

# Employee Handbook



January 2025

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## IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER

THIS 2025 NWCCOG EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK REPLACES ALL PREVIOUS EDITIONS.

The purpose of the Employee Handbook is to provide employees with an overview of key guidelines, benefits and practices adopted by the organization. Many of these exist in greater detail separately from this document. There is an Employee Benefits Guide that has covers in much greater detail the benefits outlined in this document. There is an Employee Resources file on the shared drive that has the other guiding documents sorted by those who needs to know. In other words, this Handbook is not intended to be comprehensive rather than “all-inclusive.”

Don't be alarmed, but you should understand that not everything written herein is fixed for the entire time you may be employed at NWCCOG, and that Colorado is an “at will” employment state. NWCCOG is an at will organization which means that neither the employee nor the organization is committed to an employment relationship for a fixed period. Either the employee or NWCCOG management has the right to terminate the employment relationship at any time, for any reason.

NWCCOG reserves the right to suspend, terminate or interpret... that is to change, any or all the guidelines mentioned herein, along with any other procedures, practices, benefits or other programs. Grant terms for some programs may be more restrictive than NWCCOG “base” guidelines. Changes may occur at any time with or without notice.

The language used in this handbook and any verbal statements by management are not intended to constitute a Contract of Employment, either express or implied; nor is there a guarantee of Employment for any specific duration. No representative of NWCCOG other than the Elected Official who is the NWCCOG Council Chair acting on behalf of the NWCCOG Council has authority to enter into a written employment agreement for any specified period, and such agreement must be signed in writing, signed by the Elected Official and the employee.

The Employee Handbook cannot anticipate every circumstance or question an employee may have. After reading the document if you have questions, you are encouraged to begin with a conversation with your immediate supervisor.

## WELCOME TO Northwest Colorado Council of Governments

NWCCOG is empowered by an Executive Order from the Governor of the State of Colorado and was created at the request of Municipalities and Counties in the Region (Region 12). On their behalf, NWCCOG provides services and manages grants at a regional level and facilitates regional coordination and planning. The local governments therein are the dues paying Membership. It can be difficult to explain what type of organization this is. Employees appreciate that NWCCOG “feels mission based.” Programs assist people similarly to a non-profit entity. But NWCCOG is not an NPO. NWCCOG exists because local governments in the region came together to form the entity, so we have roles that appear like a government as we work with towns and counties. But NWCCOG is neither a local government nor a state agency but a public entity akin to both. Many of our programs have existed a long time – since the early 1970s. The organization prides itself on adapting and being responsive to changing needs within the region. Membership provides funding to the COG through annual dues. The remaining revenues derive from grants and direct program funding from the State of Colorado or the Federal Government that we are entrusted and contracted to manage. Through our By-Laws, representatives from the Membership make up the NWCCOG Council which is our “umbrella” oversight for the organization.

## NWCCOG Mission

Northwest Colorado Council of Governments fosters innovative regional solutions and supports local government members by managing diverse programs that deliver direct services and grant funding opportunities to beneficiaries across the region; providing leadership, guidance and partnership building; and advocating members’ interests and needs with local, state, and federal entities.

## NWCCOG Is a Learning Organization

The NWCCOG organization plays many roles in serving member communities and their citizens. Our employees help define and continue to cultivate organizational values through a culture of safety, professionalism, innovation, and mutual respect. Employee input informs our processes, procedures, policies, values and norms as well as periodic updates of this document. We strive for the NWCCOG organization to be worthy of the high quality of life we share in Colorado.

## OF NOTE

This Employee Handbook (hereafter “Handbook”) and related guidelines, policies and procedures are filed on the NWCCOG Shared Drive under Employee Resources, and on the NWCCOG website. “NWCCOG” and “the Organization” are one and the same. References to advise or consult with an employee’s “Supervisor” or “Director” or

“Executive Director” should be read to indicate that an employee should first approach the title to which they directly report unless a situation requires bypassing that person (for instance if the issue is with that person).

## EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY (EEO)

### Employment and Unlawful Harassment

NWCCOG is dedicated to the principles of equal employment opportunity. We prohibit unlawful discrimination against applicants or employees on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, education, marital status, age, body size, political affiliation/philosophy, socio-economic status, disability, military status, veteran status, genetic information, sex, gender, gender expression, or sexual orientation, HIV status, amnesty or any other status protected by applicable federal state or local law, otherwise defined as a “protected class.” The Title VI (Discrimination and Harassment) Policy and Forms can be found on the NWCCOG Website under Contact Us.

### Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

NWCCOG will make reasonable accommodation for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless doing so would result in an undue hardship to NWCCOG or cause a direct threat to health or safety. NWCCOG will make reasonable accommodation for employees whose work requirements interfere with a religious belief, unless doing so poses an undue hardship on NWCCOG.

NWCCOG is also dedicated to compliance with the applicable provisions of Title II of the ADA in the provision of programs and services to its clients or potential clients. Employees who encounter ADA compliance requests to the organization are required to report those to their supervisor and to the NWCCOG Office Manager or Executive Director who act as the ADA Coordinator for NWCCOG.

### Pregnancy Accommodation

NWCCOG employees have the right to be free from discriminatory or unfair employment practices because of pregnancy, a health condition related to pregnancy or physical recovery from childbirth.

Employees who are otherwise qualified for a position may request reasonable accommodation related to pregnancy, a condition related to pregnancy, or physical recovery from childbirth. If an employee requests accommodation, the Organization will engage in a timely, good-faith, and interactive process with the employee to determine whether there is an effective, reasonable accommodation that will enable the employee to perform the essential functions of their position. A reasonable accommodation will be provided unless it imposes an undue hardship on the Organization's business operations.

The Organization may require that an employee provide a note from their health care provider detailing the medical advisability of the reasonable accommodation. Employees who have questions about this policy or who wish to request reasonable accommodation under this policy should contact their Supervisor at NWCCOG.

NWCCOG will not deny employment opportunities or retaliate against an employee because of an employee's request for reasonable accommodation related to pregnancy, a health condition related to pregnancy, or the physical recovery from childbirth. An employee will not be required to take leave or accept accommodation that is unnecessary for the employee to perform the essential functions of their position. The NWCCOG Family Friendly Workplace Standards can be found on the Shared Drive under Employee Resources.

## NWCCOG PROHIBITED HARASSMENT

### EEO Harassment

NWCCOG strives to maintain a work environment free of unlawful harassment. Unlawful harassment includes any unwelcome physical or verbal conduct or any written, pictorial, or visual communication directed at an individual (or group) because of that individual's (or group's) membership in, or perceived membership in, a protected class, that is subjectively offensive to the individual alleging harassment and is objectively offensive to a reasonable individual who is a member of the same protected class. Harassment does not need to be in-person and can occur over electronic media such as Zoom or other electronic platforms. Prohibited behavior may include but is not limited to the following:

1. Written form, such as cartoons, emails, posters, drawings, or photographs.
2. Verbal conduct, such as epithets, derogatory comments, slurs, or jokes.
3. Physical conduct such as assault or blocking an individual's movements.



This policy applies to all employees, including managers, supervisors, coworkers, and non-employees, such as customers, clients, vendors, consultants, etc. The Title VI (Discrimination and Harassment) Policy and Forms can be found on the NWCCOG Website under Contact Us.

## Sexual Harassment

Because sexual harassment raises issues that are to some extent unique in comparison to other Prohibited Harassment types, it warrants additional emphasis.

NWCCOG strongly opposes sexual harassment and inappropriate sexual conduct. Sexual Harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when:

1. Submission to such conduct is explicit or implied term or condition of employment
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for decisions affecting an individual's employment; or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.
4. Conduct that constitutes prohibited Sexual Harassment may include but is not limited to sexually implicit or explicit communications whether in the following:
  - Written form, such as cartoons, posters, calendars, notes, letters, and emails.
  - Verbal form, such as comments, jokes, foul or obscene language of a sexual nature, gossiping or questions about another's sex life, or repeated unwanted requests for dates.
  - Physical gestures and other nonverbal behavior, such as unwelcome touching, grabbing, fondling, kissing, massaging, and brushing up against another's body.

The Title VI (Discrimination and Harassment) Policy and Forms can be found on the NWCCOG Website under Contact Us.

## Complaint and Investigation Procedure for ADA, Diversity, and Harassment Complaints

If there has been a violation of the EEO policy or harassment based on a protected class, including sexual harassment, please use the following complaint procedure.

Report the incident to The Executive Director or Office Manager who will initiate an investigation of the matter and take corrective action. The complaint will be kept as confidential as practicable. If uncomfortable going to either of these individuals with the complaint, report the incident to a Director within NWCCOG or the NWCCOG Council Chair.

