Documentation of corrective action will become part of the employee's personnel record.

#### IV. Options for Corrective Action

This policy should be not construed as preventing, limiting, or delaying the Agency from taking appropriate disciplinary action against an employee at any point, including an unpaid suspension or termination from employment without prior warning. The Agency reserves its right to take such disciplinary actions as it deems appropriate in its sole discretion. Depending on the facts and circumstances involved in each situation, management may choose to begin corrective action at any step up to and including immediate discharge. Disciplinary action may include, but is not limited to, any of the following:

- A. Initial Discussion. For initial infractions the Agency deems to be minor, the supervisor will conduct a discussion of the issue and the expected corrections. If the situation does not improve, depending on the seriousness of the issue, the supervisor may repeat the measure or implement a more severe option. The supervisor should document the time and date of this initial discussion.
- B. Verbal Memorialization. When discussion has not yielded results and minor issues are continuing, the supervisor will have a verbal discussion and formally document the discussion using the Verbal Memorialization form. The employee will be asked to sign the form along with the supervisor. A copy is given to the employee and the original is placed in the employee's personnel file.
- C. Written Warning Notice. For repeated minor infractions, or a more substantial infraction, the employee should at a minimum be issued a written warning notice (copy following). The Executive Director must approve the written warning prior to it being given to the employee. If the situation does not improve depending on the seriousness of the issue, the supervisor may repeat the measure or take steps to discharge the employee.

The written warning notice should be prepared following a corrective action discussion with the employee. The employee will be given an opportunity to comment in writing and should be asked to sign the notice, acknowledging

receipt. Two copies of the notice will be distributed as follows: (1) employee and (2) personnel file.

- D. Discharge. For infractions management deems to be sufficiently serious or continued failure to respond appropriately to prior corrective action, discharge is appropriate. The approval of the Executive Director must be obtained prior to the discharge of an employee under any circumstances. Concurrence on the discharge of Head Start personnel will be obtained from the Head Start Policy Council.

## V. **Other Option for Corrective Action**

Suspension. If events compel a supervisor to take immediate action when discharge appears possible, the supervisor will immediately suspend the employee for a specified period, pending an investigation. The employee will be required to leave the premises immediately. The supervisor's program director and the Executive Director will be notified immediately. The suspension/investigation period will last no longer than three working days, except in highly unusual circumstances. The objective of this suspension will be to determine if discharge is the proper decision. Responsibility for managing the investigation will be that of the program director. Final decision will be made by the Executive Director.

## **Lobbying & Political Activity**

### **I. Purpose**

To identify prohibited lobbying and political activity.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to all employees.

### **III. Policy**

#### Lobbying

Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc. is an advocate for low-income families. No federal grants, state grants or any other grant funds prohibiting lobbying shall be used to pay for lobbying activities.

#### Political Activity

Employment in a Community Action Agency will not be offered as a reward for political activity, the active support of a political party, or a political candidate. CAA employees may engage in partisan political activities during their off-duty hours, but they are prohibited from becoming a candidate for a partisan political office while they are employed by a Community Action Agency.

Any evidence of disloyalty to the United States, membership in subversive organizations, or lack of sympathy with the objectives and goals of Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc. is inconsistent with employment in this Agency.



## **Confidentiality**

### **I. Purpose**

To identify standards for confidential information.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to all employees.

### **III. Policy**

This policy covers all persons employed by Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc. both during and after employment. This policy prohibits confidential information from being accessed, disclosed, or released in any format to any person/business that does not have a "need to know" without the proper consent of the individual/client involved and/or SOCAG. Information protected by HIPAA will be treated as described in the HIPAA Notice of Privacy.

#### **A. Conduct of Personnel:**

All individuals are expected to be professional and maintain confidentiality at all times, whether dealing with actual records, projects, or conversations, and abide by the obligations of contractual confidentiality agreements. Situations in violation of this policy include, but are not limited to:

- No unauthorized disclosure of "business 'secrets' or other confidential information."
- Misuse or unauthorized disclosure of confidential information not otherwise available to persons or firms outside SOCAG is cause for disciplinary action, including termination.
- Do not disclose confidential financial data, or other non-public proprietary company information. Do not share confidential information regarding customers, contractors, or business affiliates.
- Discarding confidential documents in non-secured trash.

B. Examples of Types of Information to be Protected:

1. **Client Information:** Client information must not be accessed, removed, discussed with or disclosed to unauthorized persons, either within or outside the agency, without the proper consent of the client. All individuals having access to confidential information are bound by strict ethical and legal restrictions on the release of data. No individual may disclose to a third party, including his/her own family, information learned from client accounts, management information systems, or any other confidential sources during the course of his/her work. No individual may access confidential information that they do not have a need to know to carry out their job duties.
2. **SOCAG Information:** SOCAG information that must be protected includes but is not limited to:
  - Ongoing negotiations (contracts, leases, purchases)
  - Pending litigation and/or investigations
  - Information that is proprietary, e.g., information that allows SOCAG to be more competitive in the marketplace. For example: an innovative approach that is described in a grant proposal.
  - Confidential programmatic or financial information.
3. **Individual Matters:** This includes personnel, medical, and other similar files where unauthorized access or release, falsification, or destruction of confidential individual records is strictly prohibited.

C. Disposal of Confidential Documents:

Upon determination that destruction is appropriate, documents shall be destroyed in a manner that preserves the confidential nature of the document. Such manners for hard copy files include shredding onsite and disposing of documents in locked containers provided by the third party document destruction service retained by the Agency. Questions regarding whether destruction is appropriate and the manner of destruction should be directed to the employee's supervisor or next level of management above the immediate supervisor.

D. Reporting Breach of Confidentiality:

Staff must report violations of this policy. Options include reporting to a supervisor, Program Director, or Executive Director.

E. Disciplinary Action for Non-Compliance:

Violation of this policy is cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination from employment.

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Employee Signature

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Date

## **Employee Identification Badges**

### **I. Purpose**

To establish guidelines for employee ID badges.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to all agency employees.

### **III. Policy**

Employees will be issued an Identification Badge including their photo to enhance facility security.

A. Badges are to be displayed during all work hours. This includes training events.

### **IV. Procedure**

A. Badges will be issued by the Central Office. The badge remains the property of Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc.

B. Upon termination of employment, employees are required to return the badge.

C. The agency reserves the right to charge a \$2.00 fee to replace a badge that has been lost or damaged. The employee will be notified if there is a charge, and fee will be deducted from payroll.

## **Other Employment**

### **I. Purpose**

To establish guidelines for employees who have other employment.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to all agency employees.

### **III. Policy**

SOCAG recognizes that employees may have other employment in addition to the Agency. SOCAG provides its employees with the anticipated schedule for the position the employee fills. In addition, SOCAG has an expectation that outside employment will not constitute a conflict of interest for the employee.

### **IV. Procedure**

SOCAG requires that employees' activities away from the job must not compromise the company's interests or adversely affect job performance and ability to fulfill all responsibilities to the company.

Full-time employees are permitted, but are not encouraged, to engage in outside employment or other work activity.

Employees are cautioned to consider carefully the demands that additional work activity will require. Outside employment will not be considered an excuse for poor job performance, absenteeism, tardiness, leaving early, refusal to travel, or refusal to work overtime or different hours. If outside work activity does cause or contribute to job-related problems, normal disciplinary procedures will be followed to deal with the specific issue.

SOCAG will be particularly concerned about outside employment that:

- Will reduce the employee's efficiency in working for the agency
- Will affect the employee's availability to work for the agency
- Involves working for an organization that does a significant amount of business with the agency, such as major contractors, suppliers, etc.

All employees are prohibited from engaging in any activity that compromises the employer's image. This prohibition includes the unauthorized use of any employer tools, equipment, or resources. In addition, employees are not to conduct any outside business during paid working time.

Employees who engage outside employment will not be granted excused absences for unpaid leave or for PTO that is not requested according to policy when the absence is used to work on the outside job or is the result of an injury sustained on the second job.

Employees, who have outside employment, including self-employment, should notify the Executive Director in writing. The notification should state the name and address of the outside employer, the nature of the job, and the hours and days of employment. A copy of the notice should also be forwarded to the employee's immediate supervisor. If a conflict of interest is deemed to exist, the employee will be notified in writing.

## **Open Door Communications**

### **I. Purpose**

The Agency wishes to do everything reasonable and proper to preserve an employee/supervisor relationship and to preserve a positive work environment.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies Agency-wide.

### **III. Policy**

The Agency encourages two-way communication to discuss work-related problems and issues. Program directors/supervisors are responsible for listening and to respond, if necessary, in a timely fashion. An employee's concerns will be treated with respect and discretion; however, confidentiality is not guaranteed.

The Agency's employee relations policies emphasize open-door practices whereby employees are encouraged to deal directly with their supervisor and other members of management regarding concerns or perceived inequitable conditions of employment. (See Policy No. 530, Concern and Grievance Procedures.) However, any complaint of under the Agency's Equal Employment Opportunity Policy (Policy No. 021) or Harassment Policy (Policy No. 412) must be made following the procedures set out in those policies.

The Agency has a history of honest and straightforward dealings with its employees. By following this policy, it has usually found that the intervention of third parties from outside the Agency has been unnecessary.

## **Social Media Communications**

### **I. Purpose**

To protect against disclosure of confidential and/or proprietary data of the Agency and/or other unauthorized statements on blogs, social networking, or other social media sites.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to all employees in all locations.

### **III. Policy**

The Agency acknowledges that employees have a right to express their opinions in Internet or public forums such as blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. However, employees are not authorized to make statements on behalf of SOCAG on blogs and social networking sites. Further, employees should be aware that SOCAG expects the following concerning blogs and social networking sites:

- Employees should not use social media while on work time or on equipment that the Agency provides unless it is work-related and consistent with the Agency policy relating to computer and other equipment usage.
- Employees should not use SOCAG email addresses to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools utilized for personal use.
- Employees should never represent themselves to be a spokesperson for SOCAG. If SOCAG is a subject of the content of social media, employees should make it clear that their views do not represent those of SOCAG. It is best to include a disclaimer such as "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of SOCAG."



- Employee blogs or posts may not be used to disclose confidential or proprietary information belonging to the Agency, its clients, its employees, or others, all as further defined by Agency policies and procedures.
- Employee blogs or posts may not use the Agency's logo, trademark, trade name, slogan, or graphics.
- Employees should be fair and courteous to SOCAG clients, volunteers and fellow employees. Employees are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with co-workers or by utilizing the Agency's Open Door Communications Policy than by posting complaints to a social media site. If employees decide to post complaints or criticism, they should avoid using statements, photographs, video, or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, or intimidating, that disparage clients, volunteers, fellow employees, or vendors/contractors, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, disability, religion or any other status protected by law or Agency policy.
- Employees are reminded that they have signed the Agency's Code of Ethics (Policy No. 405). Employees must ensure that their postings are consistent with their obligations under the Code of Ethics.

Any employee that does not follow these guidelines in their blogs or posts risks disciplinary action, up to and including termination from employment.

## **Communication Policy**

### **I. Purpose**

To establish the proper procedure for handling official business items of the agency.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to all employees.

### **III. Policy**

The Board of Directors has assigned the Executive Director to be the official spokesperson of the agency. Program staff may be assigned to conduct media activities with the prior approval of the Executive Director.

Events may occur at our sites that will draw immediate attention from the news media. It is imperative that one person speaks for SOCAG to deliver an appropriate message and to avoid giving misinformation in any media inquiry. Reporters generally identify themselves prior to asking questions. Every employee is expected to adhere to the following media policy: Answer all media/reporter questions like this: "I am not authorized to comment for SOCAG (or I don't have the information you want). Let me have the appropriate person contact you."

## **Internal Communications**

### **I. Purpose**

To provide a permanent and official channel of communication to employees.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to all locations of the Agency.

