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JACKSON COUNTY BOARD PERSONNEL POLICY HANDBOOK



Jackson County
1001 Walnut Street
Murphysboro, IL 62966

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	4
Section 1.1 General Policy and Applicability	4
Section 1.2 At-Will Employment	4
Section 1.3 Responsibilities.....	5
Section 1.4 Scope	5
EMPLOYEES	6
Section 2.1 Recruitment Procedures.....	6
Section 2.2 Criminal Background Check	6
Section 2.3 Background Reference Check	6
Section 2.4 Immigration Law Compliance	7
Section 2.5 New Employee Orientation	7
Section 2.6 Confidentiality	7
Section 2.7 Outside Employment	7
Section 2.8 Nepotism, Employment of Relatives, and Personal Relationships	8
NON-DISCRIMINATION.....	9
Section 3.1 Equal Employment Opportunity.....	9
Section 3.2 Pregnancy Accommodation.....	10
Section 3.3 Discrimination for the Use of Lawful Products.....	11
NON-HARASSMENT	12
Section 4.1 Non-Harassment	12
EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATIONS	16
Section 5.1 Classifications of Employees.....	16
Section 5.2 Exempt and Non-Exempt Employees.....	16
WORKWEEK AND PAYROLL.....	18
Section 6.1 Payroll Records.....	18
Section 6.2 Payment of Wages	18
Section 6.3 Work Week and Work Hours	18
Section 6.4 Overtime	18
Section 6.5 Mileage Reimbursement.....	19
Section 6.6 Garnishments	19
Section 6.7 No Pyramiding.....	19
EMPLOYEE EXPECTATIONS	20

Section 7.1	Professional Conduct	20
Section 7.2	Performance Reviews	21
Section 7.3	Attendance	21
Section 7.4	Dress Code	22
Section 7.5	Call Back	22
Section 7.6	Non-Solicitation	23
Section 7.7	Electronic Devices, Cell Phones, & Other Handheld Devices	23
Section 7.8	Technology Acceptable Use Policy	24
Section 7.9	Media Inquiries	26
THE WORKPLACE		28
Section 8.1	Drug-Free Workplace	28
Section 8.2	Medical Marijuana	29
Section 8.3	Smoke-Free Workplace	29
Section 8.4	Internal Transfers/Promotions	30
Section 8.5	Open-Door Policy	30
Section 8.6	Problem/Grievance Resolution	31
Section 8.7	Breaks and Meal Periods	32
Section 8.8	County Office Closings	32
Section 8.9	Fraud/Whistleblower Policy	32
Section 8.10	Right to Monitor	35
Section 8.11	Reduction in Force	35
BENEFITS		37
Section 9.1	Holidays	37
Section 9.2	Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF)	38
Section 9.3	Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (C.O.B.R.A.)	38
LEAVES OF ABSENCE / TIME OFF		39
Section 10.1	Paid Leave	39
Section 10.2	Vacation	42
Section 10.3	Sick Leave	42
Section 10.4	Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)	44
Section 10.5	Military Leave	48
Section 10.6	Family Military Leave	50
Section 10.7	Child Bereavement Leave	50

Section 10.8	VESSA.....	51
Section 10.9	Workers' Compensation	51
Section 10.10	Voing Time Off.....	52
Section 10.11	Jury Duty	52
Section 10.12	School Visitation.....	52
Section 10.13	Blood Donation	53
Section 10.14	Personal Leave of Absence	53
Section 10.15	Breastfeeding/Lactation.....	53
PERSONNEL FILE	54
Section 11.1	Your Personnel File	54
WORKPLACE SAFETY	56
Section 12.1	Violence in the Workplace	56
Section 12.2	Fitness for Duty	56
Section 12.3	Accident Reporting.....	57
Section 12.4	Concealed Carry	58
DISCIPLINE, TERMINATION, AND SEPARATION	59
Section 13.1	Disciplinary Policy	59
Section 13.2	Rules of Conduct	59
Section 13.3	Progressive Discipline	61
Section 13.4	Separation of Employment.....	62
Section 13.5	Return of County Property	63
Section 13.6	Rehire.....	64
EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND RECEIPT	65

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Section 1.1 General Policy and Applicability

This handbook is a general informational guide to Jackson County employment policies. Hereinafter, the term “County” will be synonymous to “Jackson County” unless otherwise noted. **This handbook shall not be construed as a contract, implied or otherwise, between you and the County. The County reserves the right to amend, delete, supplement, or rescind any of the provisions of this handbook without advance notice as the County deems necessary and appropriate. The policies contained in the handbook shall not be construed to create contractual rights or any type of promise or guarantee of specific treatment upon which any employee may rely. The County also reserves the right to deviate from these policies in order to achieve its primary mission of providing orderly and cost-efficient services to its citizens. Employment with the County is voluntary at-will on the part of both parties. Either the employee or the County may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause, as either party may deem appropriate.**

Certain County offices or departments have some of their rules and procedures determined by other entities or by other applicable state law or county ordinances. Further, the County recognizes the authority of elected officials to appoint their employees and to control the internal operations of their offices.

The provisions in this handbook are intended to comply with applicable federal, state, and local law, as well as applicable administrative rules and court rules. To the extent that any provisions in this handbook conflict with applicable federal, state, or local law, or administrative rules or court rules, the applicable law, administrative rules, or court rules will take precedence over the provisions of this handbook.

Section 1.2 At-Will Employment

Employment with the County is at-will unless an employee has a separate, written agreement stating otherwise which has been duly executed by both the employee and the County Board, or unless the employee’s employment is governed by a collective bargaining agreement stating otherwise. At-will employment means that either the employee or the County can terminate the employment relationship at any time with or without cause or notice. Nothing set forth in this employment handbook is intended to, nor should be construed to, create any contractual rights.

Section 1.3 Responsibilities

All employees are responsible for familiarizing themselves with this Employee Policy Manual, as well as other pertinent policy and procedure manuals or statements issued by the County. The County will make reasonable efforts to notify employees of any changes made to this manual, but it is the employee's responsibility to be familiar with and follow current employee policies.

Section 1.4 Scope

The policies and procedures contained in this handbook were adopted by the Jackson County Board to govern the conduct and operational procedure of all employees under the jurisdiction of the County Board. In the event that the Courts operating within the County and/or their various subdivisions and departments are without formal written policy, these policies shall apply to the employees only by formal adoption by the Court, except for those rights constitutionally reserved to the Court.

NO CONTRACT – THESE POLICIES ARE PRESENTED FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY, AND MAY BE CHANGED AT ANY TIME WITH OR WITHOUT NOTICE. NOTHING IN THESE POLICIES CREATES OR IS INTENDED TO CREATE AN EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT, EXPRESSED OR IMPLIED. NO REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COUNTY HAS THE AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH AN EMPLOYEE WITHOUT THE EXPRESS CONSENT OF THE COUNTY BOARD.

CHAPTER II

EMPLOYEES

Section 2.1 Recruitment Procedures

It is the policy of Jackson County to follow recruitment procedures that will attract, hire, and retain the most qualified applicants for job vacancies. The County considers educational background, previous experience, and proven skills and abilities while maintaining compliance with applicable employment law. It is also the County's policy to encourage a career within the County by promoting current employees to fill vacancies whenever appropriate.

Section 2.2 Criminal Background Check

If Jackson County requires a criminal background check, it will comply with the Illinois Job Opportunities for Qualified Applicants Act which, in general, prohibits (with certain exceptions) employers from considering or inquiring into a job applicant's criminal record or history until the interview, or, if the applicant will not be interviewed, until after a conditional offer of employment is made. A separate form will be provided for use based upon the circumstances described above. When appropriate, the criminal record is checked to protect the interests of the County, and that of its employees and citizens. **Conviction of certain offenses will automatically disqualify an applicant from employment in a particular position due to federal or state law or County policy.**

Section 2.3 Background Reference Check

To ensure that individuals who join Jackson County are well qualified, and to ensure that Jackson County maintains a safe and productive work environment, it is our policy to reserve the right to conduct pre-employment background checks on all applicants who accept an offer of employment. Background checks may include verification of any information on the applicant's resume or application form. The County will not check a person's credit background unless a bona fide occupational qualification for the position exists.

All offers of employment are conditioned on receipt of a background check report that is acceptable to Jackson County. All background checks are conducted in conformity with the Federal Fair Credit Reporting Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and state and federal privacy and anti-discrimination laws. Reports are kept confidential and are only viewed by individuals involved in the hiring process.

If information obtained in a background check would lead Jackson County to deny employment, a copy of the report will be provided to the applicant, and the applicant will have the opportunity to dispute the report's accuracy. Background checks may include a

criminal check, although a criminal conviction does not automatically bar an applicant from employment.

Additional checks, such as a driving record or credit report, may be made on applicants for particular job categories if appropriate and job related.

Jackson County also reserves the right to conduct a background check for current employees to determine eligibility for promotion or reassignment in the same manner as described above.

Section 2.4 Immigration Law Compliance

All offers of employment are contingent on verification of your right to work in the United States. On your first day of work you will be asked to provide original documents verifying your right to work and, as required by federal law, to sign Federal Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification Form. If you at any time cannot verify your right to work in the United States, Jackson County may be obliged to terminate your employment.

Section 2.5 New Employee Orientation

It is the policy of Jackson County to provide Orientation Programs to all new employees. This will ensure that newly hired employees are acquainted with the expectations of employment and receive consistent and appropriate information regarding employee benefits and County policies and procedures.

Section 2.6 Confidentiality

Our residents and other parties with whom we do business entrust the County with important information relating to them personally and/or their businesses. It is our policy that all information considered confidential will not be disclosed to external parties or to employees without a “need to know.” If an employee questions whether certain information is considered confidential, he/she should first check with his/her Supervisor.

This policy is intended to alert employees to the need for discretion at all times and is not intended to inhibit normal business communications.

All inquiries from the media must be referred to a duly elected member of the Board.

Section 2.7 Outside Employment

Employees are permitted to engage in outside work or to hold other jobs, subject to certain restrictions as outlined below.

Activities and conduct away from the job must not compete with, conflict with, or compromise the County interests or adversely affect job performance and the ability to fulfill all job responsibilities. Employees are prohibited from performing any services for residents and/or businesses on non-working time that are normally performed by Jackson County. This prohibition also extends to the unauthorized use of any County tools or

equipment and the unauthorized use or application of any confidential information. In addition, employees are not to solicit or conduct any outside business during paid working time.

Employees are cautioned to carefully consider the demands that additional work activity will create before accepting outside employment. 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 Jackson County determines that an employee's outside work interferes with performance, the employee may be asked to terminate the outside employment.

Employees who have accepted outside employment may not use paid sick leave to work on the outside job. Fraudulent use of sick leave will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Section 2.8 Nepotism, Employment of Relatives, and Personal Relationships

Jackson County wants to ensure that corporate practices do not create situations such as conflict of interest or favoritism. This extends to practices that involve employee hiring, promotion and transfer. Close relatives, partners, those in a dating relationships, or members of the same household are not permitted to be in positions that have a reporting responsibility to each other. Close relatives are defined as husband, wife, domestic partner, father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, grandfather, grandmother, son, son-in-law, daughter, daughter-in-law, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, brother, sister, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, step relatives, cousins, and domestic partner relatives.

If employees begin a dating relationship or become relatives, partners or members of the same household, and if one party is in a supervisory position, that person is required to inform their Supervisor or office holder of the relationship.

Jackson County reserves the right to apply this policy to situations where there is a conflict or the potential for conflict because of the relationship between employees, even if there is no direct-reporting relationship or authority involved.