NWCCOG has established a protocol designed to prevent harassment, deter future harassers, and protect employees from harassment by taking prompt action to investigate and/or address alleged discriminatory or unfair employment practices. NWCCOG also takes prompt remedial actions when warranted in response to complaints of discriminatory or unfair employment practices. Therefore, NWCCOG expects employees to make a timely complaint to enable NWCCOG to investigate and correct any behavior that may be in violation of this policy.

NWCCOG prohibits retaliation against an employee for filing a complaint under this policy or assisting in a complaint investigation. If you perceive retaliation for making a complaint or participating in the investigation, please follow the complaint procedure outlined above. The situation will be investigated.

If NWCCOG determines that an employee's behavior violates this policy, disciplinary action will be taken, up to and including termination of employment. The Title VI (Discrimination and Harassment) Policy and Forms can be found on the NWCCOG Website under Contact Us.

## Employee Classifications

Employees of NWCCOG are classified as either exempt or nonexempt under federal and state wage and hour laws, and are further classified for administrative purposes, such as the administration of fringe benefits like paid vacation or holidays. These classifications do not determine eligibility for participation in NWCCOG's group health plan. Eligibility for participation in NWCCOG's group health plan is governed by the terms of the plan documents as well as applicable law. To obtain a copy of the Employee Benefits Resources Guide request it from your supervisor; to discuss whether you are eligible to participate in the Organization's group health plan, please contact NWCCOG's Office Manager. The following classifications are used throughout this Handbook.

### Full-Time Employee

Is an employee who is normally scheduled to work at least **32 hours** per week.

### Part-Time Employee

Is an employee who is normally scheduled to work less than **32 hours** per week.

### Temporary Employee

Temporary employees are those who are employed for short-term assignments. Temporary employees are hired by an NWCCOG program for a temporary period, an assignment, or a group of assignments. These temporary employment assignments are of limited duration. Temporary employees may be classified as exempt or nonexempt based upon job duties and compensation.

### Non-Exempt Employee

Nonexempt employees are employees whose job positions do not meet the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) or applicable state exemption tests, and who are not exempt from minimum wage and/or overtime pay requirements.

### Exempt Employee

Exempt employees are employees whose job assignments meet specific tests established by the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and who are exempt from minimum wage and/or overtime pay requirements.

## Performance Evaluation

Evaluating employee job performance and providing feedback is an important factor in making employment-related decisions. See your Supervisor for information regarding our review process.

## Discipline and Discharge

When policy, performance or professional conduct has been compromised, management will take action that it deems appropriate. Disciplinary actions range from an informal discussion with an employee about the matter, recording the event in a Discipline Action Form, up to immediate discharge. Action taken by management in an individual case does not establish a precedent in other circumstances.

## Employment of Relatives

The Company may employ relatives of current employees except that:

1. Relatives cannot be in a position that supervises another relative.
2. Relatives cannot be in a position that has access to confidential information such as personnel records of the other relative.
3. Relatives cannot be in a position that audits, verifies, receives, or are entrusted with money, Personally Identifiable Information or Benefits handled by the other relative.

In cases of marriage or the formation of a civil union between two employees, if the above guidelines apply, one must transfer.

These guidelines apply to all categories of employment, including full-time, part-time, and temporary classifications. They also apply to all relatives and individuals who are not legally related but who reside with another employee. Colorado anti-discrimination law provides that it is not unfair or discriminatory for an employer to discharge an employee or to refuse to hire or promote a person solely on the basis that such employee or person is married to or plans to marry another employee of the employer under circumstances listed in the sample policy above.

## COMPENSATION/PAYROLL

### Time Records

Employees must accurately record their daily and hourly work. Time records are used to calculate pay and related hourly benefits. It is necessary for employees to indicate whether the recorded hours are for time worked, for annual leave or other leave, compensatory or flex time.

These records are the only ones used by NWCCOG to calculate employee pay and paid time off balances. It is very important that they are accurate and complete. Employees who also choose to keep their own personal time records must provide them to NWCCOG if they find a discrepancy between NWCCOG's records and their records. Employees should contact their supervisors or the Finance Director with any questions about how their pay is calculated. Employees must promptly notify their supervisor and the Finance Director of any mistakes in their time records or pay. Employees also must notify one of these individuals if they perceive that anyone is interfering with their ability to record their time accurately and completely or coercing them to falsify time worked on a timesheet. Reports will be investigated and appropriate corrective action taken. Retaliation against employees for making a report or participating in an investigation will not be tolerated.