### **III. Policy**

Various methods of communication will be used to keep employees informed of important information. Employees are responsible for routinely checking the communication channels. Greener methods of communication are preferred, so SOCAG will use electronic communication when feasible.

Bulletin Boards: Agency sites will have bulletin boards. The following information is posted on the bulletin boards.

- A. Legally required posters and notices.
- B. Safety rules and related information.
- C. Management memos and announcements, such as SOCAG job openings.
- D. Agency-sponsored program events, staff training events, and approved community partner events.

EWS: EWS is the electronic timekeeping system that employees use to record their time and activity for work. The system has the capability for messaging. Agency-wide message may be communicated to all employees. Staff supervisors may send messages to their staff. Employees may post message to their supervisor and to human resources.

E-Mail: The agency has branded e-mail accounts. They are in the format of firstname.lastname@socag.org. Employees that have agency e-mail accounts should check them at least daily.

Social Media: SOCAG has a Facebook page. Currently, individual programs are posting items of interest.

Mail: Some sites maintain post office boxes. Employees are assigned to check mail and will be responsible for adhering to the schedule as assigned.

#### **IV. Procedure**

- A. Information posted on bulletin boards must be approved in advance by the Executive Director.

## **Mail**

### **I. Purpose**

To maximize processing and delivery of the company's mail.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to all employees.

### **III. Policy**

Business resources are used to handle the Agency's incoming and outgoing mail. Employees are prohibited from using the Agency mailing address for personal purposes. In most cases, mail should be sent using the most economical method. Overnight or expedited delivery services should be limited to only items that have a critical deadline.

## **Concern & Grievance Procedures**

### **I. Purpose**

Agency policies and procedures shall be uniformly interpreted, applied, and enforced. When an employee has a work concern or grievance, they will have the right to participate in a resolution process.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to employees at all locations.

### **III. Policy**

It is good practice to settle employee work issues as quickly as possible. Most problems will be addressed by the supervisor or member of management as part of the normal working relationship. However, it is necessary to have clear and simple rules for dealing with those cases which cannot be resolved through normal practice. SOCAG prohibits any form of retaliation against any employee for bringing a bona fide grievance under this policy or for participating in the grievance process.

Each employee of the Agency has the opportunity to:

- A. Discuss work-related concerns or problems with management.
- B. Submit issues or grievances under this policy which will be promptly reviewed and considered with appropriate action taken if deemed necessary by the Agency.

### **IV. Definitions**

*Concern* is defined as a problem or complaint that an employee may have relating to working conditions, except as otherwise provided herein.

*Grievance* is defined as a dispute relating to the application or interpretation of Agency policies and/or procedures that cannot be resolved informally.

## V. Exclusions

Separate policies and procedures exist for dealing with complaints about or harassment, sexual harassment, or discrimination.

- These procedures do not apply to discrimination complaints involving race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, age, political affiliation beliefs, or disability. Procedures to file harassment and/or discrimination complaints are contained in the Agency Affirmative Action Plan.
- Also, excluded from this policy are complaints concerning an employee's involuntary separation from employment with the Agency;
- Issues in which the agency becomes aware of serious wrong doing at work by others (e.g. fraud and unlawful or unethical conduct) are handled under the Whistleblower Protection Policy #535.
- If there are several different linked grievances, a single process may be used to address all the issues.

## VI. Procedure

### Informal Concern Procedure:

If an employee has a problem, issue, complaint, or concern, they should try to resolve it first through informal discussion with the immediate supervisor. The supervisor or Program Director must give careful consideration to the employee's concern and make efforts to explain, address, or resolve the matter quickly. Both the staff and the supervisor should aim to settle differences informally.

The supervisor should maintain brief notes describing the issue and the resolution. If the informal route has been exhausted or is inappropriate for the issue, the item becomes a grievance.

Grievance and Appeals Procedure (Formal Action):

If an employee has a problem or complaint that has not been resolved through informal actions, the following steps should be taken:

Step 1:

- An employee with a grievance must present it in writing to his or her direct supervisor. The statement of the grievance must set out the events complained about and the requested remedy, must specify the policy and/or procedure which is alleged to have been violated, and must be signed and dated by the employee.
- The grievance must be filed within five days after the event on which the grievance is based.
- The direct supervisor will have three business days from receipt of the grievance to provide an answer to the employee.
- A copy must be given to the Executive Director.

Step 2:

- If the employee's direct supervisor does not settle the grievance to the satisfaction of the employee within three business days after it is presented to him/her, the employee may appeal the grievance in writing to his/her Program Director.
- This second step must be taken within 10 days after the events on which the grievance is based.
- The Program Director shall have five business days after the grievance is received to give a written answer.
- A copy must be given to the Executive Director.

Step 3 (Final Appeal):

- If the Program Director does not settle the grievance to the satisfaction of the employee within the stated five business day period, the employee may appeal the decision by written notice to the Executive Director.



- The third step must be mailed certified, return receipt requested, postmarked within twenty days after the events on which the grievance is based.
- The Grievance Review Board will be convened by the Executive Director.

Goal and Time Limits: The goal is for grievances to be considered impartially, consistently, and promptly and, where warranted, appropriate remedial action will be taken. In computing the number of days in the grieving procedure, Saturday, Sunday, and holidays shall be excluded. When there is a variance in the time limits stated, these will be communicated to the employee.

Members of the Grievance Review Panel: The review board shall be composed of the following members and will select a chairperson:

- The Vice-Chairman of the agency Board of Directors and the Chairman of the E.O. Committee or Personnel Committee of the Board of Directors.
- Two program directors that will be appointed by the Executive Director. No program director may be appointed where a member of his/her staff is appearing before the Board.
- One Agency staff member who is a peer of the person making the grievance. The two program directors appointed to the Grievance Board will select this staff member.

Grievance Review Panel Process:

- The Grievance Review Panel shall meet within ten days of receipt of the notice of appeal by the aggrieved employee.
- The review board may uphold the original action, recommend modification of the decision of the Program Director, or recommend that no action be taken.
- The panel shall review grievances, receive testimony and evidence of the parties, and provide a report of its findings and recommendations to the Executive Director.
- The recommendations of the review board are subject to the final decision of the Executive Director, which is not subject to further appeal.

Other Types of Grievances:

Program Director: Where a grievance is raised against a Program Director and cannot be worked out through the informal action process or Step 1, Step 2 will be skipped, and Step 3 of the grievance procedure will be used.

Executive Director:

If an employee has a grievance against the Executive Director, the following process will be used:

- Employee will submit a written letter of grievance within ten days of the occurrence to the Administrative Resources Director. The letter should state the issue clearly and what remedy the employee is seeking.
- Upon receipt, the Administrative Resources Director will contact the Board Chair about the grievance.
- The Board Chair will promptly discuss the issue with the Executive Director to see if an informal solution is possible.
- If an informal solution cannot be reached, the Board Chair will convene a Grievance Review Panel. The panel will consist of the Board Chair, the Chair of the Board Personnel Committee, the Associate Director, the Administrative Resources Director, and a peer of the employee selected by the Associate Director.
- The panel will meet within ten days of receipt of the notice from the aggrieved employee.
- The panel will make recommendations to the Board Chair. The Board Chair may or may not accept the panel's recommendations and will have full authority to make the final decision on the grievance. The Board Chair's decision will not be subject to further review or appeal.

If an employee is directly supervised by the Executive Director and has a concern or grievance, they are encouraged to use the informal process before proceeding to the Grievance Review Procedure above.

## **Whistleblower Protection Policy**

### **I. Purpose**

To allow an avenue for employees to report concerns regarding unlawful or unethical conduct so that it can be addressed and corrected.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to all employees of the Agency.

### **III. Policy & Procedure**

SOCAG is committed to the highest possible standards of ethical and legal business conduct. SOCAG requires directors, officers, and employees to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. All employees and representatives of SOCAG must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling their responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

This policy aims to provide an avenue for employees to raise concerns in good faith regarding unlawful or unethical conduct so that SOCAG can address and correct inappropriate conduct and actions. It is the responsibility of all employees to report concerns about violations or suspected violations of SOCAG's Code of Ethics and/or the law or regulations that govern the operation of SOCAG.

Serious concerns relating to financial reporting, unethical, or illegal conduct should be reported in writing directly to the Associate Director, Executive Director, any member(s) of the Finance/Audit Committee of the Board of Directors or Philip Olson, Attorney, at 580-482-7811. If an employee reports their concern and they believe it is not appropriately addressed, the employee should then report their concern to another person or persons identified herein. There is no need to follow any formal chain of command. Therefore, the employee may report their concern directly to the Chair of the Finance/Audit Committee if they believe it would provide a more appropriate forum.

The action taken by SOCAG will depend on the nature of the concern. All reported concerns will be forwarded to the Finance/Audit Committee. The Finance/Audit Committee shall be responsible for evaluating, investigating, and/or making appropriate recommendations to the Board of Directors with respect to all reported concerns. Initial inquiries will be made to determine whether an investigation is appropriate, and the form it should take. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. The Board of Directors shall receive a report on each complaint and a follow-up report on actions taken.

Reports of concerns, and investigations pertaining thereto, shall be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

SOCAG encourages employees to raise good faith concerns about unlawful or unethical conduct within the agency without fear of retaliation. SOCAG will not retaliate against employees who raise such concerns. This includes, but is not limited to, protection from retaliation in the form of an adverse employment action such as termination, compensation decreases, or poor work assignments and threats of physical harm. Any employee who believes he/she is being retaliated against for making a report of unlawful or unethical conduct must immediately contact the Associate Director, Executive Director, any member(s) of the Board Finance/Audit Committee or Philip Olson, Attorney, at 580-482-7811. An employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a concern in good faith may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. The right of an employee for protection against retaliation does not include immunity for any personal wrongdoing.

Employees making reports must exercise sound judgment to avoid baseless allegations. Employees are not protected if they knowingly or recklessly disseminate false information or make false claims of misconduct. An employee who knowingly or recklessly files a false report of wrongdoing will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

**Compliance with 41 U.S.C. 4712:**

Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc. complies with, and is subject to, all applicable provisions of 41 U.S.C. 4712, including all applicable provisions that prohibit, under specified circumstances, discrimination against an employee as reprisal for the employee's disclosure of information related to gross

mismanagement of a federal grant, a gross waste of federal funds, an abuse of authority relating to a federal grant, a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety, or a violation of law, rule, or regulation related to a federal grant.

An employee who initiates or provides evidence of contractor or subcontractor misconduct in any judicial or administrative proceeding relating to waste, fraud, or abuse on a Federal contract shall be deemed to have made a disclosure. An employee of a contractor, subcontractor, or grantee who believes that he or she has been discharged, demoted, or otherwise discriminated against in violation of this section may submit a complaint with the Inspector General of the agency concerned. Procedures for submitting fraud, waste, abuse, and whistleblower complaints are generally accessible on agency Office of Inspector General Hotline or Whistleblower Internet sites. A complaint by the employee may not be brought under 41 U.S.C. §4712 more than three years after the date on which the alleged reprisal took place.

Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc. shall also inform its employees, in writing (and in the predominant native language of the workforce), of employee rights and remedies under 41 U.S.C. 4712.

Additionally employees are protected by Title 74, Section 840-2.5 of the Oklahoma statutes, which protects employees from retaliation for reporting improper activities and to address written complaints alleging acts of reprisal or intimidation due to disclosure of improper activities.

## **Purchasing Procedures**

### **I. Purpose**

To establish outline procedures for the agency purchases. The complete purchasing policies are included in the Fiscal Policies.

### **II. Scope**

These procedures apply to all employees making purchases on behalf of the agency.