CHAPTER III

NON-DISCRIMINATION

Section 3.1 Equal Employment Opportunity

This policy is to ensure that all terms and conditions of employment by the County are in full compliance with the Equal Employment Opportunity requirements as they apply to all employees, applicants, citizens, residents, contractual staff, and/or professional staff performing or providing services for Jackson County with respect to the following areas:

1. Employment process: Recruiting, hiring, training, and promoting all persons in all job classifications will be based solely upon an individual's qualifications, merit, personal capabilities, previous experience, and education relating to the requirements of the open position.
2. Aspects of employment: Compensation, benefits, transfers, demotions, disciplines, layoffs and return from layoffs, terminations, education programs, and all other privileges, terms, and conditions of employment.
3. Advertisements for employment: Jackson County will use the term "Equal Employment Opportunity" or "EEO" in all such employment advertisements.
4. County Services: Utilization and/or provision of all services provided by Jackson County employees or through contracts or agreements.
 - A. It is the policy of Jackson County to ensure equal employment opportunity without discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, ancestry, religion, gender, sexual orientation, genetic information, national origin, mental or physical disability, age, military status, marital status, unfavorable discharge from military service, order of protection status, arrest record, credit history, or any other status protected by law. It is the policy of Jackson County, with regard to religious beliefs, to not require person(s) to violate or forego sincerely held practices of his or her religion including, but not limiting to, wearing of any attire, clothing, or facial hair in accordance with the requirement of his or her religion unless after engaging in a bona fide effort, the employer is unable to reasonably accommodate the sincerely held religious belief without undue hardship on the employer's business. An employer may still maintain a dress code. It is our policy to employ and promote those individuals who possess the required skills, education, experience, and qualifications for each position.
 - B. Reasonable Accommodations for Qualified Individuals with a Disability

It is against the policy of Jackson County Government to discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of a job. When dealing with situations involving job applicants or employees with a disability, the County will follow the guidelines outlined in Workplace Accommodations.

- C. The policy of equal employment opportunity will be enforced by requiring compliance with the foregoing practices and procedures by all offices and departments under the jurisdiction of the County Board. Every good faith effort will be taken by the County to fulfill the objectives of this policy.
- D. The County Board, or designee, will serve as the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer of the County and will be responsible for communicating and implementing this policy.

The County will not in any way retaliate against an individual who makes a report or is involved in an investigation of discrimination under this policy, nor will the County permit any other County official or employee to do so. Retaliation is a serious violation of this policy and should be reported immediately.

Any employee who believes that the Equal Employment Opportunity policy has been violated should immediately submit a report of the incident to his or her supervisor. Supervisors should immediately report the situation to the County Board, the County, or the County's designated Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Officer. If an employee's supervisor is the subject of the complaint or the employee is not comfortable making a report with his/her supervisor, then the employee should submit a report to the immediate attention of the EEO Officer.

Section 3.2 Pregnancy Accommodation

Every affected Jackson County employee who is pregnant, has recently given birth, or who has a medical or common condition related to their pregnancy or childbirth, shall be afforded all rights contained in the Illinois Pregnancy Accommodation Law (PA 98-1050). These rights may include, but are not limited to:

- Reasonable accommodation such as breaks, assistance in lifting, etc.
- Change or restructuring of job assignments.
- Time off.
- Freedom from retaliation.

It is illegal for the County to fire you, refuse to promote you, or refuse to provide you with reasonable accommodation because of pregnancy. For further information about

your rights under the law, or if you believe your rights under the law have been violated, contact: County Board Chair or his/her designee, or you may contact the Illinois Human Rights Department at 222 S. College, Room 101-A, Intake Unit, Springfield, IL 62704; (217) 785-5100.

Section 3.3 Discrimination for the Use of Lawful Products

Except as otherwise specifically provided by law and except as provided below, it is unlawful for Jackson County to refuse to hire or to discharge an individual, or otherwise disadvantage any individual, with respect to compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment because the individual uses lawful products off premises of Jackson County during nonworking hours.

CHAPTER IV

NON-HARASSMENT

Section 4.1 Non-Harassment

Jackson County is committed to a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal employment opportunities and prohibits discriminatory practices.

It is the policy of Jackson County to comply with local, state, and federal anti-discrimination laws, and to provide a workplace free of discrimination and harassment based on race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, familial status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, status as a veteran, order of protection status, or any other protected class. In keeping with this commitment, we will not tolerate harassment of employees by anyone, including any manager, coworker, vendor, resident, contractual staff, or citizen.

4.1.1 Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment constitutes discrimination and is illegal under federal, state, and local laws. For the purposes of this policy, sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to:

1. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual acts or favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature;
2. Any statement or implication that an individual's submission to or rejection of such sexual conduct could be used as a condition of employment, or as the basis for any employment decision affecting such individual; and
3. Any conduct, whether physical or verbal, which has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. This includes, but is not limited to: slurs, jokes, or degrading comments of a sexual nature; offensive sexual flirtation, sexual advances, or propositions; abuse of a sexual nature; graphic verbal comments about an individual's body; sexual innuendo or suggestive comments; sexually oriented "kidding" or "teasing"; unwanted physical touching, such as patting or pinching another's body; sending, forwarding, or soliciting sexually suggestive letters, notes, emails, or images; and the display in the workplace of sexually suggestive printed or visual materials, clothing, objects, or pictures.

Sexual Harassment may include a range of subtle to obvious behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different gender.

4.1.2 Harassment

Harassment based on other protected classes is also strictly prohibited. Under this policy, harassment is defined as verbal or physical conduct that demeans or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of their race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, order of protection status, national origin, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, or any other characteristic protected by law, and that:

1. Has the effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment
2. Has the effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance
3. Otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities

Harassment includes, but is not limited to: epithets, slang, nicknames, slurs, negative stereotyping, threatening, intimidating or hostile acts, denigrating jokes, and written or graphic material or material that is transmitted electronically that demeans or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group.

4.1.3 Procedures

Every employee must end and/or avoid any conduct that reasonably could be interpreted as discrimination or harassment under this policy, even if such conduct was not intended as offensive. Conversely, employees are expected and encouraged to inform others in the workplace whenever conduct is unwelcome, offensive, or in poor taste.

Jackson County expects the immediate reporting of all perceived incidents of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, regardless of the offender's identity or position, or the perceived severity of the incident. Individuals who believe that they have been subjected to harassment (or who have reason to believe that someone else has been subjected to harassment) should discuss their concerns with any County supervisor, Supervisor, or the County Board immediately. The employee may prepare a statement in writing, and/or be prepared to discuss the following:

1. The name, department, and position of the person or persons allegedly causing the harassment.
2. A description of the incident(s) including the date(s), location(s), the presence of witnesses, and the names of other employees who might have been subject to the same or similar harassment.

3. The alleged effect of the incident(s) on the complainant's position.
4. The steps the complainant has taken to try to stop the harassment.
5. Any other information the complainant believes to be relevant to the harassment complaint.

Any reported allegations of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation will be investigated promptly by the County Board. The investigation may include individual interviews with the parties involved and, where necessary, with individuals who may have observed the alleged conduct or may have other relevant knowledge.

1. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigative process to the greatest extent possible.
2. Anonymous complaints will be accepted; however, the County may be limited in its options in investigating or resolving anonymous complaints due to a limited ability to collect additional information.
3. Appropriate action, which may include disciplinary action, not to exclude termination, will be taken against any employee found to have engaged in the harassment of any other employee in the workplace in accordance with policy. If an employee is concerned about behavior or harassment by another employee that occurs outside of the workplace, they will be encouraged to contact appropriate law enforcement officials.
4. Retaliation against an individual for reporting harassment or discrimination or for participating in an investigation of a claim of harassment or discrimination is a serious violation of this policy and, like harassment or discrimination itself, will be subject to disciplinary action, not to exclude termination. Acts of retaliation should be reported immediately and will be promptly investigated and addressed.
5. Failure of an employee or supervisor to cooperate with an investigation of harassment, or refusal to comply with disciplinary action resulting from an investigation of harassment may be subject to further disciplinary action, not to exclude termination.

An employee who believes s/he has been subjected to sexual harassment has the right to file a complaint with the Illinois Department of Human Rights, 100 West Randolph Street, 10th Floor, Intake Unit, Chicago, Illinois 60601; (312) 814-6200; (217) 785-5125 (TTY) and/or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 500 West Madison, Suite 2800, Chicago, Illinois 60661; (312) 353-2713. The Illinois Human Rights Act provides that complaints of harassment must be filed within 180 days of the alleged incident. A complaint with the EEOC must be filed within 300 days of the alleged incident. It is also a violation of section 6-101 of the Illinois Human Rights Act to retaliate against an employee for opposing or complaining about conduct believed to be a violation of the Act.

CHAPTER V

EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATIONS

Section 5.1 Classifications of Employees

All employees hired by Jackson County are classified as:

REGULAR FULL-TIME – Employees who are not in a temporary status and who are regularly scheduled to work the County’s full-time schedule from 35 to 40 hours per week as determined by the department. Generally, these employees are eligible for the full benefits package, subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefits program.

REGULAR PART-TIME – Employees who are not in a temporary status and who are regularly scheduled to work less than the full-time schedule but at least 20 hours each week. Regular, part-time employees are eligible for some of the benefits offered by the County subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefits program.

TEMPORARY FULL-TIME – Employees who are hired as interim replacements to temporarily supplement the workforce or to assist in the completion of a specific project and who are temporarily scheduled to work the County’s full-time schedule for a limited duration. Employment beyond any initially stated period does not in any way imply a change in employment status.

Temporary workers are not eligible for County benefits unless specifically stated otherwise in the policies or are deemed eligible in plan documents. No individual hired on a temporary basis can be converted to a full-time employee without going through the employment process.

The County shall have the authority to establish staff positions and hire employees into those positions within budgetary limits.

This subsection is intended to define normal hours of work and shall not be construed as a guarantee of hours per day or per week.

Section 5.2 Exempt and Non-Exempt Employees

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) established minimum wage, overtime, wage and hour record keeping, and child labor standards affecting full-time and part-time workers in both the private and public sectors. In Illinois, the Wage and Hour Division of the Illinois Department of Labor addresses these same employment conditions. A state may add to but not subtract from the federal standards.

The FLSA does not affect all employees. In a very general sense, employees that meet the definitions of executive, administrative, and professional are exempt from the

FLSA. The federal government is the final arbiter of the definition of its regulations. At present, the following is a summary definition:

1. Executive – Manages two or more workers as a primary duty with the ability to hire, fire, and exercise other discretionary powers.
2. Administrative – Performs primarily office work related to management of policy and general business practices with authority over a staff of workers.
3. Professional – The primary work requires an advanced knowledge customarily acquired by specialized study or originality and creativity that involves discretion and independent judgment. The work is intellectual and varied, not standardized.
4. Certain computer employees – Performs computer system analyst, program, or software engineering skills.

Non-exempt employees are those eligible for overtime pay or compensatory time of 1.5 times the regular hourly rate of pay for all hours worked over 40 hours per work week. All overtime or compensatory time must be approved in advance. Employees should consult with the County Board Chairman if they have questions regarding their classification as a non-exempt employee.

CHAPTER VI

WORKWEEK AND PAYROLL

Section 6.1 Payroll Records

The official payroll records are kept by the County Clerk's Office. Each Supervisor shall input in the financial software program a work record for each employee in their department on a bi-weekly basis, noting hours worked, leave taken, and overtime worked during the previous pay period.

Section 6.2 Payment of Wages

Salary payment is made bi-weekly for base salary. The County pays employees one week in arrears. Paydays are usually bi-weekly on every other Friday.

Overtime payment, which is included with the nonexempt employee's base salary payment, is also paid bi-weekly with such payment covering hours worked in the prior bi-weekly period.

It is the County's policy that employees will be paid via direct deposit.

If the normal payday falls on a County-recognized holiday, direct deposit will be deposited one workday before the aforementioned schedule.

Employees may elect to have their direct deposit of funds to either a savings or checking account at the financial institution of their choice.

If an employee's marital status changes or the number of exemptions previously claimed increases or decreases, a new Form W-4 must be submitted to the County.

No salary advances will be made.

Section 6.3 Work Week and Work Hours

The work week, for purposes of the state and federal overtime laws, shall be defined as Monday through Sunday at midnight.

The normal working hours of all full-time employees of Jackson County shall be 8:00 a.m. and continuing through 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Each employee shall be generally allowed one lunch taken in such a manner so as to ensure the department's operation is not impaired.

Employees will submit their time record weekly as directed. Each employee is to maintain an accurate daily record of his or her hours worked. All absences from work schedules should be appropriately recorded.

Section 6.4 Overtime

Jackson County shall have the right to require overtime work and will make such assignment in a fair and equitable manner.

Non-exempt employees (defined by applicable wage and hour laws based upon job duties) will receive overtime pay (at the rate of one and one-half times the employee's regular rate), for all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in any given work week or holiday when offices are required to be open, in accordance with the requirements of federal and/or state law. Any time worked in excess of 40 hours per week must be authorized in advance by your Supervisor. Employees who work overtime without obtaining proper authorization may be subject to discipline.

If budget constraints require, the County may grant compensatory time off in lieu of overtime pay. If granted, compensatory time off will be allowed at one and one half hours for every hour worked, over 40 hours per week. No employee may accumulate more than 240 hours of compensatory time. Further, the County reserves the right to require the employee to use compensatory time. Compensatory time accumulated but unused at the time the employee leaves the County service shall be paid at the then-going hourly rate.