Exempt employees are paid on a salary basis. This means Exempt employees will regularly receive predetermined compensation each pay period. They are still required to track time worked and submit timecards to ensure accurate coding. NWCCOG is committed to complying with salary basis requirements which allows properly authorized deductions.

### Paydays

Paydays are on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. If the regular payday occurs on a holiday or weekend, employees are paid on the last working day prior to the regular payday. On each payday employees receive an electronically delivered, password encrypted statement showing gross pay, deductions, and net pay. Automatic deductions such as additional tax withholding, contributions to voluntary plans, and individual savings plans may be arranged through the Finance Office. NWCCOG does not print paychecks. Payroll is made through electronic transfer (direct deposit) of funds into the employee's designated, qualified account by filling out the Direct Deposit Authorization Form. Employees may designate no more than two different accounts for direct deposit.

If an employee believes an improper deduction has been made to their pay, that employee should immediately report this information to their supervisor and the Finance Director. Reports of improper deductions will be promptly investigated. If it is determined that an improper deduction has occurred, the employee will be promptly reimbursed. The Payroll Procedure can be found on the Shared Drive under Employee Resources.

## Overtime/Compensatory Time for Non-Exempt Employees

A Non-Exempt employee is eligible for overtime compensation. Non-Exempt employees are eligible to be paid overtime at one-and-one-half times their base rate of pay for all hours worked exceeding 40 hours in a workweek. All Non-Exempt employees must record all time worked and all Compensatory time taken on their timesheet. Overtime must be approved in advance by a supervisor. Overtime at the rate of time and one-half the employee's base rate will be paid to Non-Exempt employees when work is performed exceeding 40 hours in one week.

The only exception from overtime is by choice of the Non-Exempt employees to participate in NWCCOG's Compensatory Time benefit. "Compensatory" or "Comp" Time accumulates at the rate of one-and-one-half hour for each 1 hour worked that would exceed 40 hours in that week and otherwise be eligible for Overtime. Comp Time may accumulate up to 16 hrs. Non-Exempt employees are only eligible for Compensation Time if agreed upon in advance by a supervisor with the employee's written consent documented by completion of the Non-Exempt Employee Agreement to Compensatory Time Form. \*Note that some grants and programs do not allow use of compensatory time. Upon separation from employment Compensatory Time is paid to the employee. The Non-Exempt Employee Agreement to Compensatory Time Form can be found on the Shared Drive under Employee Resources.

NOTE: for purposes of calculating overtime, the workweek begins at 12:00 a.m. midnight Sunday and ends at 11:59 p.m. Saturday. The 40-hours threshold is based on actual hours worked in the week. Therefore, sick time, vacation, holiday, or other paid or unpaid leave time is not included in calculating the 40-hours threshold for Overtime or Compensatory Time accumulated.

Nonexempt employees who wish to participate in the Compensatory Time program by filling out the form will be given compensatory time off in lieu of cash payment or overtime for up to a maximum of **16** compensatory hours (for **16** hours of overtime). The compensatory time balance is payable to the nonexempt employee at termination.

## Flex Time/Exempt Employees

Exempt employees are paid a salary and will receive a predetermined amount of compensation each pay period on a weekly basis. Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime compensation as defined by the FLSA. Exempt Employees track Flex Time hours on their timesheet. Flex Time is for Exempt Employees and is roughly equivalent to Compensatory Time for Non-Exempt employees, differentiated in name so they can be defined to properly apply to each classification. Flex Time hours accumulated may be utilized as time off on another day. Hours accumulate on a one-to-one basis. Exempt employees may only accrue up to 40 hours of Flex Time. Upon separation from employment, all Flex Time for exempt employees is forfeited. Flex Time can be transferred from one calendar year to the next. The Exempt Employee Agreement to Flex Time Form can be found on the Shared Drive under Employee Resources.

## Attendance and Punctuality

Many roles at NWCCOG have flexibility for when hours are worked during the day and where those hours are worked (remote); nonetheless, punctuality and regular attendance are essential for efficient operations. Physical presence on the job in a certain place and time is an essential function of most positions, whether at the office, a jobsite or various meeting locations. Permission to work remotely must be agreed upon by a direct supervisor.