### **III. Policy**

The agency has established a purchase order system. The Executive Director and Program Directors are responsible for requesting purchase orders. Purchase orders are entered into the accounting software and printed for signature. Employees that have been assigned purchasing duties will be responsible for ensuring they have a copy of the purchase order prior to making the purchase. If there is not a purchase order, the employee should ask their Program Director to request the purchase order.

## **Employee Performance Appraisal**

### **I. Purpose**

To provide a process by which the job performance of each employee is appraised.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to performance appraisal of employees.

### **III. Policy**

The employee performance appraisal process will be managed to accomplish the following objectives:

- A. To enhance individual employee performance and contribution to the mission of the Agency by providing formal feedback which documents areas of success, as well as areas that need improvement.
- B. To summarize both formal and informal performance discussions held with employees throughout the review period.
- C. To ensure that employees are successful in their positions by documenting performance areas and by putting plans into place to correct performance and behavioral deficiencies.
- D. To link employee performance with merit increase considerations.
- E. To identify employee training needs and professional development opportunities.

## IV. Procedure

Each supervisor is responsible to set and communicate performance standards for employees under his or her supervision at the beginning of, and throughout, the review period. Each supervisor is also responsible to observe and discuss with his or her employees positive and negative aspects of their performance in relation to standards throughout the review period. And, on a regular basis, each supervisor is responsible to conduct formal performance appraisals on each subordinate employee summarizing past discussions and setting performance goals.

### A. Timing.

1. Regular employees will receive annual performance appraisals, occurring at one year intervals. Supervisors may conduct performance appraisals more frequently.
2. During the orientation period, newly hired employees will be appraised informally on an ongoing basis and may be formally appraised in the discretion of management. (See Policy No. 030, New Employee Orientation Period.)
3. The Payroll Accountant will maintain a system to assist supervisors to complete performance appraisals on time. The timely processing of performance appraisals is one of the most important management responsibilities of the supervisor.

B. Performance Appraisal Form. A copy of the employee performance review form can be obtained from the Central Office.

C. Approvals. Performance appraisals must be reviewed with the next level(s) of management including the Executive Director before a supervisor may discuss and review the performance appraisal with the employee.

D. Performance Appraisal Discussion. Supervisors will hold a discussion with the employee regarding each performance appraisal.

E. Employee Signature. The employee will be asked to comment on the appraisal and acknowledge it by signing the form. He or she will then be given a copy of the signed appraisal. If the employee declines to sign the form, he or she should be encouraged to discuss any concerns and perhaps write a rebuttal. If the



employee still declines to sign the appraisal, the supervisor should write "employee declined to sign" at the bottom of the form, add his or her initials and the date, and give the employee a copy of the appraisal. The supervisor should then notify his or her supervisor of the situation.

F. Training and Development.

1. Agency Role. When determined to meet agency needs, the agency may provide opportunities to meet identified training and/or development needs.
2. Supervisor's Role. The supervisor is responsible for communicating to the employee proposed training and development strategies and timelines for the employee's current position.
3. Employee's Role. The employee is responsible for communicating their training needs for the position they have. They will have the opportunity to discuss career goals including strategies and timelines. Employees have an obligation to participate and complete training assignments.

## **Promotions**

### **I. Purpose**

SOCAG encourages employees to seek advancement opportunities and to obtain promotion and career guidance from their supervisors and program directors. Unless outside recruitment is considered to be in the Agency's best interest, SOCAG offers qualified employees promotions to higher-level positions when appropriate.

### **II. Scope**

This applies to all positions.

### **III. Policy**

- A. When a position vacancy occurs, opportunities to promote from within may be explored, consistent with the goal of filling positions with the most suitable candidate.
- B. Employee eligibility for promotion will be determined by the requirements of the position to be filled. To be eligible, employees must have held their current position for at least 12 months, have a satisfactory performance record and have no disciplinary actions during the same period. The Agency retains the discretion to make exceptions to these eligibility requirements when deemed necessary or in the Agency's best interest.
- C. Prior to advertising a position vacancy, the Executive Director may offer a promotion to a qualified existing employee based on the employee's demonstrated skills, performance, experience, and/or education.
- D. When it is determined that a vacancy will be advertised, external recruiting sources will be used simultaneously with the internal search. Current employees that wish to apply for an opening should timely submit a new employment application form to be considered.

- E. Receipt of a promotion does not constitute a commitment for continued employment in a new position at the Agency for any specific time. All employees are employed by the Agency at-will and employment may be terminated at any time, with or without cause or notice. Further, there is no guarantee that an employee will be able to return to his or her former position if he or she is unsuccessful in the new job.

#### **IV. Related Policies**

Policy No. 610, Employee Performance Appraisal  
Policy No. 621, Job Posting

## **Job Posting**

### **I. Purpose**

To provide a system that allows current employees to be aware of job vacancies within the Agency.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to each facility.

### **III. Policy**

The Agency supports the practice of promoting from within when practicable. It also believes that employees have the primary responsibility for their own career development. Posted job announcements are provided to each site within the Agency.

### **IV. Procedure**

- A. When a vacancy occurs, the appropriate program director will submit a personnel requisition request to the Administrative Resources Director. This will include all job-related requirements necessary for proper applicant screening.
- B. The Administrative Resources Director will prepare a job posting form for display on the bulletin board. All applicants will complete an Employment Application form.
- C. When an employee from another program is selected to fill a posted vacancy, the Administrative Resources Director and Executive Director will confer with the director of that program and agree on a suitable transfer date.
- D. When an employee in the same program is selected by the Administrative Resources Director and program director with concurrence from the Executive Director to fill a posted vacancy, the program director will notify the employee.

**V. Head Start/Early Head Start Positions**

The representatives and alternates of the Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council will be notified of Head Start job vacancies advertised to the public.

## **Staff & Volunteer Training & Development Procedures**

### **I. Purpose**

To provide a process that allows for staff and volunteers to request training and development.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to agency staff and agency volunteers.

### **III. Policy**

When determined to meet the business needs of the agency, the agency will provide staff and volunteers with training opportunities as funding permits. The purposes of the training will be as follows:

- A. To ensure that employees receive regular training necessary to deliver high quality services.
- B. To provide employees with an opportunity to improve and develop their skills toward advancement within the agency.
- C. To fully utilize volunteers within agency programs while ensuring they have the knowledge necessary to carry out the volunteer assignments.
- D. To provide volunteers the opportunity to develop skills necessary to obtain employment.

## IV. Procedure

### A. Employees.

1. A Staff Training and Development Plan will be attached to the Performance Appraisal. The plan will include training needed for current job duties with strategies and timelines. It will also include the employee's career goals. The employee, supervisor, Program Director, and Executive Director will have input in the Staff Training and Development Plan.
2. Staff may request training and education on the Staff & Volunteer Training Request form.
3. Examples of ongoing training include staff meetings, in-service, area vo-tech schools, program conferences.
4. Assistance with college education will be provided as budgets allow according to Personnel Policy #340, Education Assistance Program. Employees will be expected to access financial aid for which they are qualified.
5. Employees have a responsibility to participate and complete any required training.
6. Head Start employees will receive a copy of the Performance Standards. Training will be provided on the Performance Standards and the Head Start Standards of Conduct.

### B. Volunteers.

1. Volunteers will receive orientation for the position they are assigned. Program Directors and/or supervisors will work with volunteers to assess any training needs.
2. Volunteers are welcome to attend training provided by agency programs such as in-service.
3. Training may be requested by volunteers on the Staff & Volunteer Training Request form. Volunteers will be expected to complete any approved training.

4. Head Start volunteers will receive introductory training on the Performance Standards and Head Start Standards of Conduct.
5. Volunteers who are being placed in job training positions such as Title V workers, Power Program students, college interns may be required to submit to pre-employment drug testing, OSBI criminal background checks (including fingerprint checks as required), Tuberculin Test, or any other screening required by the program rules and regulations.



**Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc.  
STAFF & VOLUNTEER TRAINING REQUEST**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ ST \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Check One: Employee \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_

Program: (Check One)

Head Start \_\_\_\_\_ RSVP \_\_\_\_\_ TSET \_\_\_\_\_

SW Transit \_\_\_\_\_ Housing \_\_\_\_\_ SW Enterprises \_\_\_\_\_

Senior Nutrition \_\_\_\_\_ ACMI House \_\_\_\_\_ Central Office \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Training Requested (include dates, times, location):

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Cost: \_\_\_\_\_

Please write a brief explanation of how the training will benefit your job or volunteer activities:

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Program Director Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Recommend Approval: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Executive Director Approval \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Safety Committee Policy & Procedures**

### **I. Purpose**

To protect the safety and health of all employees by the prevention of accidents or incidents.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to all locations and all employees.

### **III. Policy**

A committee appointed by the Executive Director composed of employees will investigate all job-related accidents or incidents that require medical attention, make safety checks of all program sites, and recommend safety training for employees.

### **IV. Procedure**

- A. A Safety Committee will be created from interested employees. Employees will be approved and appointed by the Executive Director.
  1. The Safety Committee chairperson empowered to formulate recommendations and requirements for safety purposes.
  2. The Safety Committee will investigate all job-related accidents or incidents that require medical attention. The investigation may begin with a phone call to the employee and witnesses. If needed, they will inspect the area in which the accident or incident occurred for causes of injury. The injured employee, witnesses, and their Supervisor will be required to answer questions by the Committee. The Safety Committee will evaluate the accident or incident to determine:

- (a) What happened
  - (b) Why it happened
  - (c) How to prevent recurrence
3. After the investigation is completed, the Safety Committee will prepare a written report documenting the accident findings with recommendations to prevent further occurrences. The report will be provided to the Executive Director, Program Director, Supervisor of employee, and Workers Comp file.
  4. The Safety Committee will be required to make an annual visit to all sites to evaluate those sites as to any safety hazard. The Safety Committee will prepare a report outlining recommendations to enhance health and safety of the site. The written report will be provided to the Executive Director, Program Director, and the site supervisor.
  5. A rolling two-year plan for safety training will be designed by the Committee.

## **V. Accountability**

- A. The Safety Committee Chairperson shall be given the authority to document non-compliance of safety recommendations with directions for correction of the non-compliance.
- B. The Safety Committee will maintain a master file of all documentation, including investigation notes, recommendations, safety inspections, non-compliance documentation. All findings, recommendations, and requirements will be reported to the Executive Director in writing within one week of the documentation.

## Accidents/Injuries Reporting

### I. Purpose

To protect the safety and health of all employees and to comply with applicable federal and state laws.

### II. Scope

This policy applies at all locations.

### III. Policy

Job-related injuries and illnesses, regardless of severity, should be reported immediately to the supervisor or other member of management and medical attention obtained if necessary.

### IV. Procedure

- A. Safety is everyone's responsibility. Employees should report any unsafe conditions or circumstances to their supervisor or other member of management to **prevent** accidents.
- B. Job-related injuries or illnesses should be reported immediately to the employee's supervisor or, if the supervisor is not immediately available, any other member of management.
  1. If emergency medical attention is needed, telephone the nearest emergency medical system.
  2. If immediate medical attention is not needed, the employee must report to the supervisor for evaluation and appropriate documentation, and if necessary, referred to medical attention.
  3. Safety Procedures. Certain work activities and equipment used may cause injury to the employee if precautions are not taken. All employees who work

with hazardous equipment will be issued safety devices to be used or worn by the employee and trained on its proper use. Such equipment may be, but not limited to, goggles, gloves, back support belts, hard hats, etc. An employee who has been issued safety equipment but is found to not be using or wearing it will be in violation of Agency policy, and disciplinary action may be taken up to and including termination from employment.

4. Reporting of Accidents. SOCAG is concerned about the safety of all employees. However, accidents do occasionally occur. All accidents should be reported to the supervisor of the employee immediately or, if the supervisor is not available, any other member of management. If the accident causes personal injury to a staff member that results in a loss of work time or requires medical attention away from the work site, a FORM 2 should be completed and forwarded to the payroll accountant as soon as possible. This FORM 2 will be sent to the Workers' Compensation Court and SOCAG's Workers' Compensation Insurance Carrier within 10 days of the injury. Failure to report any injury may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination from employment.