Section 6.5 Mileage Reimbursement

Each employee who is required to use his/her personal vehicle for department business and receives mileage must:

- Possess a valid driver's license; and
- Be covered by minimum liability and property damage insurance at the expense of the owner.

Each year, or at any time when requested by their supervisor, the employee will verify their compliance with this requirement by submitting a copy of their driver's license and insurance identification card to their supervisor.

Appropriate travel expenses will follow Ordinance 2016-10 adopted herein by reference. In no case, may an employee claim reimbursement for entertainment or alcoholic beverages.

Section 6.6 Garnishments

Jackson County must comply with all writs of garnishment it receives. Employees will be notified before any deductions are taken from paychecks due to a writ of garnishment requiring Jackson County to pay a portion of their wages directly to a court, and information regarding garnishments will be held in confidence.

Section 6.7 No Pyramiding

Compensation shall not be paid more than once for the same hours under any provision of this Article or Agreement.

CHAPTER VII

EMPLOYEE EXPECTATIONS

Section 7.1 Professional Conduct

Each employee holds a position of public trust and is expected to conduct themselves in a responsible, professional manner, refraining from conduct which could adversely affect the confidence of the public. In addition, good relations with co-workers, other departments and offices of the County, and public agencies are essential to the County serving its citizens. This requires that employees conduct themselves and business activities in a professional and courteous manner. Unprofessional, and therefore unacceptable, conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. The following examples cannot cover every type of **seriously inappropriate** employee misconduct but illustrate conduct that may result in termination depending upon the circumstances:

- Insubordination-Refusal to carry out supervisory instruction(s)
- Violation of Alcohol / Drug policy
- Disrespectful treatment based on sex, race, color, religion, age, national origin, disability, or any other legally protected class
- Threatening a manager, co-worker, resident, or contractor
- Disruptive behavior, including fighting and loud, verbal language
- Possession of weapons, explosives, or the like on County premises or on County business unless job specific or expressly permitted by law
- Harassment of employee, resident, or contractor
- Falsification of records
- Unauthorized use of County property (e.g. vehicles, equipment, and the like), use or consumption of County property for personal purposes, or removal of County property without authorized approval
- Other conduct that could be considered illegal, dishonest, or counterproductive to the best interest of the County, its residents, or its employees

Section 7.2 Performance Reviews

The County continually evaluates an employee's work performance. The goal of a performance review is to identify areas where an employee excels and areas that need improvement. Each employee will receive a formal appraisal at or around their anniversary date.

Performance appraisals are based on, but not limited to:

- Knowledge of work
- Quality of work
- Productivity
- Initiative
- Cooperation
- Loyalty
- Conduct
- Ability to meet the public
- Personal appearance
- Attendance and punctuality

Employees should note that a performance review does not guarantee a pay increase or promotion. Written performance evaluations may be made at any time to advise employees of unacceptable performance. Evaluations or any subsequent change in employment status, position, or pay does not alter the employee's at-will relationship with the County.

Forward any questions about performance expectation or evaluation to the manager conducting the evaluation.

Section 7.3 Attendance

Employees are expected to report to work whenever scheduled and be at their work station at starting time, and again after lunch break at the prescribed time. Failure to observe working hours could result in disciplinary procedures.

When an employee is unable to report to work because of illness or emergency, the employee must call his/her Supervisor as far in advance as possible prior to his/her scheduled shift time, or in the event of an emergency, as soon as practical. If the Supervisor is unavailable, employees should notify the other office staff. Such notification should

include a reason for the absence or tardiness and an indication of when the employee can be expected to report to work. The absent employee is responsible for ensuring that proper advance notice of absent or late arrival is given to the employee's Supervisor or other office staff. Failure to provide proper notification on an absence or lateness, as well as unexcused absences, late arrivals or early departures from work may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge unless otherwise prohibited by law.

An employee who fails to report to work and who fails to notify his/her Supervisor for three (3) consecutive workdays shall be considered to have abandoned the job without notice, effective at the end of their normal shift on the third day.

7.3.1 Individual Emergencies

Individual employee circumstances may affect an employee's ability to come to work. The key to assessing the situation on a case-by-case basis is the communication between the employee and his or her manager. The County recognizes that in a severe national or regional disaster, all methods of communication may be unavailable, but employees should persist, by any method possible, to reach their manager to discuss individual circumstances.

All pay, leave, and attendance policies included here will apply, regardless of the circumstances of the absenteeism. If the employee is required to take time off during inclement weather or other emergency, and the County is open for business, Jackson County may require the use of vacation time, paid time off, or other accrued paid leave.

Section 7.4 Dress Code

Jackson County employees are expected to present a professional business-like image to visitors and the public. Acceptable personal appearance, like proper maintenance of work areas, is an ongoing requirement of employment with the County.

Jackson County recognizes the importance of individually held religious beliefs of persons within its workforce. The County will reasonably accommodate a staff member's religious beliefs in terms of workplace attire.

Any questions about the County's guidelines for attire should be discussed with the Supervisor.

Section 7.5 Call Back

All employees are subject to call back in emergencies or as needed by the County to provide necessary services to the public. A refusal to respond to a call back is grounds for immediate disciplinary action, including possible termination. Employees called back to work will be paid their appropriate rate of pay for hours worked (the overtime rate, if applicable).

Section 7.6 Non-Solicitation

It is improper and against Jackson County policy for an employee to attempt to sell products or services, promote ideologies, or distribute literature or materials related to such issues to other Jackson County employees during work time or in designated work areas (i.e. offices, courtrooms, receiving areas, mail rooms, maintenance shops, etc.) as these are personal issues that should only be dealt with on personal time (lunches, breaks) and in non-work areas (such as employee lounges, locker rooms, eating areas of cafeterias). Products or services may be sold if pre-approved by the Supervisor and during non-work time.

Section 7.7 Electronic Devices, Cell Phones, & Other Handheld Devices

This policy covers those aspects of an employee's work at the County regarding the use of cellular phones, smartphones, or other handheld devices, whether County issued or personally owned, and the use of such electronic devices. Regardless of whether a cellular phone or smartphone is County or employee owned, such devices will be turned off, or set to vibrate/silent, during all meetings, conferences and other locations where incoming calls may disrupt workflow.

7.7.1 Use of County Owned Electronic Devices

Some job classifications require immediate access to an employee. Under such circumstances, the County may issue a cell phone, or other device, to an employee for work-related communication. The primary use of such a device is for County-related communication. All personal use of such devices is expected to be kept to a minimum. If the personal use of these devices causes disruption, or loss in productivity, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action.

Employees in possession of County equipment, such as cell phones and other electronic devices, are expected to protect the equipment from loss, damage, or theft. Upon resignation or termination of employment, or at any time upon request of the County, the employee may be asked to produce the electronic device for return or inspection.

Only when there is a necessity to do so will the County consider replacing a County-issued electronic device. Under no circumstances will the County replace business cell phones, or other electronic devices, to keep up with the changes in technology when there is not a need for such a replacement.

In the event an employee goes out on a leave under the Family Medical Leave Act or other leave described in this policy, the County reserves the right to deactivate or request for the device to be turned in for the duration of the employee's leave.

7.7.2 Use of Employee Owned Electronic Devices

While at work, employees are expected to exercise the same discretion in using personal cellular phones and other electronic devices as is expected of them in using County-owned devices. Excessive personal calls during the work day, regardless of the type of phone used, can interfere with employee productivity and be distracting to other workers. Employees are encouraged to make any personal calls on non-work time where possible and to ensure that friends and family members are made aware of the County's policy. Management reserves the right to request that the employee provide detailed cellular phone bills regarding usage reports of calls made during working hours to determine if such usage was excessive.

Use of personal cellular phones for making/taking County calls is discouraged. Under certain circumstances, an employee may submit a request to have such calls reimbursed. The County will not be liable for loss, or damage, to personal cellular phones, or other personal electronic devices brought into the workplace.

7.7.3 Safety and the Use of All Electronic Devices in the Workplace

At all times, all employees are expected to follow applicable state and federal laws or regulations regarding the use of cellular phones and other electronic devices.

Jackson County complies with state law regarding "hands-free" use of cell phones and electronic devices during the operation of any motorized vehicle. However, employees remain responsible for the continued safe operation of motor vehicles at all times.

EMPLOYEES WHO ARE CHARGED WITH TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS RESULTING FROM THE USE OF ANY CELLULAR PHONE OR ELECTRONIC DEVICE WHILE OPERATING A MOTOR DRIVEN VEHICLE WILL BE SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL LIABILITIES THAT RESULT FROM SUCH VIOLATIONS.

Section 7.8 Technology Acceptable Use Policy

The Jackson County Board has adopted an official policy dealing with acceptable use of technology, and provides guidelines for employees on their professional and personal use of technology/social media. A copy of the **Technology Acceptable Use Policy** is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

Nothing in this policy shall be interpreted in any manner that unlawfully prohibits the right of employees to engage in protected, concerted activity under the Illinois Public Labor Relations Act. Jackson County has, and always will, comply fully with the obligations under the Illinois Public Labor Relations Act. Likewise, nothing in this policy should be construed to violate an employee's rights under the federal or state constitutions.

By the way of a reminder, a violation of this policy may subject an employee to discipline, up to and including termination.

7.8.1 Professional Use of Social Media

Before engaging in social media as a representative of Jackson County, you must be authorized to comment by an elected official or supervisor. You may not comment as a representative of Jackson County unless you are authorized to do so. Once authorized to comment, you must:

- Disclose you are an employee or elected official of Jackson County, and use only your own identity.
- Disclose and comment only on non-confidential information.
- Ensure that all content published is accurate and not misleading and complies with all Jackson County policies.
- Comment only on your area of expertise and authority.
- Ensure comments are respectful and refrain from posting or responding to material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, and discriminatory, infringes copyright, breaches a Court order, or is otherwise unlawful.
- Refrain from making comments or posting material that might otherwise cause damage to Jackson County's reputation or bring it into disrepute.

7.8.2 Personal Use of Social Media

Jackson County recognizes that you may wish to use social media in your own personal life. This policy does not intend to discourage or unduly limit your personal expression or online activities.

However, you should recognize the potential for damage caused (either directly or indirectly) to Jackson County in certain circumstances via your personal use of social media when you can be identified as a Jackson County employee. Accordingly, you should comply with this policy to ensure that risk of such damage is minimized.

You are personally responsible for the content you publish in a personal capacity on any form of social media platform. Remember that all posts are public and often permanent. When in doubt, you should seek guidance from your Supervisor on how to comply with this policy. Jackson County reserves the right to read what you write or say publicly and decide if it meets this policy.

- Represent yourself accurately. Unless Jackson County has designated you to speak officially for Jackson County, you should not state that you write or speak on behalf of Jackson County or that your viewpoints are the same as

Jackson County, and you should make this clear to those reading or listening to your points of view.

- Do not disclose private or confidential information about Jackson County employees or citizens that you obtained through your employment with Jackson County. Confidential information is information that is exempt from disclosure under Section 7 of the Illinois Freedom of Information Act, 5 ILCS 140/7.
- Even when using social media on a personal basis, employees may be disciplined for posting material that is, or might be construed as, vulgar, obscene, threatening, intimidating, harassing, or a violation of Jackson County's workplace policies against discrimination, harassment on account of age, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, disability, or other protected class, status, or characteristic.
- If you chose to identify your work affiliation on a social network, you should regard all communication on that network as you would in a professional network. Ensure your profile, photographs, and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself with colleagues and clients.
- Employees who access social media during work hours or on Jackson County-owned equipment should still comply with Jackson County computer usage policy. There is no right to privacy on Jackson County-owned equipment.
- Jackson County may discipline employees for making a comment or posting any material that might otherwise cause damage to Jackson County's reputation or bring it into disrepute. When the employee's comment is made as a citizen and not as an employee and is made on a matter of public concern, Jackson County may discipline the employee in situations where the interests of Jackson County in promoting efficient operations outweighs the interests of the employee in commenting on such matters of public concern.

Section 7.9 Media Inquiries

All media inquiries should be referred to Supervisor. No employee is authorized to speak to the media on behalf of the County unless expressly authorized to do so in advance by that employee's Supervisor, or under certain circumstances the County Board Chairman.