If an employee knows in advance, they are going to be unavoidably late or absent, that employee must notify their Supervisor's cell phone. If an employee is absent without prior notice, the employee should advise the Supervisor or Program Director by calling or texting their cell phone as soon as possible. If a Supervisor is not available, employees should contact the Office Manager during business hours at 970-468-0295 or another Program Director. Employees are expected to make every effort to speak directly with a person and should leave a message only when other alternatives are exhausted.

**IMPORTANT: If an employee fails to report to work for three consecutive days without following the above call-in procedures, the employee is subject to separation from employment.**

## Recording Holidays for Payroll

NWCCOG observes 14 holidays as days off with pay. When a holiday falls on a Saturday, it is observed on the proceeding Friday. When the holiday falls on a Sunday, the following Monday is the paid day off. The 14 holidays are as follows:

New Year's Day	January 1
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Martin Luther King Day	Third Monday in January
President's Day	Third Monday in February
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Juneteenth Day	June 19th
Independence Day	July 4
Colorado Day	First Monday in August
Labor Day	First Monday in September
Frances Xavier Cabrini Day	First Monday in October
Veteran's Day	November 11
Thanksgiving Day	Fourth Thursday in November
Thanksgiving Friday	Friday after Thanksgiving
Christmas Day	December 25
Floating Holiday	Any day, at the discretion of the employee

Non-Exempt full-time employees who are not scheduled to be at work on a holiday will receive 8 hours of holiday pay at their regular rate of pay. *Holiday time off is **not** counted as hours worked in the computation of overtime for that week.* Non-Exempt employees shall not work on NWCCOG observed holidays without prior approval from their Supervisor. Work on holiday time by a Non-Exempt employee is compensated like overtime.

Exempt Employees may Flex holiday time off within the pay period or next with verbal approval from their Supervisor.

Holiday pay for part-time employees is prorated based on their regularly scheduled work hours. *\*Note that some grant programs only allow pay for federal holidays, so any holidays (floating, Thanksgiving Friday) must be budgeted in the program to be paid.*



## TOTAL COMPENSATION PACKAGE EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

### Overview

NWCCOG offers a Total Compensation package of pay and benefits. To receive certain benefits, eligible employees must meet participation requirements and pay any required premiums and other contributions. NWCCOG complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding the provision of benefits to same-sex spouses, domestic partners and couples in a civil union. Benefits may vary according to the position and status of the employee.

Benefit plans offered by NWCCOG are defined in legal documents such as insurance contracts and summary plan descriptions. In the event information in this Handbook or other employee communication conflicts with the actual terms and conditions of coverage, the plan documents will control. Benefits described in this Handbook, including the types of benefits offered and/or the requirements for eligibility of coverage, may be modified or discontinued from time to time at NWCCOG's discretion as permitted by law. NWCCOG and its designated benefit plan administrators reserve the right to determine eligibility, interpretation and administration of issues related to benefits offered by NWCCOG.

After selecting benefits during onboarding, employees will have an opportunity to make changes to their benefit selections during NWCCOG's annual open enrollment period. Employees who experience a qualifying life event such as marriage, divorce or the birth of a child will also be allowed to make a change in their benefit selection when that event occurs, in accordance with the terms of the plan document.

In the event you take a personal or other leave of absence, please consult the Finance Director to determine the impact the leave may have upon your benefits, including eligibility and/or making any required premium payments. For all other basic questions about Total Compensation Benefits listed below, look for the NWCCOG Benefits Guide or ask the Office Manager for basic questions who can direct the employee to contacts for detailed questions regarding each program.

### NWCCOG offers these Supplements for Total Compensation:

The benefits listed below are covered in more detail in the NWCCOG Benefits Guide. The Benefits Guide can be found on the Shared Drive under Employee Resources.

**Medical Insurance Plan** - pays covered medical expenses for the employee and eligible family members through County Health Pool (CHP) which utilizes Anthem BlueCross/Blue Shield.

**Dental Insurance Plan** - provides employees and eligible dependents dental coverage at group rates through CHP.

**Vision Insurance Plan** – provides employee and eligible dependents vision coverage at group rates through CHP.

**Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs)** - allows employee to accumulate and use pre-tax dollars to pay for eligible health care-related expenses, such as health and dental insurance premiums, co-payments, and deductibles, and to be reimbursed for eligible dependent care expenses, such as dependent adult day care, nursery, and preschool programs through Employee Benefits Corporation.