All accidents are to be investigated by the designated representatives of the Safety Committee. This report will be given to the Executive Director for review. Reports should include the exact nature of the accident, the person or persons involved, the events that led up to the accident, any witness and their accounts, and what can be done to prevent it from recurring.

SOCAG is covered by workers' compensation insurance. Should an injury occur while on the job site which requires medical attention, the supervisor or other members of management should make every effort to see that proper treatment is obtained as soon as possible and the program director is notified. The Payroll Accountant will monitor the employee's status with the Workers' Compensation case manager and provide updates to the Executive Director.

If an employee that is injured on the job cannot work and is deemed compensable under workers' compensation, the insurance company will pay the employee as required by the Oklahoma workers' compensation regulations. An employee may use accrued paid leave that they have available during the time that they are not being paid by Workers' Compensation.

SOCAG reserves the right to choose the medical treatment provider (physician, healthcare provider, pharmacy, hospital) when an injury has occurred. This decision will be made in the best interest of both SOCAG and the injured employee.

## **Safety Equipment and Training**

### **I. Purpose**

To inform employees about safety equipment and training.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to all employees.

### **III. Policy**

- A. Each employee will abide by prescribed safety rules and precautions and posted working regulations. Employees will be required to wear or use safety equipment that is issued to them.
- B. Programs will tailor safety training to the needs of each particular program. All employees will be required to attend and complete scheduled or required safety training.

## Bloodborne Pathogens

### I. Purpose

To inform employees of the exposure control plan for blood or potential infectious materials.

### II. Scope

This policy applies to all employees.

### III. Procedure

- A. In accordance with the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens standard, 29 CFR 1910.1030, the following exposure control plan has been developed to eliminate or minimize employee exposure:

Some employees may incur occupational exposure to blood or potential infectious materials. Employees who will be treating injuries are required to have disposable protective gloves close at hand to put on immediately when needed.

Supervisors should keep a pair of disposable gloves with them at all times in case emergency treatment is needed.

Any blood on floor, machine, or other materials will be wiped up with ~~Clorox~~ chlorine bleach before removing gloves. Chlorine bleach will be readily available in each department where exposure to blood borne pathogens is probable.

After removal of personal protective gloves, employees shall wash hands and other potentially contaminated skin area immediately with soap and water. Any skin that has been exposed to the glove shall be rinsed with ~~Clorox~~ chlorine bleach after soap and water. Gloves are single use and will not be reused by employees.



Gloves and clean up material will be disposed of in a material safety red bag and taken to JCMH for proper disposal.

All employees who have been identified as having exposure to blood will be offered the Hepatitis B vaccine, at no cost to the employee. The vaccine will be offered within 24 hours of their initial exposure.

When any employee incurs an exposure incident, it should be reported to the Executive Director immediately.

Any employee who incurs an exposure incident will be offered post-exposure evaluation and follow-up in accordance with the OSHA standard.

This follow-up will include the following:

- Documentation of the route of exposure and the circumstances related to the incident
- If possible, the identification of the source individual, and if possible, the status of the source individual. The blood of the source individual will be tested (after consent is obtained) for HIV/HBV infectivity.
- Results of testing of the source individual will be made available to the exposed employee with instructions on applicable laws and regulations concerning disclosure of the identity of the source individual.
- The exposed employee will be offered the option of having their blood tested for HIV/HBV serological status. This testing will take place within 90 days of exposure.
- The employee will be given appropriate counseling concerning precautions to take during the period after the exposure incident. The employee will also be given information on what potential illnesses to be alerted for and to report any related experience to appropriate personnel.

A written opinion shall be obtained from the health care professional who evaluates employees of this facility. Written opinions will be obtained in the following instances:

- When the employee is sent to obtain the Hepatitis B vaccine.
- Whenever the employee is sent to a health care professional following an exposure incident.

Health care professionals shall be instructed to limit their opinions to:

- Whether the Hepatitis B vaccine is indicated and if the employee has received the vaccine, or for evaluation following an incident.
- That the employee has been informed of the results of the evaluation and has been told about any medical conditions resulting from exposure to blood.

All employees will be trained in the use of gloves to aide an injured person. They will be instructed to the placement of disposable gloves. All employees will receive instructions annually.

All records required by the OSHA standard will be maintained by the Central Office for 30 years.

## Disaster Recovery Plan

### I. Purpose

To establish procedures for disaster recovery.

### II. Scope

This policy applies to all agency facilities.

### III. Policy

The Disaster Recovery Plan contains information needed to recover from disasters that result in the disruption of agency operations.

#### A. Definitions:

1. Technology Services. An occurrence which impacts Information Technology (IT) activities to the extent that the capability to perform normal and routine operations is impaired. The extent can range from a minor disruption to total destruction involving computer equipment, communications, records, data files, system and applications, software, and/or a combination thereof.
  - a. Minor Disaster. Recovery can be accomplished within 72 hours and/or without significant deviation from normal operations.
  - b. Major (Catastrophic) Disaster. A situation which seriously interrupts IT operations. Recovery requires an extended period of time and requires additional outside sources. Services may be interrupted for a period of time.
2. Facilities. An occurrence which impacts an agency facility to the extent that the performance of normal activities is impaired. The extent can range from

minor disruption such as severe weather, storm damage, loss of electricity, water, or plumbing to total destruction of a facility.

- a. Minor Interruption. Recovery can be accomplished within 72 hours and/or without significant deviation from normal operations.
  - b. Major (Catastrophic) Disaster. A situation which seriously interrupts operations. Recovery requires an extended period of time and requires additional outside sources. Services may be interrupted for a period of time.
- B. Roles and Responsibilities. The Executive Director in conjunction with Program Directors and mid-management supervisors or assigned key holders at the centers is responsible for the assessment and recovery process. In the absence of the Executive Director, the Associate Director will assume the lead role.
- C. Recovery Process. The following outlines the process for assessing and recovering from disasters:
1. Identify the extent of damage
  2. Determine condition of equipment and facility as appropriate
  3. Identify problems
  4. Describe what is salvageable
  5. Assess operational capability
  6. Define requirements to restore operations
  7. Schedule salvage and restoration
  8. Monitor process
  9. Communicate status and progress to appropriate persons
- D. Interruptions to Work. In general, all employees are expected to report to their work sites as scheduled. Facility closures will be communicated to the supervisors and the local radio stations. Supervisors will inform staff. During Minor Interruptions to work, employees who do not perform any work during the interruption may opt to use Paid Time Off or Leave without Pay.

Should a major disaster be involved, employees may be reassigned to other work sites temporarily. Should this not be possible, the Reduction In Force procedures will apply.

E. Technology Procedures.

1. Hardware. The Agency retains a Computer Technology & Maintenance provider on contract. Equipment is also covered under the Agency insurance policy.
2. Software. All software is appropriately licensed. Data of the Central Office is backed up daily.
3. Backup. Backup of the Central Office server and work stations is done daily on an automated NAS system. Programs are responsible for having their sites back up data as needed. Many of the client databases are web-based. The vendor is responsible for backup of web-based client software.
4. Batteries. The Central Office server and work stations are connected to appropriate sized battery backups to protect the hardware and data during power outages and surges. Programs are responsible for having their site computers connected to battery backups.
5. Technology. Currently, the Central Office server requires a user login and password to access the computer. The agency will confer with its contracted technology partner about computer disaster plans and security of technology. Upgrades will be considered and implemented when feasible.
6. Physical Facilities Procedures. If the Central Office operations are disrupted for an extended time, the site requirements for a recovery facility are as follows:
  - Power
  - Heating/air conditioning
  - Cabling
  - Communications (i.e. phones, fax, internet)
  - Appropriate square footage

Personnel and office needs are as follows:

- Space for designated personnel

- Office furniture, equipment, and supplies
- Designated personnel or temporary staff as needed.

F. Review and Assessment of Plan. The Disaster Recovery Plan will be reviewed and amended as needed.

## Workplace Policy for Domestic Violence, Sexual Violence, and Stalking

### I. Purpose

SOCAG institutes this policy as part of its commitment to a safer and more supportive organizational climate and to the prevention and reduction of the incidence and effects of domestic violence, sexual violence, and stalking [hereinafter “violence”] at the workplace. SOCAG recognizes that domestic violence, sexual violence, and stalking present unique issues for its workforce.

Domestic violence, sexual violence, and stalking are workplace issues even if incidents occur elsewhere. Domestic violence, sexual violence, and stalking span across economic, educational, cultural, age, gender, racial, and religious lines and occur in a wide variety of contexts. Therefore, the organization will take every appropriate measure to prevent and/or address such violence in the context of:

- Subordinate/superior relationships;
- Heterosexual and same-sex intimate partner relationships, including marital, cohabiting, or dating;
- Heterosexual or same sex non-intimate partner relationships, such as between coworkers;
- Parent/child relationships; and
- Violent acts of others that could potentially occur within the workplace.

The purposes and goals of this policy are to:

- Support a comprehensive workplace education and training program to prevent violence and promote healthy relationships for employees and their families;
- Create a supportive and healthful work environment that helps employees to avoid the use of violence in any context;
- Institutionalize responsive policies and procedures to assist employees who are impacted by violence, including the provision of training on this policy to employees and management;
- Provide assistance to employees who are perpetrators of violence and take disciplinary action to hold them accountable for violent behavior; and

- Provide immediate assistance and support to victims of violence, such as information and referrals to community resources, to facilitate safety and support for victims and fellow employees.

## II. Scope

Persons covered by this policy include full and part-time employees, interns, contractors, volunteers, or temporary workers engaged by Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc., or in any workplace location.

## III. Definitions

### 1. Survivor or victim

An individual who is currently subject to, or has in the past been subjected to, domestic violence, sexual violence, stalking or other forms of violence.

### 2. Perpetrator

An individual who commits or threatens to commit an act of domestic violence, sexual violence, or stalking, including unwarranted violence against animals.

### 3. Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a pattern of coercive behavior, including acts or threatened acts, that is used by a perpetrator to gain power and control over a current or former spouse, family member, intimate partner, or person with whom the perpetrator shares a child in common. Domestic violence includes, but is not limited to: physical violence, injury, or intimidation; sexual violence or abuse; emotional and/or psychological intimidation; verbal abuse; threats; harassment; stalking; or economic abuse and control.

### 4. Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is a range of behaviors, including but not limited to: sexual harassment; a completed nonconsensual sex act (i.e., rape); an attempted nonconsensual sex act; abusive sexual contact (i.e., unwanted touching); and non-contact sexual abuse (e.g., threatened sexual violence, exhibitionism, verbal harassment). Some or all of these acts may also be addressed in SOCAG's Sexual Harassment Policy. Sexual violence is any sexual act or behavior that is perpetrated against someone's will when someone does not or cannot consent. Victims of sexual violence may know the perpetrator(s), such as a coworker or a



supervisor, and/or may be involved in a dating or marital relationship with the perpetrator, or the perpetrator may be unknown to the victim. Consent is not given when a perpetrator uses force, harassment, threat of force, threat of adverse personnel action, coercion, or when the victim is asleep, incapacitated, or unconscious.

**5. Stalking**

Stalking refers to harassing, intimidating or threatening conduct that causes the victim to fear for his or her safety or the safety of a family member, or would cause a reasonable person in a similar situation to fear for his or her safety. Stalking conduct includes, but is not limited to: following or spying on a person; appearing at a person's home or work; engaging in unwanted, harassing, or threatening phone calling, emailing, texting, etc.; waiting at places in order to make unwanted contact with the victim or to monitor the victim; leaving unwanted items, presents, or flowers for the victim; and posting information or spreading rumors about the victim on the internet, in a public place, or by word of mouth. Stalking may occur through use of technology including, but not limited to: email; voicemail; text messaging; and use of GPS and social networking sites.