Media requests for public documents should be honored, but only through the designated Freedom of Information Act Officer of the department, or under certain

circumstances the County Board Chairman. Under no circumstances are materials, documents, or other information that are designated as confidential, private, proprietary, personal, or restricted be provided without prior express approval of the County Board Chairman and State's Attorney.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WORKPLACE

Section 8.1 Drug-Free Workplace

The Jackson County Board believes strongly in making all County work places safe and healthy environments free of drugs and the accompanying problems associated with their use. Further, the Drug Free Work Place Act (30 ILCS 580/3) mandates that the County initiate and maintain a drug-free workplace for its employees. Accordingly, the Board has adopted the following policy:

- A. County policy, state, and federal regulations prohibit employees from engaging in the following conduct:
 - 1. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance (including cannabis), or the use of intoxicants in any County building, on County property, or while engaged in County business.
 - 2. Reporting to work under the influence or with a measurable amount of alcohol, intoxicants, illegal drugs, or other controlled substances in their systems.
 - 3. Refusing to participate in drug-free programs that are sponsored from time to time by the County.
 - 4. Failing to notify the County Board or its designee within five (5) days of any criminal conviction of a drug statute for a violation having occurred in the workplace.
- B. The County recognizes drug/alcohol dependency as an illness and a major health problem. Employees needing help in dealing with such problems are encouraged to use our health insurance plan as appropriate. Conscientious efforts to seek such help will not jeopardize an employee's job and will not be noted in any employee file.
- C. Any employee who violates any of the prohibitions contained in the above sections and/or fails to make a conscientious effort to seek help for his or her drug/alcohol dependency is subject to appropriate disciplinary action which could include involuntary termination.
- D. The County respects the confidentiality and privacy of its employees. The identity of any employee having been convicted of an offense and the identity of any employee participating in the County's assistance program or other assessment of treatment program will not be revealed by the County to anyone except as required

by law. The County will release an employee's records as directed by the express written consent of the employee.

- E. Nothing contained herein shall prohibit any department/office of Jackson County from implementing a more restrictive drug-free policy where deemed appropriate.
- F. The County may require an employee to immediately submit to a urine and/or blood test where there is a reasonable suspicion that the employee is under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The County will only use the Carbondale Memorial Hospital, St. Joseph's Hospital, or other laboratories which are certified by the state of Illinois, pursuant to the Illinois Clinical Laboratory Act, or that meet the accreditation requirements of the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) to perform drug and/or alcohol testing.

Section 8.2 Medical Marijuana

Employees may not bring medical marijuana (cannabis) into the workplace and/or onto any Jackson County-owned property, including buildings, park and recreation areas, parking lots, and/or County-owned vehicles, even if the employee has the legal right to possess legally obtained marijuana (cannabis) outside the workplace.

An employee may not be under the influence of marijuana (cannabis) while working. An employee determined to be under the influence of legally prescribed marijuana (cannabis) shall be subject to remedial actions, including discipline up to and including termination, in the same manner and fashion as an employee under the influence of any other legally prescribed medication.

As allowed under state statute, Jackson County reserves the right to conduct random drug testing, or testing for reason and suspicious cause, as deemed necessary. A positive result in any County-required drug screen indicating the presence of legally prescribed marijuana (cannabis) shall be treated in the same manner as any other medication which an employee has been legally prescribed.

Section 8.3 Smoke-Free Workplace

Pursuant to the Illinois Smoke Free Workplace Act, it is the policy of the County to prohibit smoking in order to provide and maintain a safe and healthy work environment for all employees. The law defines smoking as the "act of lighting, smoking or carrying a lighted or smoldering cigar, cigarette or pipe of any kind." This policy also applies to the use of the "E-cigarette" technology currently available.

Even while smoking outdoors, employees must remember that tobacco use of any kind (including "chewing" tobacco) in the presence of others may be offensive. The rights of others must be a consideration at all times.

The smoke-free workplace policy applies to:

- All areas of County buildings.
- All County-sponsored off-site conferences and meetings.
- All vehicles owned or leased by the County.
- All visitors (and vendors) to the County premises.
- All contractors and consultants and/or their employees working on the County premises.
- All employees, temporary employees, and student interns.

Smoking is permitted in parking lots only as long as they are well beyond 15 feet from any entrance or exit to a building.

Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination.

Section 8.4 Internal Transfers/Promotions

Employees with more than twelve months of service may request consideration to transfer to other jobs as vacancies become available and will be considered along with other applicants. At the same time, the County may initiate transfers of employees between departments and facilities to meet specified work requirements and reassignment of work requirements.

Jackson County offers employees promotions to higher-level positions when appropriate. The County prefers to promote from within and may first consider current employees with the necessary qualifications and skills to fill vacancies above the entry level, unless outside recruitment is considered to be in the County's best interest.

To be considered, employees must have held their current position for at least twelve (12) months, have a satisfactory performance record, and have no disciplinary actions during the last twelve (12) months. Management retains the discretion to make exceptions to the policy.

Section 8.5 Open-Door Policy

Jackson County has adopted an open-door policy for all employees. This means that every manager's door is open to every employee. The purpose of our open-door policy is to encourage open communication, feedback, and discussion about any matter of importance to an employee.

If any area of your work is causing you concern, you have the responsibility to address your concern with a manager. Whether you have a problem, complaint, suggestion, or observation, Jackson County managers want to hear from you. By listening to you, the County is able to improve, address complaints, and foster employee understanding of the rationale for practices, processes, and decisions.

Most problems can and should be resolved in discussion with your immediate supervisor; this is encouraged as your first effort to solve a problem. In addition to an open-door policy, the County has established an effective grievance procedure, which is contained in Section 8.6. No matter how you approach your problem, complaint, or suggestion, you will find managers at all levels that are willing to listen and help bring about a solution or clarification.

By helping to solve problems, managers benefit by gaining valuable insight into possible problems with existing methods, procedures, and approaches. While there may not be an easy answer or solution to every concern, Jackson County employees have the opportunity at all times, through the open-door policy, to be heard.

Section 8.6 Problem/Grievance Resolution

For employees who are “**employees at-will**,” it is important that they are treated fairly and receive prompt responses to problems and concerns. For this reason, the Jackson County Board provides a grievance procedure for non-union employees in order to promote resolution of issues raised by staff. This procedure may be used freely without fear of retaliation. The process outlined below should be used if an individual disagrees with a supervisor’s action, including any disciplinary action. If the problem involves discriminatory harassment, and/or discrimination, reference to those policies should be made to initiate a grievance.

1. Discuss complaint with an immediate supervisor. The Jackson County Board encourages informal resolution of complaints. Employees should first discuss a complaint with their immediate supervisor within three (3) business days of the situation whenever possible. If the complaint is not resolved as a result of this discussion, or such a discussion is not appropriate under the circumstances, the employee should proceed to Step 2. If the action in dispute involves suspension or termination of employment, Step 1 should be bypassed.
2. Written Grievance – If the employee feels the grievance was not resolved in discussion with his or her immediate supervisor, he or she shall meet with the County representative within five (5) working days, and the representative shall provide a written decision within five (5) working days thereafter.

3. Final Appeal to the County Board – If the employee is not satisfied with the Step 2 decision, they may submit the grievance to the County Board within seven (7) business days of receipt of the decision under Step 2. The County Board will provide the final written response and decision within a reasonable period of time.

Section 8.7 Breaks and Meal Periods

All breaks shall be arranged so that they do not interfere with County business or service to the public. The employee's Supervisor or supervisor shall schedule meal periods. The scheduling of meal periods may vary depending on department workload.

Section 8.8 County Office Closings

Every reasonable effort will be made to keep the Courthouse and other County-operated offices open during normal work days, and the staff shall make every practical effort to report to work. Should it be necessary to officially close the Courthouse and other County-operated offices, the decision to suspend operations will be made in conjunction with the Chief Judge, Chairperson of the Jackson County Board, and the Sheriff. Employees will immediately be notified of the closing either in person or by telephone.

When the Courthouse has to be closed prior to 8:00 a.m. because of weather emergencies or other man-made or natural disasters, employees that are scheduled to work that day may take either a paid vacation, personal day, or an unpaid day. In the event of hazardous weather or other disaster conditions that occur during the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., employees that are at work that day will be paid from the time the office closes until the end of their normal work day.

In the event of extreme weather conditions occurring locally, which make it impossible for the employee to report for work when the Courthouse and their Department is in operation, the employee may take a paid vacation day, personal day, or an unpaid day.

Section 8.9 Fraud/Whistleblower Policy

The County Board is responsible for the detection and prevention of fraud, misappropriations, and other irregularities. Fraud includes, but is not limited to, knowingly misrepresenting the truth or concealment of a material fact in order to benefit personally, creating a benefit for a family member/friend, or inducing another to act to his or her detriment. Each Supervisor will be familiar with the types of improprieties that might occur within his or her area of responsibility and be alert for any indication of irregularity. Any suspected fraud should be immediately reported to the County Board Chair or the State's Attorney for investigation.

8.9.1 Purpose/Scope

The purpose of this policy is to establish certain principles and expectations for the County in order to prevent fraud, to investigate fraud, to provide consequences for engaging in any manner of fraud, and to heighten awareness of possible fraud. The County will not tolerate fraud or the concealment of fraud. This policy is intended to promote consistent organizational behavior by providing guidelines and assigning responsibility for the development of controls and conduct of investigations.

This policy applies to any irregularity, suspected or observed, involving any employee of the County, vendors, contractors, volunteers, outside agencies doing business with the County, and any other persons or parties in a position to commit fraud on the County. Any investigation required shall be conducted without regard to the suspected wrongdoer's length of service, position/title, or relationship with the County.

8.9.2 Actions Constituting Fraud

Actions constituting fraud include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Falsifying or unauthorized altering of County documents, including, but not limited to: claims for payments or reimbursements (including but not limited to submitting false claims for travel or overtime), files (both physical and electronic forms), photographic or audio records, or accounts belonging to the County; checks, bank drafts, or any other County financial document; maintenance records; fire, health, and safety reports.
- Accepting or offering a bribe, gifts, or other favors under circumstances that indicate that the gift or favor was intended to influence an employee's decision making.
- Disclosing to other persons the purchasing/bidding activities engaged in, or contemplated by, the County in order to give any entity, person, or business an unfair advantage in the bid process.
- Causing the County to pay excessive prices or fees where justification is not documented.
- Unauthorized destruction, theft, tampering, or removal of County records, furniture, fixtures, or equipment.
- Using the County's equipment or work time for any outside private business activity or enterprise.
- Any dishonest or fraudulent act.
- Impropriety in the handling or reporting of money or financial transactions.

8.9.3 Investigation Responsibilities

The County Board Chairman, in consultation with the State's Attorney, has the primary responsibility for overseeing the investigation of all suspected fraudulent acts as defined in this policy. If the investigation substantiates that fraudulent activities have occurred, the County Board Chairman will issue reports to the appropriate designated personnel and, if appropriate, to the full County Board.

Decisions to prosecute or refer the examination results to the appropriate law enforcement and/or regulatory agencies for independent investigation will be made in consultation with the State's Attorney and the County Board, as will final decisions on the disposition of the case. When an investigation is conducted concerning complaints or charges against an employee, the employee shall be accorded ethical treatment, due process of law, and shall be offered fair and impartial consideration. All County employees shall cooperate fully with appropriate authorities who are conducting investigations into employee conduct.

8.9.4 Confidentiality

The County Board shall treat all information received confidentially (to the extent permitted by law). Investigation results will not be disclosed or discussed with anyone other than those who have a legitimate need to know and as may be required by law.

8.9.5 Authorization for Investigating Suspected Fraud

The County Board Chairman, in consultation with the State's Attorney, will investigate suspected fraud and in conjunction therewith will have access to County records (paper or electronic), premises (whether owned or rented), files, desks, cabinets, storage facilities, and may conduct interviews of suspected parties or witnesses.

8.9.6 Reporting Procedures

Great care must be taken in the investigation of suspected improprieties or irregularities so as to avoid mistaken accusations or alerting suspected individuals that an investigation is under way until the appropriate time.

An employee who discovers or suspects fraudulent activity will contact the County Board Chairman immediately. The employee or other complainant may remain anonymous. All inquiries concerning the activity under investigation from the suspected individual, his or her attorney or representative, or any other inquirer should be directed to the State's Attorney. No information concerning the status of an investigation will be given out. The proper response to any inquiries is "I am not at liberty to discuss this matter." Under no circumstances should any reference be made to "the allegation," "the crime," "the forgery," "the misappropriation," or any other specific reference.