**Life Insurance Plan** - provides certain insurance coverage at group rates through CHP and UNUM (NWCCOG's insurance carrier).

**Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D) Insurance Plan** - provides payments in case of accidental death or dismemberment. This coverage is available to employees and eligible dependents at group rates, through CHP and UNUM.

**Short-Term Disability (STD) Plan** - replaces a portion of the employees' salary if they suffer a covered disability for a limited period through CHP and UNUM.

**Long-Term Disability (LTD) Plan** - replaces a portion of the employee's salary if they suffer a covered disability for an indefinite period through CHP and UNUM.

**Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** – program designed to help alleviate workplace issues due to mental health, substance abuse, personal, and workplace issues through CHP Medical Insurance and various Leave Benefits.

**Retirement/Deferred Compensation:** NWCCOG is a member of Colorado County Officials and Employee Retirement Association (CRA) and **participates in the program instead of contributing to Social Security**; therefore, **all employees are required to participate** in the 401(a) Plan. For details about how non-participation in Social Security while employed at NWCCOG may impact their status as a participant and full eligibility for Social Security in retirement, employees are encouraged to consult with NWCCOG's CRA representative or their financial advisor.

NWCCOG provides a 100% employer match for an employee's 6% contribution to the 401(a) Plan. For more information about the CRA including eligibility requirements, please contact the Office Manager. NWCCOG offers additional plans to save for retirement if an employee decides to set aside more than the 401(a) plan allows, including voluntary contributions to CRA 457, and 410(a) and 457(b) plans which the employee may choose to participate in to supplement the required plan.

## Paid Professional Development Programs:

NWCCOG encourages employees to participate in professional development activities. Supervisors will specify any training that is required for an employee to perform duties.

Program Directors or the Executive Director may also approve training or education that is for personal advancement or professional education. Discuss possibilities for personal or professional development training with your supervisor. The Paid Professional Development Guidelines can be found on the Shared Drive under Employee Resources.

## Recreation Benefit

NWCCOG pays a nominal annual Business Membership Fee for NWCCOG employees to be eligible for corporate employee pass pricing at the Silverthorne Recreation Center. Please visit the Recreation Center website for current pricing for monthly, six month, or annual individual or family pass rates. Employees are responsible for paying their own entry or membership fees. Recreation Centers elsewhere in NWCCOG charge considerably more for business memberships so this is only available at this location.

## EMPLOYEE BENEFITS –Accumulated Leave

### Annual Leave

Annual Leave is a benefit intended to provide the employee an opportunity to self-manage work-life balance to manage their health and remain engaged in work. This paid time is for employees to use upon request. For example, it may be used to take time off for vacation, sickness, family illness, personal matters, or other reasons. NWCCOG does not differentiate between Annual Leave and “sick leave.”

Employees must schedule use of accrued Annual Leave to minimize interruptions to organizational operations and authorization for use of leave from their supervisor through a signed Request for Leave Form. Annual Leave time will not be advanced (ahead of the current pay period), prior to it being accrued under any circumstances. Employees must provide their supervisor with as much advance notice as possible when requesting annual leave. The Annual Leave Form can be found on the Shared Drive under Employee Resources.

An employee is not eligible to accumulate more than 240 hours of accrued annual leave and carry it from one pay period to the next. Once an employee reaches this maximum, the employee ceases accruing additional Annual Leave; and resumes accruing leave only from and after the date that leave falls below the 240-hour limit. Program Director or Executive Director may require an employee to take Annual Leave if it is believed that employee is reaching the 240-hour limit and not managing use of Annual Leave.

Upon termination, employees receive pay for accrued, unused Annual leave.

**Part-time employees** accrue annual leave at a rate of no less than 1 hour per 30 hours worked per Healthy Families and Workplace Act (HFWA).

## HFWA DISCLAIMER

Annual Leave is provided with hours and with sufficient pay for all the same purposes and under all the same conditions as the Healthy Families and Workplaces Act (HFWA) and applicable rules. This includes but is not limited to accrual, use, payment, annual carryover of unused accrued leave, notice and documentation requirements, and anti-retaliation and anti-interference rights. Additional HFWA leave will not be provided if an employee uses their available Annual Leave for non-HFWA-qualifying reasons (e.g., vacation), except when a public health emergency is declared after usage of Annual Leave, requiring supplemental leave.