**6. Protection or Restraining Order**

Protection orders, sometimes called restraining orders or stay away orders, allow a victim to petition the court for protection from a perpetrator, as well as establish custody and visitation guidelines and provide for other forms of support, like rent or mortgage payments, which last for the duration of the order. Protection orders may also be issued in criminal cases as a condition of probation or condition of release particularly in a domestic violence, sexual violence, dating violence, or stalking related crime. In addition, some states have enacted laws that allow employers to apply for protection orders to prevent violence, harassment, or stalking of their employees.

**7. Workplace-Related Incidents**

Workplace-related incidents of domestic violence, sexual violence, dating violence, and stalking include acts, attempted acts, or threatened acts by or against employees, the families of employees, and/or their property, that imperil the safety or well-being of any person associated with an employee of SOGAG regardless of whether the act occurred in or outside the organization's physical workplace. An employee is considered to be in the workplace while in, or utilizing the resources of the employer, including but not limited to facilities, work sites, equipment, or vehicles, or while on work-related travel.

**8. Non-Workplace Incidents**

Non-workplace incidents of domestic violence, sexual violence, dating violence, and stalking include acts, attempted acts, or threatened acts by or against any person or animal that occur anywhere outside a company's physical workplace, and/or while an employee is not engaged with or traveling for the employer.

**9. Workplace Safety Plan**

A strategy developed in collaboration with a victim and victim service provider to implement workplace safety options, including but not limited to: handling of court protection orders; procedures for alerting security personnel of threats or incidents; temporary or permanent adjustments to work schedules, locations, contact information, change in parking spots, and requests for escorts to and from workplace facilities.

## **IV. Statement of Confidentiality**

SOCAG recognizes and respects an employee's right to privacy and the need for confidentiality and autonomy. SOCAG shall maintain the confidentiality of an employee's disclosure regarding violence to the extent allowed by law, and unless to do so would result in physical harm to any person, and/or jeopardize safety within the workplace. When information must be disclosed to protect the safety of individuals within the workplace, SOCAG shall limit the breadth and content of such disclosure to information reasonably necessary to protect the safety of the disclosing employee and others, and to comply with the law. SOCAG shall provide advance notice to the employee who disclosed information, to the extent possible, if the disclosure must be shared with other parties in order to maintain safety in the workplace or elsewhere. SOCAG shall also provide the employee with the name and title of the person to whom SOCAG intends to share the employee's statements, and shall explain the necessity and purpose regarding said disclosure.

## **V. Employer Responses to Violence**

**A. Responses to Victims**

**i. Non-Discrimination and Non-Retaliation**

SOCAG will not discharge, or in any manner discriminate or retaliate against an employee because of the employee's status as a victim of domestic violence, sexual violence, or stalking, if the victim provides notice to the organization of the status, or the organization has actual knowledge of the

status.

SOCAG will not retaliate against a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking for requesting leave or a reasonable accommodation (see Section 5(A)(ii)), regardless of whether the request was granted.

ii. Leave and Other Reasonable Accommodations and Assistance

SOCAG recognizes that victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and dating violence may need time off to obtain or attempt to obtain a protection or restraining order or any other legal assistance to help ensure his or her health, safety, or welfare or that of his or her child. SOCAG will work in collaboration with the employee to provide reasonable and flexible leave options when an employee or his or her child is a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking. SOCAG will work with employee to provide paid leave first before requiring an employee to utilize unpaid leave.

An employee must provide reasonable advance notice to the employer of the need to take time off unless advance notice is not feasible. SOCAG may require the employee to provide documentation or other certification verifying that the employee was a victim of violence. To request Leave, employee should contact [person].

SOCAG will maintain the confidentiality of a person who requests leave under this policy, to the extent allowed by law.

SOCAG will also provide reasonable accommodations for a victim of domestic violence, sexual violence, or stalking who requests an accommodation for the safety of the victim or to maintain his or her work performance while at work. Reasonable accommodations may include the implementation of safety measures, include a transfer, reassignment, modified schedule, changed work telephone, changed work station, installed lock, assistance in documenting the violence that occurs in the workplace, an implemented safety procedure, another adjustment to a job structure, workplace facility, or work requirement in response to the violence, or referral to a victim assistance organization. SOCAG will assist an employee to enforce his or her protection order, if applicable.

iii. Access to Unemployment Insurance Benefits

SOCAG recognizes that in certain situations it is no longer feasible for an employee who is a victim of violence to continue working for SOCAG. In such

circumstance, SOCAG shall provide to employee information regarding access to unemployment insurance benefits. SOCAG has designated the Administrative Resources Director and/or the EEO Officer to provide accurate information regarding unemployment benefits for victims of violence.

iv. Work Performance

SOCAG recognizes that employees who are victims of violence may experience temporary difficulty fulfilling job responsibilities. If SOCAG becomes aware that an employee's work performance or conduct has been impacted by domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking, SOCAG will offer support to the employee and work in collaboration with the employee to address the issues, in accordance with established policies within the workplace. SOCAG may develop a work plan with employee, provide leave and other accommodations as specified in Section 5(A)(ii), provide referrals to support or advocacy agencies, advise employee of his or her rights regarding unemployment insurance as specified in Section 5(A)(iii), and maintain a separate and confidential record of employee's status as a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking to ensure to victim that his or her rights and privileges of employment are not impacted or compromised as a result of the violence.

v. Protection and Restraining Orders

SOCAG recognizes that a victim of violence may seek an order of protection, or may receive a protection or restraining order, as part of his or her efforts to become safe and as part of his or her workplace safety plan. SOCAG recognizes that the workplace may or may not be included on an order as a location from which a perpetrator must remain away. If an employee chooses to disclose the existence of a protection or restraining order to SOCAG, SOCAG may, wherever possible, assist the employee to enforce his or her order, shall archive said order in a confidential and separate file from employee's personnel file, and, if applicable, may assist employee to gather documentation from the workplace, such as emails or voice messages, that could support the employee's efforts in the justice system or otherwise to obtain or maintain safety from a perpetrator.

**B. Reporting by Employees with Information about Violence**

Employees who have information about or witness an act of violence perpetrated by an employee, or who have information about or witness violence against an employee, are required to report all information to the designated person in SOCAG organization.

SOCAG will not retaliate against, terminate, or discipline any employee for reporting information about alleged incidents of violence, as defined in this policy that may have been committed by any other employee, including a member of management. Prohibited acts of retaliation include, but are not limited to, demotion or withholding of earned pay, as well as acts of personal retaliation, such as those related to an employee's immigration status or sexual orientation, for example.

Any employee who believes he or she has been subjected to adverse action as a result of making a report pursuant to this policy should contact the Administrative Resources Director (HR Department) and/or the EEO Officer. See Section 7 regarding reporting of violations of this policy.

**C. Responses to Workers Who Commit Violence**

If SOCAG receives information that alleges or suggests that an employee has committed an incident of workplace-related or non-workplace violence, as defined in this Policy, or if any manager receives information that any employee has engaged in any incident of workplace-related or non-workplace violence, then the matter shall be referred to the designated executive for the purpose of investigating the information or allegation. SOCAG shall conduct an immediate investigation of the information or allegation, which investigation shall be completed within 45 days of receipt of the information or allegation concerning the alleged incident of violence.

Every employee shall have a duty to cooperate with the investigation, and failure to do so will result in disciplinary action being taken against the uncooperative employee up to and including termination. Additionally, every employee has the duty to be truthful and must disclose all information known to the employee when requested to do so by an appropriate person in the organization or the person designated by the organization to investigate an alleged incident of violence. Any employee who fails to be completely truthful or who withholds information shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

At the conclusion of the investigation conducted by SOCAG, the investigator shall report her or his findings to the designated official. If the investigator concludes, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the employee has engaged in a workplace-related incident or non-workplace incident, as defined in this Policy, then that employee shall be subject to disciplinary

action up to and including termination. The employee might also be required to participate in counseling or other remedial measures. Employees are prohibited from utilizing any workplace resources, such as work time, phones, email, computers, fax machines or other means to threaten, harass, intimidate, embarrass or otherwise harm another person.

An employee who is subject to a protection or restraining order, or a named defendant in a criminal action as a result of a threat or act of domestic violence, sexual violence, or stalking must notify the SOCAG Human Resources Department immediately regarding the existence of such criminal or civil action. Failure to disclose the existence of such criminal or civil actions in these circumstances will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination from employment.

## **VI. Reporting by Employees Who are Victims**

Employees who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking, and employees who are concerned about coworkers who might be victims are encouraged to provide a report to SOCAG. SOCAG has designated the Administrative Resources Director as the person to whom such reports should be made. SOCAG's designated employee shall provide community referrals and resources to employees in order to assist employees with their concerns or experiences regarding violence.

## **VII. Reporting Violation of Policy**

A person who wishes to report a violation of this policy should also contact the Administrative Resources Director and/or the EEO Officer. SOCAG will not subject employees who report violence or report a violation of this policy to work-related or personal retaliation, as described in Section 5(B). Any allegations of violations of this policy will be immediately investigated in accordance with the timeline and procedure outlined in Section 5(C).

## **Employee Separation**

### **I. Purpose**

To ensure timely and accurate processing of employee separation from the Agency.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to all employees.

### **III. Definitions**

The categories of separation and their definitions are:

A. Resignation. A voluntary separation, including:

Resignation (employees are requested, but not required, to give two weeks written notice, if possible).

An absence of two or more consecutive working days without notice to the company. (See Policy No. 310, Employee Leave.)

Failure to return from leave of absence as arranged with the agency.

B. Release. A separation in which the employee is not able to perform the essential job functions with or without reasonable accommodation and no other assignment for which the employee is qualified is available. Release usually results from no fault of the employee. Employees who are unable to perform satisfactorily during the new employee orientation period will be considered as released.

C. Deceased. The death of an employee in active employment.

D. Retirement. A voluntary separation.

- E. Discharge. A separation in which the employee is removed from the payroll for violation of employee standards of conduct, violation of policies and procedures, violation of safety regulations, unsatisfactory job performance or behavior, or any other reason deemed by the Agency to warrant discharge.

#### **IV. Procedure**

- A. Notice to Employee. All employees are employed at-will, meaning either the employee or the Agency may terminate employment at any time, with or without cause or notice. There are no requirements for advance notice to employees upon separation unless a reduction-in-force that falls within the provisions of the federal WARN Act requirements. In the event of WARN requirements, SOCAG will notify employees as required by law.
- B. Management Approvals. When an employee is released, separated due to a reduction-in-force, or discharged, written approvals will be required from the program director, in addition to the acknowledgement of the Executive Director.
- C. Change in Status. The Program Director of the separated employee is responsible for completing an Employee Termination Form and designating the appropriate separation code.
- D. Resignation. An employee who resigns, with or without notice, will be asked immediately by the supervisor to complete a voluntary resignation form (copy following). The completed notice will be forwarded to the Payroll department for filing in the employee's permanent record.
- E. Return of Equipment and Keys. Prior to the last day of work, the supervisor must obtain all company property including keys and passwords from the separated employee.
- F. Employment References for Separated Employees. Refer to Policy No. 040, Personnel Records and Privacy.



## V. **Benefit Eligibility**

Generally, when an employee is separated, benefit credits are lost (beyond those paid for at the time of termination), with these exceptions:

- A. Reduction-in-Force. Refer to Policy No. 811.
  
- B. Health and Life Insurance Benefits. Extended coverage and conversion privileges of the health and life insurance benefit plan is provided in accordance with federal law and/or the plan documents.
  