The reporting individual should be instructed not to contact the suspected individual in an effort to determine facts or demand restitution, or discuss the case, facts, suspicions, or allegations with anyone unless specifically asked to do so by the State's Attorney or the County Board Chairman.

8.9.7 Protection of Reporting Person

No County employee shall be dismissed, disciplined, or suffer an adverse personnel action for disclosing information pursuant to the provisions of this policy. Neither the County nor the elected or appointed official shall take any adverse action that affects the rights or interests of a person in retaliation for the person's disclosure of information under this policy. The provisions and protections of this policy shall not be applicable when an employee discloses information which the employee either knows, or reasonably should know, is false information.

8.9.8 Disciplinary Action

If an investigation results in a recommendation of discipline consistent with this policy handbook, the applicable discipline decision shall be made by the appropriate Supervisor or the County Board, all taken in consultation with the State's Attorney or outside counsel, if necessary.

Section 8.10 Right to Monitor

All County-supplied technology and County-related work records belong to the County and not to the employee. It is for authorized use only. Any use of the system may be intercepted, monitored, recorded, copied, audited, inspected and/or disclosed to authorized County staff and law enforcement personnel as well as authorized officials of other domestic and foreign agencies. By using Jackson County equipment and the County system, the user consents to such activities. Inappropriate or illegal use or communications may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Section 8.11 Reduction in Force

It is the policy of Jackson County to reduce the workforce when deemed necessary and appropriate.

8.11.1 Guidelines

A. Reduction in Force

1. A Supervisor, in consultation with the Board, may implement a reduction in force (RIF) of an employee(s) for the following reasons:
 - a. A shortage of funds or work;
 - b. A bona fide abolishment of, or change in, the duties of a position;
 - c. A position eliminated due to re-organization;

- d. A position that is part of a program by a federal or state grant in which the grant funds cease to exist.
- B. In the event a RIF is expected; the County will attempt to communicate information to employees about the impending reduction as soon as possible.
- C. In determining the order of reduction of force, the Supervisor shall consider, on a consistent and equitable basis, qualifications, performance appraisals, work record, conduct, job responsibilities, and years of service.
- D. When a reduction in force occurs, the separation date is normally the last day worked. If the reduction in force occurs during a disability leave, the separation will be deemed to be the date the reduction in force occurred. This date does not include any time owed to the employee, such as vacation, sick leave, compensatory time or floating holidays.
- E. Group insurance benefits will cease in accordance with policy.
- F. Application for Re-employment
 - 1. An employee who has been subjected to reduction in force is eligible to apply for re-employment by completing an application.
 - 2. All other considerations being equal, applicants who are on the re-employment registry will be considered before external candidates.
 - 3. A person re-employed shall be subject to the successful completion of an introduction period.
 - 4. The employee's past salary is no indication of future salary.

CHAPTER IX

BENEFITS

Section 9.1 Holidays

All offices and departments of County government where the days of operation are subject to the discretion of the County Board shall be closed upon the day designated by Statute to be observed as a holiday*. It is the policy of the County to observe the following days:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King's Birthday
- Lincoln's Birthday
- Washington's Birthday
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Friday after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day

No other day shall be considered unless designated by the Board.

Only active employees shall qualify for paid Holidays unless otherwise indicated.

*Subject to Judicial Review

9.1.1 Religious Holidays

If an employee's religious beliefs require observance of a holiday not included in the basic holiday schedule, the employee may, with the Supervisor's approval, take the day off using vacation, compensatory time, or leave without pay.

Section 9.2 Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF)

Once an employee reaches eligibility qualifications, he or she is required to participate in the IMRF plan. Information regarding the plan, eligibility, etc. will be provided to employees in New Employee Orientation or at any time from the County. If an employee participates in IMRF, upon attaining benefit eligibility, payments are in addition to Federal Social Security payments.

It is the policy of Jackson County to provide employees and their families' income protection in the event of disability, retirement, or death. This protection is provided through the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF).

Section 9.3 Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (C.O.B.R.A.)

C.O.B.R.A. is the acronym for the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, which is a federal act that provides an employee, an employee's dependent(s), a former employee, and/or a former employee's dependent(s) with the opportunity to purchase health care should they not qualify for group health care coverage and/or dental coverage.

At the time an employee or an employee's dependent(s) no longer qualify for group health care coverage and/or dental coverage, the County Board will send the employee or dependent(s) a letter detailing their C.O.B.R.A. rights and obligations. The employee or the employee's dependent must comply with all conditions outlined in the C.O.B.R.A. detail letter in order to assure implementation of coverage.

CHAPTER X

LEAVES OF ABSENCE/ TIME OFF

Section 10.1 Paid Leave

This policy is designed to comply with County's obligations under the Paid Leave for All Workers Act (hereinafter "PLAWA") (820 ILCS 192/1 et seq.) In the event of any conflict between this policy and PLAWA, the provisions of PLAWA will govern.

In accordance with PLAWA, full time employees are awarded forty (40) hours of PLAWA leave (hereinafter PL) at the start of the 12-month period.

Part-time employees will be awarded a pro-rata amount of PL at the start of the 12-month period based on the number of hours they typically work in a workweek. If the employee works more hours than anticipated, the employee is entitled to accrue additional hours at a rate of 1 hour of paid leave for every 40 hours worked in that same 12-month period, up to 40 hours of paid leave.

The County may provide some of its employees paid leave in form of frontloading and other employees paid leave via accrual.

The County will count all time that an employee works, including overtime hours worked, for purposes of calculating accrual. The County is not required to count time when an employee is on paid or unpaid leave or other non-compensable time where the employee is not performing work for the County as time worked for accrual purposes. If an employee works overtime and the paid leave is calculated via accrual, the employee may accumulate more than 40 hours of paid leave in a 12-month period.

The 12-month period for purposes of calculating PL shall be the calendar year. Employees shall be permitted to use PL beginning on March 30, 2024, or ninety (90) days after the commencement of their employment, whichever is later.

10.1.1 The County requires employees to provide seven (7) calendar days' notice that the employee will take PL. If, however, the employee's need to take PL is not foreseeable, the employee must provide notice as soon as is practicable after the employee is aware of the necessity of taking PL. Employees will use a written request for leave form and submit it in person, by email, or by fax.

The County may deny an employee's request to use PL if granting leave would significantly impact business operations. The following is an illustrative (not exhaustive) list of reasons why requests to use PL may be denied:

- 1) Staffing would fall below minimum levels necessary to provide effective public service;
- 2) Emergency circumstances exist requiring employee attendance;

3) Employee absence would hamper the County's ability to meet critical workflow obligations or deadlines.

10.1.2 An employee is not required to search for or find a replacement worker to cover the hours during which the employee will take PL. Employees may take PL in increments as small as two (2) hours unless the employee's scheduled workday is less than two (2) hours, in which case, the employee's scheduled workday shall be used to determine the amount of PL taken.

10.1.3 An employee may take PL for any reason of the employee's choosing. An employee is not required to provide the County with a reason for taking PL. The County will not require the employee to provide documentation or certification of the reason that PL was taken. An employee may choose whether to use PL under this policy prior to using any other leave provided by the County or State law.

10.1.4 If an employee works in a County department, office, or service in which PL is calculated via accrual, at the end of a 12-month period, the employee may carry over accrued, unused PL into the next 12-month period. Employees may not carry over more than 80 hours of unused PL.

10.1.5 If an employee works in a County department, office, or service in which PL is frontloaded, the employee is not entitled to carry over paid leave time from one 12-month period to the next.

10.1.6 An employee may not use more than 40 hours of accrued PL in a 12-month period.

10.1.7 Employees shall be paid their regular rate of pay when taking paid leave time, or, if salaried, an hourly amount equivalent to their annualized rate of pay divided by the number of hours they are expected to work in a year.

10.1.8 The County does not credit PL under this policy to any other employee vacation bank or paid time off (PTO) bank. As a result, in accordance with PLAWA, the County does NOT compensate employees for unused PL upon termination or separation from employment.

10.1.9 The County will create and maintain, for not less than 3 years, the following records for each employee:

- 1) Name and address;
- 2) Hours worked each day in each workweek;
- 3) Paid leave earned or accrued in each workweek;
- 4) Paid leave taken or used in each workweek;
- 5) Requests by the employee to use paid leave that the County denied; and
- 6) Remaining paid leave balance in each workweek and upon employee's

separation or termination from employment.

10.1.10 The County will make all records related to the Paid Leave for All Workers Act and this Part available to the employee or for inspection by the Department of Labor upon request.

10.1.11 The County will comply with all notice provisions related to the Paid Leave for All Workers Act.

10.1.12 The County will not take adverse action against an employee because he or she exercises or attempts to exercise a right under PLAWA, opposes the County's practices which he or she believes to be in violation of PLAWA, or supports the exercise of rights of another County employee subject to this Personnel Policy. The County will not consider the use of PL by an employee as a negative factor in any employment action that involves evaluating, promoting, disciplining, or counting paid leave under a no-fault attendance policy.

10.1.13 The County shall maintain coverage for the employee and the employee's covered family members under any group health plan for the duration of PL at no less than the level and conditions of coverage that would have been provided if the employee had not taken PL.

10.1.14 Nothing in this policy shall be deemed to interfere with, impede, or in any way diminish the right of employees to bargain collectively with the County through representatives of their own choosing in order to establish wages or other conditions of work in excess of the applicable minimum standards established under this policy.

10.1.15 For employees whose paid leave benefits are set forth in an existing collective bargaining agreement in effect prior to January 1, 2024, the leave provisions of the collective bargaining agreement shall control over conflicting provisions in this policy.

10.1.16 For any collective bargaining agreement entered into on or after January 1, 2024, if the collective bargaining agreement explicitly waives the requirements of PLAWA in clear and unambiguous terms, then the provisions of this policy will not apply to employees subject to such collective bargaining agreement.

10.1.17 If an employee is transferred to a separate division, entity, or location, but remains employed by the County, the employee is entitled to all PL accrued at the prior division, entity or location and is entitled to use all PL in accordance with this policy.

10.1.18 If an employee is separated from employment with the County and is rehired within twelve (12) months of separation from the County, previously accrued PL that had not been used by the employee shall be reinstated, and the employee shall be entitled to use it at the commencement of reemployment.

10.1.19 The Jackson County Highway Department will consider any paid leave provided under the Paid Leave for All Workers Act to be combined (not in addition) to time accrued under the vacation time provision of the policy. In addition to the existing provisions of the vacation provision, one week of vacation will be added to the employee's accrued vacation at the rate of

one day per month of continuous employment that can be taken after completion of at least one month of continuous employment not to exceed five days per the initial 12 months of continuous employment. Upon completion of the initial 12 months of continuous employment, vacation time will follow the vacation time provision of the existing policy as it exists for the Jackson County Highway Department.

All accrued vacation time is eligible to be paid out to an employee upon termination, resignation, retirement or other separation based on the vacation bank balance plus any pro-rata vacation earned but not yet eligible to be used in the year in which the separation occurred.

Section 10.2 Vacation

All regular full-time employees shall earn vacation time, except those on leave of absence or layoff. Eligible employees shall earn vacation time on their anniversary date in accordance with the following schedule:

- Employees with more than one year of continuous employment but less than five years shall receive five (5) working days as vacation leave.
- Employees with more than five years of continuous employment but less than ten years shall receive ten (10) working days of vacation leave.
- Employees with more than ten years of continuous employment but less than twenty years shall receive fifteen (15) working days of vacation leave.
- Employees with twenty or more years' continuous employment shall receive twenty (20) working days of vacation leave.

All vacation leaves shall be scheduled with the supervisor at least one month in advance or at the discretion of the supervisor. If required by the supervisor, each vacation leave request shall be made in writing to the supervisor using a "Request of Absence" form. No request shall be honored unless approved by the supervisor. Upon termination, an employee's vacation time for that year will be prorated to the number of months the employee has worked that fiscal year.

10.2.1 Use of Vacation Hours

Vacation time may be taken in increments of not less than one hour, and at any time after it is earned it is subject to the operational needs of the Department. Vacation, which is accrued, but not used during a year may be accumulated by an employee. However, vacation leave shall not be accumulated for more than two years. All other accrued, but unused, vacation hours will be lost on the employee's anniversary date.

Section 10.3 Sick Leave

Each employee of the County covered by this Agreement shall be entitled to accumulate sick leave as follows:

- Regular Full-Time Employees: One day for each calendar month worked.
- Regular Part-Time Employees: Part-time employees shall accumulate sick leave prorated on the actual hours worked.