**Full-time employees** accrue annual leave based on the following schedule:

Annual Leave Earned Per Year for Full Time Employees	Length of Service
128 hours @ 5.34 hours per pay period (or 16 days)	Commencing on the date of employment, continuing to the fifth anniversary of the date of employment
168 hours @ 7 hours per pay period (or 21 days)	Commencing on the fifth anniversary of the date of employment, continuing to the tenth anniversary of the date of employment
240 hours @ 10 hours per pay period (or 30 days)	Commencing on the tenth anniversary of the date of employment, continuing through the remainder of employment

Employees may take Annual Leave in no smaller than hourly increments.

Annual Leave may be used if an employee:

- (1) has a mental or physical illness, injury, or health condition that prevents them from working.
- (2) needs preventive medical care, or to get a medical diagnosis, care, or treatment, of any mental or physical illness, injury, or health condition.
- (3) needs to care for a family member who has a mental or physical illness, injury, or health condition, or who needs the sort of care listed in category (2).

(4) the employee or the employee's family member having been a victim of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or criminal harassment, and needing leave for related medical attention, mental health care or other counseling, victim services (including legal services), or relocation.

(5) due to a public health emergency, a public official having closed either (A) the employee's place of business or (B) the school or place of care of the employee's child, requiring the employee needing to be absent from work to care for the child.

(6) needs to care for a family member whose school or place of care has been closed due to inclement weather, loss of power, loss of heating, loss of water, or other unexpected occurrence or event that results in the closure of the family member's school or place of care.

(7) needs to grieve, attend funeral services or a memorial, or deal with financial and legal matters that arise after the death of a family member; or

(8) needs to evacuate the employee's place of residence due to inclement weather, loss of power, loss of heating, loss of water, or other unexpected occurrence or event that results in the need to evacuate the employee's residence.

If the reason for the absence is one of the above, employees should notify their Supervisor each day at the beginning of the shift when unable come to work. In addition, they must let the manager know when they expect to return to work. In the event of an unplanned absence of four or more consecutive workdays, the employee must obtain medical or legal certification. This certification should indicate that the employee was unable to work due to one of the reasons listed above and the length of time this restriction lasted.

## Bereavement Leave

Employees are currently eligible for paid bereavement leave as part of Colorado's Healthy Families and Workplaces Act.. Following a death in an employee's immediate family, they may arrange with their supervisor a supplemental bereavement leave of up to 3 days. The Annual Leave Guidelines can be found on the Shared Drive under Employee Resources.

## Shared Leave

Shared Leave is for when an employee has an extenuating circumstance requiring time off of work and has expended all of their Annual Leave by which other employees may give (share) their accrued Annual Leave to that employee. Approval of Shared Leave is at the discretion of the Executive Director and subject to any departmental grant restrictions. Leave time is gifted by the written permission of individual employees

whose own Annual Leave will be reduced by the number of hours gifted. Shared Leave that is gifted will be charged to the gifting employee's program as it would be if they used it themselves. An employee may put in a written request to the Executive Director to give not more than two of their own accumulated annual leave days to a fellow employee who has utilized all their own accumulated Annual Leave time and whose circumstances warrant additional time. Not all programs have funding that allows their employees to share leave. The Shared Leave guidelines can be found on the Shared Drive under Employee Resources.

## Domestic Abuse Leave

NWCCOG provides leave to employees who are the victims of domestic violence or abuse, stalking, sexual assault, or a crime found by the court to include an act of domestic violence. Employees must be employed for at least 12 months preceding the leave. Upon reasonable advance notice (except in cases of imminent danger to the health or safety of an employee), an employee may take up to three working days of leave in any 12-month period. The 12-month period will be measured forward from the date the first domestic violence leave begins.<sup>i</sup>

1. Leave may be unpaid or paid at the discretion of the Executive Director or Finance Director and (employees may use accumulated Annual Leave without any of the conditions below). Employees granted Domestic Abuse Leave may:
2. Seek civil protection orders to prevent domestic abuse.
3. Obtain medical care or mental health counseling for themselves or their child(ren) to address physical or psychological injuries resulting from the domestic abuse, stalking, sexual assault, or other crime involving domestic violence.
4. Make their home secure or seek new housing to escape the perpetrator.
5. Seek legal assistance, attend, and prepare for court-related proceedings arising from domestic violence acts.