- C. Paid Time Off. Refer to Policy No. 310, Employee Leave.

## **Reduction-In-Force and Recall**

### **I. Purpose**

To provide guidelines for reduction in the workforce and recall procedures.

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to all employees.

### **III. Policy**

Economic conditions, changes in technology, changes in programs or other unforeseen circumstances may require adjustments in staff levels by means of a personnel reduction-in-force (RIF). Before competent employees are separated due to lack of work, the company will explore reasonable possibilities for reassignment.

### **IV. Definitions**

*Reduction-in-Force (RIF)* includes these definitions:

- A. Temporary Reduction. Work is no longer available, but recall to work is expected within 12 months.
- B. Permanent Reduction. Work is no longer available. Recall to work is not expected (job eliminated, contract expired, department closed, etc.)
- C. Furlough. Work is reduced periodically during periods of budget shortfalls.

### **V. Procedure for Reduction-In-Force**

These procedures will guide decreases in the workforce:

- A. When the number of employees must be reduced, employee performance will generally govern. When two or more employees are of similar ability, length of service may also be a consideration.
- B. The Agency may retain employees without regard to length of service because of the employee's knowledge, skill, training, performance, education or experience.
- C. When possible, two weeks' notice will be given to employees scheduled to be separated due to RIF. If the RIF falls within the provisions of the federal WARN Act, SOCAG will comply with the WARN Act requirements.
- D. Employees on temporary reduction will retain benefit credit for benefit plan purposes if recalled within 12 months.

## **Travel Policy**

### **I. Purpose**

To establish guidelines for business travel.

### **II. Scope**

All employees traveling on Agency business.

### **III. Responsibility**

Establishment and administration of this policy is the responsibility of the Executive Director. Each program director is responsible for ensuring that employees, prior to departure on their first business trip, review this policy to understand its intent and requirements.

### **IV. Policy**

(The Agency abides by Oklahoma Department of Commerce Requirement, subject to travel and per diem requirements.) Some programs have vehicles available for employees to use in business travel. The Program Director and Executive Director will determine if an agency vehicle is available to use for the business travel.

**Local Travel Expense Statement:** This form is completed by the employee who drives his or her personal car locally on official business within the normal service area.

- A. Mileage Reimbursement. Employees who use their personal vehicles within the service area for agency business can be reimbursed on a per mile basis at the established rate. The agency requires current automobile liability on the vehicle being used.

1. Electronic claims can be made in the EWS system and are encouraged. The employee records the number of miles. In the description, they are required to provide the beginning and ending mileage and a description of the travel. The expense report is printed and signed by the employee and supervisor. The appropriate Purchase Order is attached. The reimbursement is received by the employee by direct deposit added to their paycheck.
2. Mileage reported electronically will follow the established pay periods. The deadline to report electronically is 8:30 a.m. following the 1<sup>st</sup> working day after the pay period ends. (ex. 10/01/xx to 10/15/xx, mileage must be entered by 10/16/xx, 8:30 a.m.)
3. Mileage that is not submitted electronically or is after the deadline will be claimed manually using the Mileage Reimbursement Form. Manual claims that are less than \$10.00 will only be paid once per month at the end of the month.

**Out of Area Travel:** All out of area travel must be approved by the Executive Director with the recommendation of the program director. Advances are to be used for out of area overnight travel only, except at the Executive Director's discretion, and only 80% of the total amount requested will be disbursed. For out of state travel, the Executive Director can elect to approve up to 100% of the estimated travel for advance.

**Out of Area Travel Expense Statement:** This form is completed by the employee upon return from official out of area travel. Documentation should be attached to the form to support expenses other than per diem and mileage for personal auto. If the employee had a travel advance, it is deducted from the amount payable to the employee. If the advance exceeded expenditures, the employee must reimburse SOCAG when the travel expense statement is submitted. If an employee has not repaid any portion of the travel advance due back to the agency, SOCAG reserves the right to deduct this portion from the employee's following paycheck.

A. Approval for Travel.

1. All business travel plans require prior approval by the program director or Executive Director. An advance request form must be completed and signed by the program director and approved by the Executive Director. Airline

tickets, car rental, and hotel reservations will be arranged through the program director.

2. The Board of Directors authorizes the Executive Director to travel as needed to complete the job duties. This authorization extends to local, regional, and national travel.
3. The mode of travel and whether or not overnight travel is warranted will be the decision of the Agency. Normally, the most economical method of travel will be selected. If an employee requests an alternate means of travel, a cost comparison will be completed and attached to the Travel Advance and Authorization form. The most economical method of travel will be the maximum amount reimbursed to the employee. If the employee's selected method involves additional time away from work, the employee must use their Paid Time Off.

B. Air Travel Policy.

1. All domestic air travel will be in coach class.
2. Program director will select the carrier based on a combination of service available and rate structure. It will not be determined by frequent flier enrollment unless that represents the lowest fare. Also, the lowest possible fare may require a stopover or change of plans, and this will be chosen over a higher cost direct flight.
3. Travel arrangements should be made as far in advance as possible to take advantage of the most economical rate.
4. If there are penalties associated with changing reservations, the Agency will pay for these, provided the Agency required the change or the change was beyond the control of the employee or is for the benefits of the Agency. Penalties or cancellation charges incurred for any other reason will be the responsibility of the employee. This includes changes to get on an earlier flight.

C. Rental Car.

The use of a rental car is permitted when it is in the interest of the Agency to do so.

For less than three employees traveling together, the Agency will reimburse for the cost of a compact car. Upgrades to mid-size are permissible if three or more employees travel together.

If rental cars are retained over a weekend, such expenses are personal, except when used to travel on a weekend to another location on Agency business.

The employee should check to make sure that the tank is full when picking up the car. The car should be returned with a full tank of gas.

Rental charges must be supported by a receipt.

D. Travel To and From Terminals.

Travel to and from airport terminals will be by the least costly method available consistent with business requirements; e.g., airport bus or limousine, taxi, air commuter, or personal automobile (including parking or storage fees). On trips of more than one day's duration, long-term parking must be used and receipts must be attached to the expense report.

E. Use of Personal Automobile.

Employees traveling by personal automobile on company business are required to carry, at the employee's expense, public liability and property damage insurance at the minimum required by law. The employee will be reimbursed at the state allowed rate per mile, plus tolls and reasonable parking charges. Such reimbursement will not exceed the cost of commercial air fare for the same trip.

F. Rooms.

Suite accommodations are not permitted; the Agency pays only for single rooms. An upgrade to a security room is a personal expense unless the hotel is in a place or a city that is designated to be a risk to all travelers.

1. If late arrival is guaranteed and the reservation must be canceled, the cancellation must be made within the time allowed. If there are penalties associated with changing reservations, the Agency will pay for these provided the Agency required the change or the change was beyond the control of the employee. Penalties or cancellation charges incurred for any other reason will be the responsibility of the employee.
2. All hotel charges, when shown on the Travel Expense Statement, should be itemized to show each specific charge. Room service, mini-bar charges, and pay-for-view movies are considered personal expenses and therefore not reimbursable.
3. The employee must pay the bill and submit it for reimbursement. The original detailed hotel bill must be attached to the expense report. Miscellaneous expenses must be supported by receipts and attached to the expense report.

G. Per Diem.

Employees traveling on agency business will be reimbursed a daily meals expense allowance (per diem) at the state allowed rate per quarter (six hours) providing the trip requires an overnight stay. The allowance is in lieu of reimbursement of the actual cost of meals and is intended to cover expenses for breakfast, lunch and dinner including tips, taxes, and any other personal purchases such as snacks, refreshments, over-the-counter medicines, etc.

Computing the reimbursement allowance begins at start of trip and ends upon return. Reimbursement shall be allowed for each one fourth of a day (six hours) or a major fraction of one fourth (more than three hours).

H. Compensatory Travel Time.

(Please see Policy No. 212.)

I. Tips.

For expenses such as taxi, etc., the gratuity should be limited to the accepted norm and included in the amount reported. It is proper to show as "tips" -



gratuities to redcaps, skycaps, hotel porters, and bellhops (generally \$1.00 per bag).

J. Laundry and Valet.

No laundry expenses will be reimbursed unless the trip lasts for more than one week. If the trip is for more than one week, reasonable charges for laundry and valet service must appear on the hotel bill or a proper receipt must be furnished for non-hotel service. Expenses of this nature are not allowed after return from a business trip.

K. Insurance - Travel.

Medical expenses resulting from an accident while on Agency business are covered under workers' compensation insurance. Any travel insurance purchased by an employee is at personal expense.

L. Telephone.

Two telephone calls to employee's residence will be considered acceptable on a business trip not to exceed one call per day or a maximum of two per trip. There is a \$5 limit per call. If the cost of the call exceeds \$5, the employee must pay the remainder.

M. Combined Business and Personal Travel.

The Agency will pay for the cost of the business segment, and the employee will pay for the difference between that and the total. If the total is cheaper than the business segment, there are no additional charges. Combined business and personal travel must be approved in advance by the Executive Director.

N. Spouse on Trip.

If an employee chooses to take his or her spouse or other member of family on an approved business trip, the additional expense incurred is personal. The Agency will reimburse expenses to the extent that it would have incurred for the employee alone; i.e., the single rate for a hotel room. The Agency will not be liable for the care or well-being of anyone accompanying an employee on an approved business trip.

O. Miscellaneous Expense.

Unexplained items labeled *miscellaneous* are not allowable items of expense. Some examples of items not considered allowable are: newspapers, magazines, movies, shoe shines, personal expenses incurred for household services due to employee's absence on a business trip, etc.

P. Airline Clubs.

Fees for membership in airline clubs are considered personal expense and therefore not reimbursable.

Q. Reporting Travel.

A Travel Expense Statement must be used to report all travel expenses. The expense report should be filed within one week after completion of a trip. Expense reports that are filed more than one month after a trip may not be reimbursed. Any travel advances and/or company paid expenses should be noted on this report.

R. Approvals and Review.

Expenses incurred as the result of business travel require the approval of the program director and/or Executive Director. Implicit in the approval is that the approver has personally reviewed the details of the Travel Expense Statement.

Final review, prior to reimbursement, is the responsibility of the Accounting Department.

## **Amendment Procedures**

This policy statement supersedes and rescinds all previous personnel policy and practice statements and becomes the official policy statement of SOCAG.

The policies contained in this manual will be amended as necessary to meet changing laws, regulations and/or the needs of the Agency. The Executive Director will review the proposed amendment. Before an amendment is enacted and distributed to employees, it will be placed on the Board of Directors' agenda for review, edit, and final approval.

The following attachments are policy items applicable to specific programs. Employees working in those programs are responsible for adhering to those policies.

Head Start/Early Head Start Standards of Conduct  
Southwest Enterprises Individual Handbook  
ACMI House Operating Policies & Procedures

## **Birth to Five Standards of Conduct**

### **I. Purpose**

To identify the provisions of Head Start Standards of Conduct in reinforcing appropriate professional behavior among staff. (§1302.90 (c) *Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS)*)

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to all Head Start and Early Head Start employees, consultants, contractors, and volunteers.

### **III. Policy**

All staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers will abide by the program's standards of conduct that:

A. Ensure staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers implement positive strategies to support children's well-being and prevent and address challenging behavior;

B. Ensure staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers do not maltreat or endanger the health or safety of children, including, at a minimum, that staff must not:

- (1) Use corporal punishment;
- (2) Use isolation to discipline a child;
- (3) Bind or tie a child to restrict movement or tape a child's mouth;
- (4) Use or withhold food as a punishment or reward;
- (5) Use toilet learning/training methods that punish, demean, or humiliate a child;
- (6) Use any form of emotional abuse, including public or private humiliation, rejecting, terrorizing, extended ignoring, or corrupting a child;
- (7) Physically abuse a child;
- (8) Use any form of verbal abuse, including profane, sarcastic language, threats, or derogatory remarks about the child or child's family; or,
- (9) Use physical activity or outdoor time as a punishment or reward;

C. Staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers respect and promote the unique identity of each child and family and do not stereotype on any basis, including gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or family composition;

D. Staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers will comply with program confidentiality policies concerning personally identifiable information about children, families, and other staff members in accordance with subpart C of part §1303 of the Head Start Program Performance Standards and applicable federal, state, local, and tribal laws; and,

F. Ensure no child is left alone or unsupervised by staff, consultants, contractors, or volunteers while under their care.