Employees shall start to accumulate sick leave as of the date of employment and shall be eligible for said sick leave absences once they have completed their probationary period. Employees shall not accrue sick leave for any pay period during which they are on layoff or other leaves of absence which are of at least 30 days' duration.

Sick leave which is accrued but unused during a year may be accumulated by an employee. However, an employee who leaves employment with the County shall not be entitled to any compensation for unused sick leave accumulated during employment by the County. Nevertheless, such accumulated, but unused sick leave may be applied for service credit for pension purposes as allowed by IMRF.

Any employee who has contracted or incurred and is suffering from any non-- service connected sickness or disability, which renders them unable to perform the duties of their position, shall be eligible to receive paid sick leave. This also includes periods during which the employee is under an enforced quarantine in accordance with community health regulations, or restricted due to exposure to a contagious disease in accordance with a doctor's order.

Employees shall be eligible to receive paid sick leave when there is a sickness or disability involving a member of their immediate family which requires the employee's personal care and attendance, provided that requiring the employee to report for work would cause a serious hardship on the member of the immediate family suffering from the illness or disability. Immediate family is defined as husband, wife, domestic partner, father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, grandfather, grandmother, son, son-in-law, daughter, daughter-in-law, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, brother, sister, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, step relatives, cousins and domestic partner relatives.

Employees shall be eligible to receive paid sick leave, to the extent they have accrued sick leave credit, for maternity leave (if the employee is in fact unable to work due to pregnancy), approved medical leave, and approved extended duty injury leave.

If paid sick leave benefits have been exhausted, an employee unable to work due to pregnancy, illness, or disability (documented by a physician's statement) may be granted an unpaid leave of absence without pay for up to six (6) months. To return to work after approved leave, the employee must provide a release from the attending physician and be qualified to perform the duties of the position last held. If an employee is unable to return to work at the end of six (6) months, additional leave time may be requested by the employee.

The rate of sick leave pay shall be the employee's regular straight-time hourly rate of pay in effect for the employee's regular job at the time the sick leave is taken.

It is the responsibility of each employee requesting paid sick leave to notify his/her supervisor as promptly as may reasonably be possible (in the absence of extenuating circumstances, not later than the beginning of that workday). Where someone other than the employee is, or has been requested to make the required notification, the employee will be solely responsible for notification being made. If an employee becomes sick or ill during their work shift, he/she must notify or cause notification to be made to their supervisor immediately.

If the County has reasonable grounds to believe sick leave is being abused, it may at its discretion require any employee requesting paid sick leave to furnish substantiating evidence or a statement from their attending physician certifying that absence from work was required due to such reason as may conform to the requirements set forth herein. In any case, such certification must be presented whenever sick leave is requested for more than 3 consecutive workdays.

If the County demands an additional form of proof, different than that was furnished by the employee and which involves cost to the employee, the County shall pay the cost of such professional services.

Any employee who is sick or disabled for 24 consecutive work hours may be required at the County's discretion, and any employee who is sick or disabled for eighty (80) or more consecutive work hours shall be required, to secure and submit a physician's release certifying that they are fit to return to work. This release must be submitted to the employee's supervisor before the employee will be permitted to return to work. The County may also require, at its discretion, that an employee take a medical physical as set out above. If the County requests a medical physical, they may give the employee leave with pay until the report from the medical physical is received.

Section 10.4 Family Medical Leave (FMLA)

It is the policy of Jackson County to comply with all federal and state laws in granting Family Medical Leave. This policy is meant to comply with the Family Medical Leave Act and is not intended to grant leave in addition to what the Act requires.

All regular full-time and regular part-time employees who have worked at least 1,250 hours during the twelve (12) months preceding the leave and who have completed twelve (12) months of service are eligible to take Family Medical Leave.

10.4.1 Guidelines

A. An eligible employee will be entitled to a total of twelve (12) work weeks of unpaid leave during a designated twelve (12) month period for one or more of the following:

1. The birth and care of the newborn child of the employee. (Leave to care for a newborn child or for a newly placed child must conclude within twelve (12) months after the birth or placement.)
2. The placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care. (Leave to care for a newborn child or for a newly placed child must conclude within twelve (12) months after the birth or placement.)
3. To care for an immediate family member (spouse, child, or parent) of the employee with a serious health condition.

4. When the employee is unable to work because of a serious health condition.
5. Qualified Exigency Leave related to a spouse, child, or parent called to active duty in the National Guard or Reserves.

B. An eligible employee may also take up to 26 work weeks of leave during a "single twelve-month period" to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness, when employee is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next-of-kin of the service member. The "single twelve-month period" for military caregiver leave is different from the twelve-month period used for other FMLA leave reasons.

C. An eligible employee will be entitled to a total of twenty-six (26) work weeks of unpaid leave during a designated twelve (12) month period to care for an injured or ill military service member who is the employee's spouse, son or daughter, parent, or "next of kin." The leave is applied on a per-service member, per-injury basis.

D. Jackson County uses a rolling twelve (12) month calendar to calculate an employee's Family Medical Leave, measured backward from the date leave is taken. Each time an employee requests Family Medical Leave, Jackson County will compute the amount of available time based upon the date of the employee's previous leave, if applicable.

E. In most circumstances, an employee may be required to use any accrued vacation days, personal days, and sick time during any unpaid portion of Family Medical Leave granted, providing this does not interfere with Workers' Compensation benefits. FMLA leave will run concurrently with any other applicable leave. For instance, IMRF disability or Workers' Compensation leave will be simultaneously designated as FMLA leave as well, if the leave is also FMLA qualifying.

F. The County will provide basic life, medical, and dental insurance coverage to an employee who is on Family Medical Leave at the current employee rate. If an employee is off work after exhausting their twelve (12) weeks of Family Medical Leave, the employee will be responsible for the entire premium from that point forward. If an employee fails to pay their share of the premium, coverage may be cancelled.

G. Under certain circumstances, an employee may take Family Medical Leave intermittently, which means taking leave in blocks of time, or by reducing the employee's normal weekly or daily work schedules.

H. If Family Medical Leave is for birth and infant care or placement for adoption or foster care, use of intermittent leave is subject to the County's approval. The County's approval is not required for intermittent leave during which the mother has a serious health condition in connection with the birth of her child or if the newborn child has a serious health condition.

I. When leave is needed for planned medical treatment, the employee must make a reasonable effort to schedule treatment during non-working business hours so as not to unduly disrupt the operation of the department.

J. Spouses employed by the County may be limited to a combined total of twelve (12) weeks of Family Medical Leave for birth and care of a newborn child, for placement of a child for adoption or foster care, or to care for a parent who has a serious health condition. In the situation where the spouses have both used a portion of the total twelve (12) weeks of Family Medical Leave for birth and care of a newborn child or for placement of a child for adoption or foster care, each would be entitled to the difference between the amount they have taken individually for other purposes.

K. An expectant mother is entitled to FMLA leave for incapacity due to pregnancy, for prenatal care, or for her own serious health condition following the birth of the child. Circumstances may require that FMLA leave begin before the actual date of birth of a child. An expectant mother may take FMLA leave before the birth of the child for prenatal care or if her condition makes her unable to work. The mother is entitled to leave for incapacity due to pregnancy even though she does not receive treatment from a health care provider during the absence, and even if the absence does not last for more than three (3) consecutive calendar days.

L. An employee is entitled to FMLA leave if needed to care for their pregnant spouse who is incapacitated or if needed to care for her during her prenatal care, or if needed to care for the spouse following the birth of a child if the spouse has a serious health condition.

M. Spouses employed by the County are entitled to FMLA leave if needed to care for a child, adopted child, or foster child with a serious health condition if the requirements of the applicable FMLA regulations are met and provided they have not exhausted their entitlements during the applicable twelve (12) month FMLA leave period.

N. An employee with twelve (12) or more months of service who is eligible for Family Medical Leave and is absent on Family Medical Leave for twelve (12) work weeks or less will have the right to return to the same, or equivalent, position. However, an employee has no greater right to reinstatement or other benefits and conditions of employment than if they had not taken leave. If the employee does not return to work on the first business day after the approved FMLA leave ends, the employee will forfeit their right to be reinstated under the FMLA.

O. Certain "key" employees (highly compensated salaried employees) may not be returned to their former or equivalent positions following a leave if reinstatement to employment will cause substantial economic injury to the County. The County will notify those who qualify as "key" employees and those who will be denied reinstatement, and it will also notify these employees of their rights.

P. Before returning to work, the employee must provide a written medical release from their physician with a specific return date noting any restrictions. If restrictions are noted, the Supervisor and County Board will determine whether and how the restrictions may be accommodated. If such certification is not received, their return to work will be delayed.

Q. Accrual of vacation and sick time will cease during any family medical leave of absence over thirty (30) days. In addition, employees will not be eligible to receive jury duty/court services pay or blood donation leave pay at any time during FMLA leave and will not be eligible to receive holiday pay or bereavement pay following thirty (30) days of an FMLA leave. Unpaid leave is defined as time off during which the employee is not receiving any compensation for previously accrued benefit sick time (sick, vacation, personal days, or compensatory time).

10.4.2 Procedures

1. An employee must contact the County Board to request Family Medical Leave at least thirty (30) days in advance, where practical or where leave is foreseeable, stating both the purpose and the beginning and ending dates of the leave. If the need for leave is not foreseeable, or the employee does not receive thirty (30) days advance notice themselves, notice is required as soon as practicable, generally within one (1) or two (2) days of learning of the need for leave.

2. Requests for Family Medical Leave must be approved by the County Board, or designee.

3. The County will require that the employee obtain a Certification of Healthcare Provider form and have it completed by a certified health care provider. The employee is responsible for providing updated medical re-certifications as requested by the County during the leave.

4. The County may contact the healthcare provider directly to authenticate a certification or obtain clarification.

5. An employee will be required to provide their supervisor with a treatment schedule or a one (1) to two (2) day notice of anticipated absences.

6. If an employee fails to provide a one (1) to two (2) day notice or a call on the same day of an absence, it will not be counted as FMLA time. Instead, it will be treated as a regular absence and will be subject to the department's attendance policy unless it was an emergency; then the employee must have a doctor/facility note to verify the emergency.

7. The County, at its expense, may require an examination by a second health care provider designated by the County. If the second medical opinion differs from the employee's original certification form, the County, at its expense, may require that a third, mutually agreeable health care provider provide a final and binding opinion.

8. The County will notify the employee of the status of their request for Family Medical Leave by sending the employee a Notice of Eligibility and Rights & Responsibilities form and Designation Notice form.

9. Employees may be required to provide periodic updates of their status and intent to return to work while on Family Medical Leave.

10. If an employee was on Family Medical Leave due to their own serious health condition, the employee must provide medical documentation from their treating health care provider indicating they can perform the essential functions of their position before returning to work. The medical documentation must include a list of restrictions that would impact their ability to perform the essential job functions of the position.

11. If circumstances of a leave change, enabling the employee to return to work earlier than the date specified, the employee should notify their supervisor at least two (2) working days prior to returning.

12. If a reduced work schedule or intermittent leave for planned medical treatment is approved, the employee may be temporarily transferred to an available alternate position for which the employee is qualified. All salary and benefits status will remain the same.

13. If an employee fails to return from leave for reasons other than the continuation, recurrence, or onset of a serious health condition or other circumstances beyond the control of the employee, the County may recover the premium that was paid for maintaining group health plan coverage.

14. If an employee fails to return from leave, the employee's supervisor should notify the County immediately.

15. Consistent with the County's policy regarding all types of leave, the following conduct is strictly prohibited in relation to FMLA leave:

- a. Engaging in fraud, misrepresentation, or providing false information to the County or any health care provider.
- b. Having other employment during the leave, without prior written approval from the County.
- c. Failure to comply with the employee's obligations under this policy.
- d. Failure to timely return from the leave.

16. Employees who engage in such conduct will be subject to loss of benefits, denial, or termination of leave and discipline up to and including discharge.

Section 10.5 Military Leave

It is the policy of Jackson County to comply with all applicable federal and state laws in granting Military Leave to employees who voluntarily or involuntarily serve or are reserve members of the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, Army National Guard, Air National Guard, and/or the Commissioned Corps of the Public Health

Service, and others designated by the President of the United States in times of war or emergency.

In accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), the County is obligated to release employees for service with the Armed Forces when the employee participates in:

1. Annual Training (Summer Camp)
2. Active Duty of Training (School)
3. Inactive Duty Training Assemblies (Weekend drills)
4. Extended leave of absence for voluntary active-duty service (Enlistment)
5. Involuntary call-up

Military leave of absence shall not result in a loss of seniority status or benefits, which would have normally accrued if the employee had not been absent for such purposes.

In accordance with federal law, a military leave of absence shall have a 5-year limit (with some exception) on the cumulative length of time an employee may serve in the military and remain eligible for reemployment.

The County is not required to provide additional work hours to compensate for military leave.

10.5.1 Procedures

1. Any regular full-time or regular part-time employee who enlists, is drafted, or is called to active/inactive duty shall immediately notify their supervisor verbally or in writing prior to departure for military service.
2. An employee who is called to uniformed service shall provide a copy of official orders as soon as available reflecting the length and character of the service to their supervisor.
3. In accordance with the applicable law(s), the employee shall be compensated for the difference between the payment received from the military and their compensation paid by the County. The employee may request the use of vacation, compensatory time, or leave without pay to supplement absences; however, they are not required to do so.
4. The employee's insurance benefits will continue through their military leave period, unless the employee decides to discontinue the benefits.
5. If the employee's insurance benefits will continue through their military leave, coverage will be immediately reinstated, without a waiting period, following the employee's return.

6. The employee will continue to accrue vacation and sick leave. Vacation, sick leave, and floating holidays that were unused at the time the military service began will be resumed upon the employee's return.

7. In accordance with federal law, upon completion of the period of military service, the returning employee shall notify their supervisor that they intend to return to employment. The employee will provide documentation to the length and character of their uniformed service. The length of time the employee has to contact their supervisor depends upon the amount of time spent in service.

Section 10.6 Family Military Leave

Under the Illinois Family Military Leave Act, certain employees are entitled to take unpaid job protected leave if they:

- Are either the spouse, parent, child, or grandparent of a person called to the military service lasting longer than thirty (30) days; and
- Have worked for the company for at least twelve (12) months and for at least 1,250 hours in the last year.

Eligible employees may receive up to fifteen (15) days of unpaid leave. An employee must have exhausted all vacation, personal, and any other accrued leave before taking Family Military Leave. Jackson County will not require an employee to use sick or disability leave.

Eligible employees taking leave for less than five (5) consecutive days must give the County notice as soon as practicable. Employees taking leave for more than five (5) consecutive days must give the County at least fourteen (14) days' notice.

Jackson County may require proof from the proper military authority to verify the employee's eligibility for Family Military Leave. This proof will typically consist of a copy of the military member's deployment orders.

Section 10.7 Child Bereavement Leave

It is the policy of Jackson County to comply with the provisions of the Child Bereavement Leave Act. This policy is meant to comply with the Child Bereavement Leave Act and is not intended to grant leave in addition to what the Act requires.

In order to be eligible for Child Bereavement Leave, a regular full-time or regular part-time employee must have worked at least 1,250 hours during the twelve (12) months preceding the leave and have completed twelve (12) months of employment with Jackson County.

An eligible employee is entitled to a maximum of two (2) weeks of unpaid leave for the death of one (1) child and may be entitled to up to six (6) weeks of unpaid leave for the death of more than one child during a designated twelve (12) month period for one or more of the following reasons:

- Attend the funeral or alternative to a funeral of a child.
- Make arrangements necessitated by the death of a child.
- Grieve the death of a child.

The Child Bereavement Leave Act defines child as: an employee's son or daughter who is a biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child of a person standing in loco parentis.

This policy does not create a right for an employee to take unpaid leave that exceeds the unpaid leave time allowed under or is in addition to the unpaid leave time permitted by, the federal Family Medical Leave Act.

Section 10.8 VESSA

In accordance with the Illinois Victims Economic Security and Safety Act (VESSA), leave shall be granted to an employee who is a victim of domestic (sometimes referred to as "intimate partner violence") or sexual violence or who has a family or household member (defined as spouse or Civil Union partner, parent, son, daughter, and persons jointly residing in the same household) who is a victim. Up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid leave per year (52 consecutive weeks) may be taken. For purposes of this policy, the initial one-year period will commence on the first day that VESSA is taken. VESSA does not create a right for the employee to take a leave that exceeds the leave time allowed under, or in addition to, the leave time permitted by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). For employees on VESSA leave who are also eligible for FMLA leave, VESSA leave time is not in addition to the 12-week FMLA entitlement when the reason for VESSA leave also qualifies under FMLA but depletes the 12 week FMLA entitlement when used.

An employee, who may have exhausted all available leave under FMLA for a purpose other than that which is available under VESSA, remains eligible for leave under VESSA. Employees taking leave under VESSA may "voluntarily" use accumulated, unused leave days, first. However, the County cannot require that these unused personal leave days be used. When an employee is taking a VESSA leave of absence concurrently with FMLA, they will be required to use accumulated, unused leave days (PTO) as outlined in FMLA policy.

While on a VESSA qualifying leave, employees will retain health insurance benefits at the same level as if continuously employed. Upon return to employment following a VESSA leave, the employee is entitled to be returned to his or her same or equivalent position. Contact your Supervisor for additional information.

Section 10.9 Workers' Compensation

Employees who sustain injuries at work may be eligible for workers' compensation. All work-related accidents or illnesses, no matter how minor, must be reported by a supervisor as soon as possible and in most cases no later than the end of the shift.

Coverage may include payment for medical treatment and, in qualifying cases, partial income replacement. There is a waiting period (dictated by state law) that must expire before employees are eligible to receive benefits for lost time and/or income. The amount of this benefit is established by state law and depends upon the nature and extent of the injury.

Employees returning to the job from an injury that qualified under Workers' Compensation must submit a written release from the attending physician before returning to normal duties.

Employees are required to:

- Make an immediate report to their supervisor.
- Cooperate in completing a "First Report of Injury Form" for submission to insurance carrier.

Failure to report to work after being released by the attending physician may result in counseling action up to and including termination.

Section 10.10 Voting Time Off

Pursuant to Illinois law, Jackson County will allow an employee up to two (2) hours of paid time from his or her scheduled workday to vote in primaries, general elections, special elections, or elections which are submitted to a popular vote in the state if the polls are not open at least two (2) hours before or after the employee's regular scheduled hours. The employee must notify his/her supervisor at least the day prior to the election to be eligible for excused time and the supervisor may specify what time the employee may utilize (i.e., at the start, end, or during their scheduled work hours). If notification is provided by the employee, he/she will suffer no negative repercussions for the time away from their job. If notification is not provided, the employee is subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Section 10.11 Jury Duty

Employees shall receive the necessary time off for jury duty and if subpoenaed as a witness in a civil or criminal proceeding in accordance with applicable law. Employees must present a copy of the jury summons or witness subpoena to their Supervisor immediately upon receipt thereof. Employees will be paid the difference between their regular base salary and any jury or witness pay received. The employee shall have the option to keep the money paid to the employee for court service and collect no pay from the County or to turn said payment from the Court over to the County and receive their regular salary from the County. If released from the jury or witness duty, prior to noon, employee shall report back to work.

Jury or witness duty leave shall not include any matter in which the employee is personally involved as plaintiff or defendant or in which the employee appears as expert.

Section 10.12 School Visitation

Pursuant to the School Visitation Rights Act, an employee who has utilized all of his or her vacation, personal, and compensatory time may request to schedule up to eight (8) hours of time off within a calendar year to attend school conferences or classroom activities related to the employee's child, if the conference cannot be scheduled during nonworking hours. The time may be scheduled in not more than four (4) hour increments and will be unpaid. The employee must schedule time with their Supervisor at least seven (7) days in advance of when they wish to take the time off unless the conference is due to an emergency in which case twenty-four (24) hours' notice shall be given. The employee is required to consult with the County regarding scheduling the time off so as not to unduly disrupt the County's operations. The employee must submit documentation to his or her supervisor within two (2) working days of the conference.

Section 10.13 Blood Donation

Jackson County will follow applicable Illinois law regarding time off for blood donation. After an employee, has exceeded his/her six (6) month anniversary date of employment, he/she may request up to one hour paid time off every 56 days to donate blood. They must request the time in advance from their supervisor and receive their approval prior to taking the time off from their job. A copy of the paperwork supplied by the donation center must be given to the Supervisor on his/her next scheduled day at work to verify the time was used to donate.

Section 10.14 Personal Leave of Absence

A personal leave of absence without pay may be granted for urgent personal reasons only after the employee has expended all accrued annual vacation and personal days. The Supervisor and County Board consider only those requests for leave of absence received from employees in positions that can be left unfilled or filled temporarily for the duration of the leave without detriment to the department.

Personal leaves of absences will not normally exceed 30 days. Vacation time, sick leave and personal time and other benefits will not accrue. The employee will be responsible for making group insurance premium payments in order to continue coverage during any such leave.

Section 10.15 Breastfeeding/Lactation

Any employee who is breastfeeding their child will be provided reasonable break times as needed to express breast milk for their baby. Jackson County Board will from time to time designate a room for this purpose.

CHAPTER X

LEAVES OF ABSENCE / TIME OFF

CHAPTER XI

PERSONNEL FILE

Section 11.1 Your Personnel File

Keeping your personnel file up-to-date can be important to you with regard to pay, deductions, benefits, and other matters. If you have a change in any of the items listed below, please be sure to notify the County Official in whose office you work.

1. Legal name
2. Home address
3. Home telephone number
4. Person to call in case of emergency
5. Number of dependents
6. Marital status
7. Change of beneficiary
8. Driving record or status of driver's license, if you operate any of the County vehicles
9. Military or draft status
10. Exemptions on your W-4 tax form
11. Training Certificates
12. Professional License
13. Social Security

Upon experiencing a family status change, please notify supervisor within 31 days for benefit modifications, if necessary. The County may require additional information for personnel records when it is deemed necessary.

Under Illinois law, you have the right to see information which is kept in your own personnel file if you wish, and you may request and receive copies of all documents you have signed. Access to your personnel file will be provided pursuant to the Illinois Personnel Records Review Act.

All medical records, if any, will be kept in a separate confidential file. The County maintains this information in the strictest confidence and may not use or disclose medical information about an employee without the employee first having signed an authorization form permitting such use or disclosure.

CHAPTER XII

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Section 12.1 Violence in the Workplace

Jackson County is committed to providing a safe and secure place, free from threats and violence, for all those involved in the business of the County.

I. Safety and Security

The safety and security of our employees and customers are very important. Threats, threatening behavior, acts of violence, or any related conduct which disrupts another's work performance or the organization's ability to execute its missions will not be tolerated. Any person who makes threats, exhibits threatening behavior, or engages in violent acts on Jackson County-owned property or at any work site may be removed from the premises pending the outcome of an investigation. Threats, threatening behavior, or other acts of violence executed off of Jackson County-owned property or job sites, but directed at Jackson County employees or members of the public while conducting Jackson County business, is a violation of this policy. Off-site threats include, but are not limited to, threats made via telephone, fax, electronic or conventional mail, or any other communication medium.

Violation of this policy will lead to disciplinary action that may include dismissal, arrest, and prosecution. In addition, if the source of such inappropriate behavior is a member of the public, the response may also include barring the person(s) from Jackson County-owned premises or job sites, termination of business relationships with that individual, and/or prosecution of the person(s).

Employees are responsible for notifying the Supervisor of any threats which they have witnessed, received, or have been told that another person has witnessed or received. Employees should also report any behavior they have witnessed which they regard as threatening or violent when the behavior is job-related or might be carried on Jackson County-owned property, job sites, or in connection with Jackson County employment.

IN CASE OF IMMINENT PHYSICAL THREAT, DIAL 911.

Section 12.2 Fitness for Duty

Jackson County is committed to providing a safe working environment and to protecting the health and safety of all employees. If an employee lacks the essential physical and mental requirements necessary to perform the essential functions of the job,

or poses a significant risk to their own safety, safety of co-workers, or the safety of the public, they may be referred for a fitness for duty evaluation.

Employees are responsible for managing their health in such a way that they can safely perform the essential functions of their job, with or without a reasonable accommodation.

Employees must come to work fit for duty and must perform their job in a safe, secure, productive, and effective manner during the entire time they are working.

Employees are responsible for notifying their supervisor if they are not fit for duty.