E. Infractions will lead to corrective action up to and including discharge for staff, consultants, and volunteers who violate the standards of conduct. (See Personnel Policy No. 422, Corrective Action)

## **Head Start Program Governance Procedures**

### **I. Purpose**

To maintain a formal structure for program governance that includes a governing body (SOCAG Board of Directors), a policy council at the agency level, and a parent committee at each center. (*§1301.1 HSPPS) Diagram attached of Governance.*

### **II. Scope**

The Board of Directors has a legal and fiscal responsibility to administer and oversee the agency's Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Policy councils are responsible for the direction of the agency's Head Start and Early Head Start programs. (*Duties listed in 642 of the Head Start Act*)

### **III. Policy**

The agency will provide appropriate training and orientation to the governing body and the policy council, including training on program performance standards and training indicated in §1302.12(m) to ensure the members understand the information they receive and can effectively oversee and participate in the programs.

### **IV. Procedures**

A representative of the Board of Directors will also serve on the Policy Council. This member will be appointed yearly by the Chairman of the Board. The representative will report to both the Board of Directors and the Policy Council, when requested, about the ongoing activities of both.

To facilitate meaningful consultation and collaboration about decisions of the governing body and the policy council, the Board of Directors and Policy Council jointly established written procedures for resolving internal disputes between the governing board and policy council in a timely manner that include impasse procedures. These are reviewed annually. (*§1301.6*)

# Head Start

## Governance and

## Management

## Composition

### Governing Body/Tribal Council

*The governing body shall be composed as follows:*

- Not less than 1 member shall have a background and expertise in fiscal management or accounting.
  - Not less than 1 member shall have a background and expertise in early childhood education and development.
  - Not less than 1 member shall be a licensed attorney familiar with issues that come before the governing body.
- Additional members shall—
- reflect the community to be served and include parents of children who are currently, or were formerly, enrolled in Head Start programs;
  - are selected for their expertise in education, business administration, or community affairs.

### Policy Council

The policy council shall be elected by the parents of children who are currently enrolled in the Head Start program of the Head Start agency.

*The policy council shall be composed of—*

- parents of children who are currently enrolled in the Head Start program of the Head Start agency (including any delegate agency), who shall constitute a majority of the members of the policy council; and
- members at large of the community served by the Head Start agency (including any delegate agency), who may include parents of children who were formerly enrolled in the Head Start program of the agency.
- In addition, parents of children currently enrolled in all program options must be proportionately represented on established policy groups.

### Management Staff

*May include:*

- Executive director
- Chief financial officer
- Head Start director
- Key HS management staff



# **SOUTHWEST OKLAHOMA COMMUNITY ACTION GROUP HEADSTART MASKING POLICY**

Effective November 30, 2021

## **Purpose**

To comply with the Office of Head Start (OHS) rules regarding mask requirements to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in Head Start Programs and any subsequent applicable mask mandates for Head Start Programs. As set out in detail below, the mask requirement is effective November 30, 2021.

## **Scope**

Effective immediately, masking, using masks recommended by the CDC, is required for all individuals aged 2 years and older as follows:

1) When there are two or more individuals in a vehicle owned, leased, or arranged by the Head Start program;

2) Indoors in a setting when Head Start services are provided; and

3) For those not fully vaccinated, outdoors in crowded settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people.

This policy applies to all individuals age 2 or over including Head Start children and staff, contractors whose activities involve contact with or providing direct services to Head Start children and families, volunteers working in classrooms or directly with Head Start children and families and any other individual that enters a building or any other location where Head Start services are provided or Head Start activities are taking place. This masking requirement is a term and condition of employment for Head Start staff and for participation by children, unless an exemption or deferral has been approved in advance by Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group.

This policy will be interpreted and applied so as to comply with the masking provisions of the Head Start Program Performance Standards found at 45 CFR Part 1302 and any other applicable laws, standards or regulations.

## **Procedures**

Acceptable masks should be worn properly as provided herein. Masks must be of a type recommended by the CDC. Masks should be comfortable to wear and fit snugly. The mask must cover the mouth, nose, and chin. The mask can fasten around the ears or the back of the head, as long as it stays in place when talking and moving. Masks should be put on properly and adjusted as necessary throughout the day. Hands should be promptly washed after removing the mask. Cloth or other non-disposable masks should be laundered in between daily use. Disposable masks should not be reused from day to day. Damaged or torn masks are not



acceptable. Masks with vents or exhalation valves are also not acceptable. Masks will be made available free of charge to children and staff who do not possess an acceptable mask.

Exceptions to this universal masking requirement are as follows:

- 1) Children or adults when they are eating or drinking;
- 2) Children when they are napping;
- 3) Individuals who cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask, because of a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act consistent with CDC guidance on disability exemptions; or
- 4) When a child's health care provider advises an alternative face covering to accommodate the child's special health care needs.

Head Start staff and volunteers are required to provide positive reinforcement and instruction to children regarding mask wearing. Like all new skills, children will need to be taught the proper way to put a mask on and keep a mask on. While children are adaptable, they are still in the early stages of development and may need reminders and reinforcements to comply with this requirement. Head Start staff and volunteers are required to abide by the Standards of Conduct outlined in 1302.90 Personnel Policies in the Head Start Program Performance Standards requiring the implementation of positive strategies to support children's well-being and not use harsh disciplinary practices that could endanger the health or safety of children.

This policy may be amended at any time, with or without notice, by Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group.

### **Reasonable Accommodation**

Individuals in need of an exemption from this policy due to a medical reason or because of a sincerely held religious belief must submit a completed request for accommodation form to the human resources department to begin the interactive accommodation process as soon as possible. Accommodations will be evaluated under applicable laws and the policies and procedures of Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group. Accommodations will be granted to eligible individuals where they do not cause Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group undue hardship or pose a direct threat to the health and safety of others.

Head Start staff and children seeking an exemption will be temporarily accommodated pending a final decision regarding their request. Head Start staff and parents of children seeking an exemption are required to fully cooperate with Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group in the interactive accommodation process. Decisions regarding exemption requests will be provided in writing. Records of exemption requests and decisions made pertaining to same will be maintained in confidential files by Human Resources for Head Start Staff and by the Birth to Five Health Manager for all other individuals.

Possible accommodations may include, but are not limited to, provision of alternative mask styles, alternative types of face covering, ongoing COVID-19 testing, physical distancing, and/or leaves of absence until masks are no longer required.

### **Enforcement**

For Head Start staff, failure to comply with this policy will result in discipline, up to and including termination of employment. Failure to comply by other individuals may result in denial of participation in Head Start programs.

### **Questions**

Please direct any questions regarding this policy to the Birth to Five Health Manager or Human Resources.

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## SOCAG Birth to Five Program Transition Procedure 1302.70-72

Children experience many transitions, including from home to a classroom, between age groups or program settings, and from preschool to kindergarten. Supporting these transitions for children, families, and staff is critically important because even positive change can be challenging. Our system supports children, families, and staff through transitions with far-reaching effects on children's well-being and academic success. Program staff consider the long-term process of building and maintaining the capacity to support children and families at all levels. Partnering with families is essential to understanding each child and how best to individualize their care.

Children and staff experience **routine transitions** throughout a normal day. Knowledge of child development helps early educators and families gain a deeper perspective on how children's development influences their responses to transition. Children's social and emotional skills and their approaches to learning can tell us how they may express and manage their emotions during transition. Their language and communication skills let us know how well they will be able to understand information shared with them and express their needs and feelings. Knowing children's cognitive, perceptual, and motor development skill levels can help adults support children as they explore and learn about new environments and routines. By building awareness, planning for, and supporting children and families during times of transition, we can provide a foundation that prepares them to manage change successfully.

A collaborative approach to transition fosters **continuity of care** across learning settings. It provides children and families with the information and support they need during transition. Planning effective transition services begins by forming a diverse team of individuals in various roles in and outside the program. Effective transition policies and practices are based on core values of collaboration and ongoing communication between families, program staff, and early education partners. Practices promote ongoing communication with families, collaboration with all partners, and individualization of services to address children's and families' diverse backgrounds, strengths, and needs. Ongoing assessment of your program's transition policies and practices contributes to continuous improvement. Providing ongoing professional development opportunities for staff at all levels ensures that programs have the capacity to

deliver well-planned, collaborative transition services that lead to seamless, successful transitions for children and families.

## Providing Continuity of Care

**Relationships.** Positive parent-child relationship is critical to children's learning. SOCAG strives to embrace the six essential program practices for relationship-based care: continuity of care, small groups, primary caregiving, individualized approach, inclusive services, and culturally responsive care. Children that experience moving to a new classroom or center are supported by staff through the process.

- Family photos are accessible for children to hold, hug, and kiss.
- Photo cards of staff who frequently visit the room are available.

**Alignment.** Caregiving practices used in the home also occur within the program setting.

- Intake procedures and communication help staff learn family strategies to use in class.
- Work with families to develop rituals that help children and parents say "goodbye" and "hello".

**Information.** Help parents become familiar with program processes, such as signing in or calling when the child is ill.

- Let parents know that each child adapts differently.
- Staff and families keep in touch and share valuable information that supports the child.
- Families should know they are welcome to be a part of everything in the child's life.

## Supporting Classroom Routine Transitions

**Predictable Schedule.** Classrooms use pictures to remind children of activities on a schedule board. Warning time is given before activities change. Children are provided choices. Staff plan ahead to work learning goals into transitions. Individualized to child need.

**Social.** Encourage and demonstrate positive social skills. Speak thoughtfully of other staff so children will remember them when they come into the classroom again. Post photographs of children, staff, and families. Children are given class chores so they know they are a part of the room.

**Communication.** Communications with families to understand cultural parenting. Parents invited as volunteers in the classroom. Collaborative relationships with families.

**Zoning.** Active supervision at all times with a plan to have staff and volunteers positioned to assist children at all times.

**Wellness.** Take mindful moments, stop to breathe, discuss feelings. Practice stretches and exercises as well as planned and open free outdoor activities.

Task	Timeline	Responsible Person
Transition begins in the process of recruitment. Parents are provided information about services including enrollment requirements.	Ongoing	All staff
Letters are sent to collaborating agencies recruiting children with disabilities.	Ongoing	Head Start Director
News releases for enrollment opportunities include recruitment for children with disabilities as well as those from low-income families.	Ongoing	Head Start Director
For children transitioning from another program such as LEA or SoonerStart, an IEP meeting is held to communicate with the parents about the continuity of services and other program options. The parent receives a booklet regarding their rights and responsibilities.	Ongoing	Disability Manager
Applicants are given a tour of the school and a brief overview of the services offered. This is documented on the child's Individual Transition Plan which is filed in the child's folder.	Completed during the application process	School Supervisor
During enrollment, staff will go over the Individual Transition Plan with the parent and encourage them to be active team members in transitioning their child into Head Start and from Head Start to the public school.	Completed during the enrollment process	School staff
The first parent meeting will include an orientation for parents, which includes information on the actual orientation of the children into the classroom and the activities planned for children geared to prepare them for the next setting. The parent's part in their child's education is discussed. Transportation and Pedestrian Safety will be reviewed. This is documented on the child's Individual Transition Plan. If a child moves to another classroom, visits are provided for child and parents.	First parent meeting of the school year – August  As needed	School Supervisor Partnership Manager  Teacher School Supervisor
Training is provided on parent's rights and responsibilities concerning their child's education.	December	School Supervisor Partnership Manager
Surveys are sent out to parents for the collection of information about their child's next service setting. The surveys are used to set up field trips to the child's next setting. This will be documented in the child's folder.	Spring	Program Director

Field trips for children, based on the surveys sent in the Spring, to their future setting. These will either be at the public school or other Head Start setting.	April / May	School Supervisors
Head Start will coordinate with other agencies to transfer relevant records, including information on screenings and evaluations, with parental permission as necessary.	Ongoing	School Supervisors Head Start Managers Teachers

## Transition Services

### ***Transitions from Early Head Start.***

Implement strategies and practices to support successful transitions for children and their families transitioning out of Early Head Start.