12.2.1 Procedures

1. A fitness for duty assessment may be requested when there is reasonable cause for serious concern about an employee's ability to perform their role and duties safely, when an employee's behavior is grossly inappropriate for the workplace, or if there is reasonable concern for workplace safety.
2. An impartial, independent healthcare evaluator with expertise in the disciplines of medical, psychological, alcohol, or other drug conditions will conduct a fitness for duty evaluation.
3. Referrals for Fitness for Duty assessments will be made by the County Board office.
4. Employees will be removed from the workplace while in the process of completing a Fitness for Duty Assessment.
5. Employees who cooperate in a Fitness for Duty evaluation and are in compliance with recommendations for medical, psychological, and/or chemical dependence treatment may be returned to work provided appropriate discipline, if warranted, has taken place.
6. Non-compliance with a request for a Fitness for Duty evaluation or a determination that an employee is unfit for duty may result in disciplinary action, not to exclude termination.

Section 12.3 Accident Reporting

Any employee who is injured while on duty (regardless of severity) shall report the injury to his/her supervisor immediately both verbally and in writing with a completed Incident Report. The Incident Report shall include the following: the date, time, place injury occurred, how the injury occurred, the type of injury, the identity of any witnesses, and whether medical assistance was obtained.

Any employee witnessing or receiving a report of an injury to a visitor shall verbally report the injury to the employee's supervisor immediately.

Any accident involving Jackson County's property or vehicles or involving a privately-owned vehicle being operated for Jackson County business shall be reported immediately to the employee's supervisor both verbally and in writing with a completed Incident Report. The Incident Report shall include the following: the date, time, place incident occurred, how the incident occurred, the identity of any witnesses, and the extent and type of damage, if applicable. The report shall be submitted by the end of the workday. Employees are also required to notify law enforcement when appropriate.

Section 12.4 Concealed Carry

The Occupational Safety and Health Act require employers to provide a workplace "free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm." The Illinois Gun Control Act contains a "prohibited area" exception that forbids even permit holders from knowingly carrying a firearm into certain designated "prohibited areas." Examples of these areas include childcare facilities, universities, casinos, and government buildings, among others. There are posted signs at the entrances of our buildings stating that firearms are prohibited in the buildings. The concealed weapon bans do not extend to parking areas. Under the Firearm Concealed Carry Act, in Illinois if you obtain a concealed carry permit you will be able to store your firearms in your vehicles even when parked in the parking lot of a workplace that otherwise bars concealed firearms, as long as your vehicles are locked and the firearm is out of sight or the firearm and ammunition are in a locked container inside the car.

Law Enforcement Officer Safety Act (LEOSA) of 2004 and its amendments in 2010 and 2013 state that a "qualified law enforcement officer" which is defined by law does not have to have a concealed carry permit to conceal a gun.

CHAPTER XIII

DISCIPLINE, TERMINATION, AND SEPARATION

Section 13.1 Disciplinary Policy

This Disciplinary Actions Policy applies to all employees.

This policy pertains to matters of conduct as well as the employee's competence. Should your performance, work habits, overall attitudes, conduct, or demeanor become unsatisfactory in the judgment of Jackson County, based on violations either of the above or of any other policies, rules, or regulations, you will be subject to disciplinary action ranging from oral reprimand up to and including dismissal.

Nothing contained herein shall alter the at-will nature of the employment relationship and neither the use nor non-use of a corrective measure shall be construed as creating any right of an employee, or require JACKSON COUNTY, to utilize a corrective measure before termination.

Section 13.2 Rules of Conduct

All employees shall maintain high standards of conduct, and shall comply with all policies and guidelines of Jackson County. We expect each person to act in a mature and responsible way at all times. If you have any questions concerning any work or safety rule, or any of the unacceptable activities listed below, please see your manager, supervisor, or designated Jackson County representative for an explanation.

Note that the following list of Rules of Conduct do not include all types of conduct that can result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Nothing in this list alters the **at-will nature of your employment**; either you or Jackson County may terminate the employment relationship with or without reason and in the absence of any violation of these rules. Misconduct which will not be tolerated shall include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Failure to maintain a superior standard of work
2. Negligent abuse of or failure to maintain County equipment
3. Failure to maintain appropriate records
4. Conduct that brings disrespect or disrepute to Jackson County
5. Engaging in any activity which would be a legal conflict of interest or give rise to the appearance of a conflict of interest with his or her employment

6. Conviction of a DUI while driving a County-owned vehicle, or where the loss of license affects the ability of the employee to perform his or her job duties and responsibilities
7. Violation of security or safety rules or failure to observe safety practices; failure to wear required safety equipment; tampering with Jackson County equipment
8. Negligence or any careless action which endangers the life or safety of another person
9. Being intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance while at work; use, possession, or sale of a controlled substance in any quantity while on Jackson County premises, except medications prescribed by a physician which do not impair work performance
10. Unauthorized possession of dangerous or illegal firearms, weapons, or explosives on Jackson County property or while on duty
11. Engaging in criminal conduct or acts of violence or making threats of violence toward anyone on Jackson County premises or when representing the County; fighting or provoking a fight on Jackson County property or negligent damage of property
12. Insubordination or refusing to obey instructions properly issued by your manager pertaining to your work; refusal to help on a special assignment
13. Threatening, intimidating, or coercing fellow employees on or off the premises at any time, for any purpose
14. Theft or unauthorized possession of Jackson County property or the property of fellow employees; unauthorized possession or removal of any County property, including documents, from the premises without prior permission from management; unauthorized use of Jackson County equipment or property for personal reasons; using Jackson County equipment for profit
15. Dishonesty; falsification or misrepresentation on your application for employment or other work records; lying about sick or personal leave; falsifying reason for a leave of absence or other data requested by Jackson County; alteration of Jackson County records or other County documents
16. Giving confidential or proprietary Jackson County information to competitors or other organizations or to unauthorized Jackson County

employees; working for a competing business while a Jackson County employee; breach of confidentiality of personnel information

17. Any act of harassment, sexual, racial, or other; telling sexist or racist jokes; making racial or ethnic slurs
18. Leaving work before the end of a workday or not being ready to work at the start of a workday without approval
19. Sleeping or loitering during working hours
20. Excessive use of Jackson County telephones for personal calls
21. Creating or contributing to unsanitary conditions
22. Failure to report an absence or late arrival; excessive absence or lateness
23. Speeding or careless driving of Jackson County-owned vehicles

Section 13.3 Progressive Discipline

While all employment is at-will, Jackson County has adopted a progressive discipline policy to identify and address employee and employment related problems. This policy applies to any and all employee conduct that the employer, in its sole discretion, determines must be addressed by discipline. Of course, no discipline policy can be expected to address each and every situation requiring corrective action that may arise in the workplace. Therefore, Jackson County takes a comprehensive approach regarding discipline and will attempt to consider all relevant factors before making decisions regarding discipline.

Most often, employee conduct that warrants discipline results from unacceptable behavior, poor performance, or violation of the employer's policies, practices, or procedures. However, discipline may be issued for conduct that falls outside of those identified areas. Equally important, the County need not resort to progressive discipline, but may take whatever action it deems necessary to address the issue at hand. This may mean that more or less severe discipline is imposed in a given situation. Likewise, some policies, like harassment and attendance, contain specific discipline procedures.

Progressive discipline may be issued on employees even when the conduct that leads to more serious discipline is not the same that resulted in less severe discipline. That is, violations of different rules shall be considered the same as repeated violations of the same rule for purposes of progressive action.

Jackson County will normally adhere to the following progressive disciplinary process:

1. **Verbal Warning:** An employee will be given a verbal warning when a problem is identified that justifies a verbal warning. Verbal warnings are documented and placed in the employee's personnel file.
2. **Written Warning:** A written warning is more serious than a verbal warning. A written warning will be given when an employee engages in conduct that justifies a written warning or the employee engages in unacceptable behavior during the period that a verbal warning is in effect. Written warnings are maintained in an employee's personnel file.
3. **Suspension:** A suspension without pay is more serious than a written warning. An employee will be suspended when the employee engages in conduct that justifies a suspension or engages in unacceptable behavior during the period that a written warning is in effect. An employee's suspension will be documented and, regardless of the length of the suspension issued, will remain in an employee's personnel file.
4. **Decision Making Leave:** Generally following a suspension, an employee will be reprimanded and then sent home for the day on decision making leave. This is intended to help the employer decide whether the employee should continue employment with the employer. If the employee returns, the employee will be expected to work harder than before to follow the employer guidelines and continue employment without interruption. The other option with this leave is the employee may choose to resign because employment with the employer is not a match.
5. **Termination:** An employee will be terminated when the employee engages in conduct that justifies termination or does not correct the matter that resulted in less severe discipline.

Again, you are an “at-will employee,” and while Jackson County will generally take disciplinary action in a progressive manner, it reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to decide whether and what disciplinary action will be taken in a given situation.

An employee may receive a warning, suspension, or be dismissed based upon the severity of the offense.

Section 13.4 Separation of Employment

Separation of employment within an organization can occur for several different reasons.

- **Resignation:** Although we hope your employment with us will be a mutually rewarding experience, we understand that varying circumstances

cause employees to voluntarily resign employment. Resigning employees are encouraged to provide two weeks' notice, preferably in writing, to facilitate a smooth transition out of the organization. Management reserves the right to provide an employee with two weeks' pay in lieu of notice in situations where job or business needs warrant such action. If an employee provides less notice than requested, the employer may deem the individual to be ineligible for rehire depending on the circumstances regarding the notice given.

- **Retirement:** Employees who wish to retire are required to notify their office holder in writing at least one (1) month before the planned retirement date.
- **Job Abandonment:** Employees who fail to report to work or contact their supervisor for three (3) consecutive workdays shall be considered to have abandoned the job without notice, effective at the end of their normal shift on the third day. The supervisor shall notify the office holder at the expiration of the third workday and initiate the paperwork to terminate the employee. Employees who are separated due to job abandonment are ineligible to receive accrued benefits and are ineligible for rehire.
- **Termination:** Employees of Jackson County are employed on an at-will basis, and the county retains the right to terminate an employee at any time.

Section 13.5 Return of County Property

The separating employee must return all County property at the time of separation, including iPads, cell phones, keys, PCs, and identification cards. Failure to return some items may result in deductions from the final paycheck. An employee will be required to sign the Wage Deduction Authorization Agreement to deduct the costs of such items from the final paycheck.

The separating employee shall contact the Supervisor as soon as notice is given to schedule an exit interview. The interview will be on the employee's last day of work or another day, as mutually agreed on.

Accrued vacation leave will be paid in the last paycheck.

Health insurance terminates the last day of the month of employment, unless an employee requests immediate termination of benefits. Information for Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation (COBRA) continued health coverage will be provided by the third-party administrator. Employees will be required to pay their share of all authorized payroll deductions through the end of the month.

Section 13.6 Rehire

Former employees who left Jackson County in good standing and were classified as eligible for rehire may be considered for reemployment. An application must be submitted, and the applicant must meet all minimum qualifications and requirements of the position, including any qualifying exams, when required.

An applicant or employee who is terminated for violating policy or who resigned in lieu of termination from employment due to a policy violation will be ineligible for rehire.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND RECEIPT

I have received my copy of the Employee Handbook.

The employee handbook describes important information about Jackson County, and I understand that I should consult my Supervisor regarding any questions not answered in the handbook. I have entered into my employment relationship with Jackson County voluntarily and acknowledge that there is no specified length of employment. Accordingly, either I or Jackson County can terminate the relationship at will, with or without cause, at any time, so long as there is not violation of applicable federal or state law.

I understand and agree that no manager, supervisor or representative of Jackson County has any authority to enter into any agreement for employment other than at will.

This handbook and the policies and procedures contained herein supersede any and all prior practices, oral or written representations, or statements regarding the terms and conditions of my employment with Jackson County. By distributing this handbook, the County expressly revokes any and all previous policies and procedures that are inconsistent with those contained herein.

I understand that, except for employment-at-will status, any and all policies and practices may be changed at any time by Jackson County, and the County reserves the right to change my hours, wages and working conditions at any time. All such changes will be communicated through official notices, and I understand that revised information may supersede, modify or eliminate existing policies.

I understand and agree that nothing in the Employee Handbook creates, or is intended to create, a promise or representation of continued employment and that employment at Jackson County is employment at will, which may be terminated at the will of either Jackson County or myself. Furthermore, I acknowledge that this handbook is neither a contract of employment nor a legal document. I understand and agree that employment and compensation may be terminated with or without cause and with or without notice at any time by Jackson County or myself.

I have received the handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it.

Employee's Signature

Date

Employee Name (Print)

TO BE PLACED IN EMPLOYEE'S PERSONNEL FILE