### ***Timing for transitions.***

Ensure the most appropriate placement and service following participation in Early Head Start program staff must, at least six months prior to each child's third birthday, implement transition planning for each child and family that:

(1) Takes into account the child's developmental level and health and disability status, progress made by the child and family while in Early Head Start, current and changing family circumstances and, the availability of Head Start, other public pre-kindergarten, and other early education and child development services in the community that will meet the needs of the child and family; and,

(2) Transitions the child into Head Start or another program as soon as possible after the child's third birthday but permits the child to remain in Early Head Start for a limited number of additional months following the child's third birthday if necessary for an appropriate transition.

### ***Family collaborations.***

Collaborate with parents of Early Head Start children to implement strategies and activities that support successful transitions from Early Head Start and provide information about the child's progress during the program year and provide strategies for parents to continue their involvement in and advocacy for the education and development of their child.

***Early Head Start and Head Start collaboration.***

Early Head Start and Head Start classroom staff will work together to maximize enrollment transitions from Early Head Start to Head Start and promote successful transitions through collaboration and communication.

***Transition services for children with an IFSP.***

Provide additional transition services for children with an IFSP. Staff work with Disabilities Manager to ensure parent has information needed.

***Transitions from Head Start to kindergarten.***

Implement transition strategies to support a successful transition to kindergarten for children that will be five years of age by September 1<sup>st</sup>.

***Family collaborations for transitions.***

Collaborate with parents of enrolled children to implement strategies and activities that will help parents advocate for and promote successful transitions to kindergarten for their children, including their continued involvement in the education and development of their child.

At a minimum, such strategies and activities must:

- (i) Help parents understand their child's progress during Head Start;
- (ii) Help parents understand practices they use to effectively provide academic and social support for their children during their transition to kindergarten and foster their continued involvement in the education of their child;
- (iii) Prepare parents to exercise their rights and responsibilities concerning the education of their children in the elementary school setting, including services and supports available to children with disabilities and various options for their child to participate in language instruction educational programs; and,
- (iv) Assist parents in the ongoing communication with teachers and other school personnel so that parents can participate in decisions related to their children's education.

***Community collaborations for transitions.***

Collaborate with LEA to support family engagement and kindergarten teachers to implement strategies and activities that promote successful transitions to kindergarten for children, their families.

At a minimum, such strategies and activities must include:

(i) Coordination with schools or other appropriate agencies to ensure children's relevant records are transferred to the school or next placement in which a child will enroll, consistent with privacy requirements;

(ii) Communication between appropriate staff and their counterparts in the schools to facilitate continuity of learning and development, consistent with privacy requirements,

(iii) Participation, as possible, for joint training and professional development activities for Head Start and kindergarten teachers and staff.

Collaborate with school districts to determine the availability of summer school programming for children who will be entering kindergarten and work with parents and school districts to enroll children in such programs, as appropriate.

***Learning environment activities.***

Implement strategies and activities in the learning environment that promote successful transitions between activities in the classroom, staying at school and going home after school, accepting new persons into the classroom, as well as transitions to kindergarten for enrolled children and foster confidence about such transitions.

***Transition services for children with an IEP.***

Provide additional transition services for children with an IEP.

***Transitions between programs.***

For families and children who move out of the community in which they are currently served, including homeless families and foster children, undertake efforts to support effective transitions to other Early Head Start or Head Start programs. If Early Head Start or Head Start is not available, assist the family to identify another early childhood program that meets their needs.

For children whose families have decided to transition them to other early education programs, including public pre-kindergarten, in the year prior to kindergarten entry we undertake strategies and activities described in transition to kindergarten as practicable and appropriate.



## SOCAG Birth to Five Professional Development

Each person hired by SOCAG will meet or in some cases be working toward the requirement for the position they are doing. All have the required background checks, fingerprinting, and reference checks. Personnel Policies are provided to each staff. Orientation is attended which includes Oklahoma DHS Licensing Standards and Conscious Discipline.

Our practice-based coach provides observation, ideas, modeling and supportive services to classroom staff through a systematic approach of determining how much support each staff needs with new teachers having priority. Strengths and areas of support are identified for each teaching staff. Intensive coaching with feedback and modeling are provided for identified staff. Group discussion and feedback sessions are provided for all teaching staff.

Each staff must complete at least 20 hours of professional development per year to meet the Oklahoma STARS QRIS requirement. Supervisors and Managers need 30 hours of professional development each year.

Training is planned each year during in-service training sessions on:

- Methods to handle suspected child abuse and neglect cases that comply with the laws.
- Best practices for implementing family engagement strategies.
- Training that builds knowledge and competences to improve child and family outcomes.
- Research-based curriculum.
- School readiness goals and ways to share them with families.
- Health and wellness including **infectious diseases** and immunizations.
- Mental health and wellness including those that may affect job performance.

## **Southwest Enterprises Individual Handbook**

*Southwest Enterprises Individual Handbook* is a policy and procedures manual for the individuals served at Southwest Enterprises.

A copy of the handbook will be distributed to individuals served at Southwest Enterprises and appropriate staff persons at Southwest Enterprises.

## **Safe Haven Policies & Procedures**

*Safe Haven Policies & Procedures* is a policy and procedures manual for the services provided at Safe Haven.

A copy of the policies and procedures will be distributed to the employees at Safe Haven.

## **RSVP Policies & Procedures**

*RSVP Policies & Procedures* describes the expectations of RSVP volunteers such as attendance, confidentiality, and conduct. It outlines the background check requirements. It also provides the expectations of the program, as well as what the volunteer can expect from SOCAG.

A copy of the policies and procedures will be distributed to the volunteers of the RSVP Program.

## Receipt for Personnel Policy Manual

Policy No.	Title	Current Date
	Table of Contents	12/2/2021
005	Introduction to Personnel Policies	1/28/2016
010	Definitions of Employment Status	7/21/2016 Eff: 7/01/2016
020	Recruiting and Selection	7/21/2016 Eff: 7/01/2016
021	Equal Employment Opportunity	1/28/2016
022	Americans With Disabilities Act	1/28/2016
023	Employment of Relatives	1/28/2016
024	Employment of Minors	1/28/2016
025	Certification and License Requirements	1/26/2017
030	New Employee Orientation Period	1/28/2016
040	Personnel Records and Privacy	1/28/2016
045	HIPAA Privacy Policy	1/28/2016
110	Exempt/Non-Exempt Employee Status	1/28/2016
120	Salary Program Administration	1/28/2016
209	Hours Worked - Breaks	1/28/2016
210	Pay Periods	1/28/2016
211	Overtime: Non-Exempt Employees	9/17/2018
212	Hours Worked and Compensation - Travel Time	1/28/2016
305	Employee-Employer Relations	1/28/2016
310	Employee Leave - Paid Time Off, Banked Time, Unpaid Leave	4/1/2018
312	Holidays	12/2/2021
313	Agency Emergency Loan Policy	1/28/2016
320	Court and Jury Duty	1/28/2016
321	Military Leave	1/28/2016
323	Pregnancy Leave	1/28/2016
324	Family and Medical Leave	1/28/2016
340	Education Assistance Program	1/28/2016
350	Insurance Programs	1/28/2016
360	Retirement Plan	1/28/2016
370	Workplace Wellness Benefit	2/21/2019
371	Wellness Benefit	12/2/2021
405	Code of Ethics	1/28/2016
410	Standards of Conduct	1/28/2016
411	Conflict of Interest	1/28/2016
412	Harassment, Including Sexual Harrassment	1/28/2016
414A	Drug and Alcohol Use	1/28/2016
414B	DOT Regulated Substance Abuse	11/30/2017 Eff: 1/01/2018
414C	Non-DOT Regulated Substance Abuse	5/26/2022 Eff: 6/10/2022
415	Dress and Personal Appearance	1/26/2017
416	Tobacco in the Workplace	1/17/2020
417	Telephone/Voice Mail/Cell Phone Use	1/28/2016
418	Information Technology Resources Policy	1/28/2016
419	Agency Vehicles Policies	1/28/2016
420	Weapons Policy	1/28/2016
421	Criminal Charges	1/28/2016
422	Corrective Action	1/28/2016
423	Lobbying & Political Activity	1/28/2016
424	Confidentiality	1/28/2016
425	Employee ID Badges	1/28/2016
426	Other Employment	1/28/2016
501	Open Door Communications	1/28/2016
502	Social Media Communications	1/28/2016
505	Communication Policy	1/28/2016

## Receipt for Personnel Policy Manual

Policy No.	Title	Current Date
510	Internal Communications	1/28/2016
515	Mail	1/28/2016
530	Concern and Grievance Procedures	1/28/2016
535	Whistleblower Protection Policy	1/28/2016
550	Purchasing	1/28/2016
610	Employee Performance Appraisal	1/28/2016
620	Promotions	1/28/2016
621	Job Posting	1/28/2016
622	Staff & Volunteer Training & Development Procedures	1/28/2016
708	Safety Committee Policy & Procedures	12/2/2021
710	Accidents/Injuries Reporting	1/28/2016
711	Safety Equipment and Training	1/28/2016
712	Bloodborne Pathogens	1/28/2016
725	Disaster Recovery Plan	1/28/2016
810	Employee Separation	1/28/2016
811	Reduction-In-Force and Recall	1/28/2016
910	Travel Policy	1/28/2016
1001	Amendment Procedures	1/28/2016
1002	Birth to Five Standards of Conduct	4/4/2019
1003	Southwest Enterprises Individual Handbook	9/30/2021
1004	Safe Haven Operating Policies & Procedures	7/2/2020
1005	RSVP Policies & Procedures	11/17/2016
	Personnel Policies Receipt Form	5/26/2022
	Drug and Alcohol Policies Receipt Form	5/26/2022

I have received a copy of the Agency Personnel Policy Manual as of the date listed below. I have read and understood the policies. I also understand that if I have any questions, I am to promptly ask my supervisor, program director, or human resources.

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

## RECEIPT FOR DRUG & ALCOHOL TESTING POLICIES

I have received a copy of SOCAG's Drug and Alcohol Policy (414A) and the Drug and Alcohol Testing Policies and Procedures as applicable to my position (\_\_\_\_\_ 414B DOT Testing Policy, dated 11/30/17, effective 1/1/18 or \_\_\_\_\_ 414C Non-DOT Testing Policy dated 5/26/22, effective 6/10/22). I have read and understood the requirements of the policies.

I understand that a violation of the Program may result in severe disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Further, I understand that, as an employee of Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc., I may be subject to future testing, consistent with the Program.

I understand that the Program is not a contract of employment and that it may be changed, modified, or eliminated at any time, with or without notice. I understand that my employment with Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc. is "at-will" and for no fixed period of time. I understand that Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group, Inc. can terminate my employment at any time at its sole discretion, with or without cause, and I may quit at any time, with or without notice.

If I have any questions, I will direct them to one of SOCAG's Designated Employer Representatives (DERs) which are the Executive Director, Associate Director, and the Administrative Resources Director.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_