Employees are to contact the Office Manager, Executive Director or Finance Manager to request domestic abuse leave. NWCCOG requires appropriate documentation to approve leave, which may include police reports, court orders, confirmation of court appearances, or documentation from medical and other professionals.

## Jury Duty

NWCCOG recognizes jury duty as a civic responsibility. When summoned for jury duty, an employee will be granted leave to perform their duty as a juror. If the employee is

excused from jury duty during their regular work hours, they are expected to report to work promptly. Employees receive regular pay for the first three days of jury duty if they are scheduled to work and the employee submits a juror service certificate. Beginning the fourth day and thereafter employees serving as jurors will be paid \$50.00 per day by the State of Colorado for state or county court jury duty. For jury duty beyond three days, employees receive the difference between jury duty pay and their regular pay up to a maximum of 10 days (80 hours). Jury duty leave beyond this period is without pay from NWCCOG.

## Community Service Leave

Employees may utilize accrued Annual Leave for community service or service trips. Program Directors or the Executive Director can allow group community service hours to be billed to the program as regular work hours when more than one employee participates, and the effort is deemed as a teambuilding or related purpose.

## Military Leave

Employees granted military leave of absence are reinstated in their employment and paid in accordance with the laws governing veterans' re-employment rights without loss of pay, benefits, or seniority.

## Voting or Election Judge

If it is necessary for employees to arrive late or leave early from work to vote, employees may plan the day before with their supervisor. All Colorado voters receive a mail-in ballot for major elections, so this is only for when voting is required in-person. Leave may be used for volunteering to be an Election Judge.

## Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Public sector employers are subject to the provisions of the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). However, to be eligible to take FMLA leave, employees must work at a worksite within at least 50 employees within 75 miles. Because NWCCOG does not employ 50 employees at one location within a 75-mile radius, employees are not eligible to take FMLA leave. However, the State of Colorado does provide family and medical leave as outlined below.

## Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) Program

The Organization has voted to opt out of participating in the FAMLI state-run family leave program. All employees of the Organization can participate in FAMLI on an individual basis. FAMLI provides benefits and protections, including partial income protection for eligible employees who are temporarily unable to work due to their or a family member's qualifying medical or legal reason, specifically, for the care of a newborn, adopted child, or fostered child; to care for a family member with a serious health condition; for the employee's own serious health condition; for qualifying military exigency leave; or to address safety needs or the impact of domestic violence and/or sexual assault. Partially paid leave is available for up to 12 weeks in a calendar year or up to 16 weeks under certain circumstances related to pregnancy and childbirth. Please see the Office Manager to obtain additional copies of the required notices to employees of local government employers who have opted out of FAMLI that are distributed upon hiring.

## Paid and Unpaid Administrative Leave

The Executive Director (or the NWCCOG Council when required for the Executive Director) may place an employee on Paid or Unpaid Administrative leave at NWCCOG's full discretion, if appropriate for the good of the organization for that employee to be away from the workplace for a specified or indefinite period of time for a complaint to be investigated, or for other circumstances as determined by the Executive Director (or the NWCCOG Council in the case of the Executive Director).

The Executive Director, in consultation with a Program Director may provide Paid Administrative leave for a variety of special personal situations including, extended medical situations when there is an anticipated return to work. Such leave will be charged to the employee's program and there must be budgeted funds available to cover such leave. med

A Program Director, in consultation with the Executive Director at the sole discretion of NWCCOG may place an employee on Unpaid Administrative leave as a part of an escalated employee Disciplinary process.

Prior to any Leave without NWCCOG Pay earned during that leave, including FAMLI, the employee will continue paying their portion (approximately 15%) of their monthly premium, unless granted special consideration by the Executive Director. The status of health benefits during leave must be determined and noted on the leave request. When the employee is required to pay the employee portion of benefits to continue health benefits while on leave they shall make arrangements prior to leave for how premiums will be paid during that leave. Annual Leave will not accrue during a medical leave of absence.



## Personal Unpaid Leave of Absence

At the sole discretion of the Executive Director, an employee may be granted unpaid leave of absence for reasons other than illness, disability, vacation, or a leave of absence otherwise protected under federal or state law for not more than 60 days. Annual Leave will not accrue during a medical leave of absence. Employees taking approved unpaid leave of absence are responsible for paying the employee portion of benefits coverage during the absence; and have no guarantee of employment by NWCCOG upon return.

## Medical Leave

A medical leave of absence of not more than three months may currently be granted to employees who work at least 24 hours per week. This unpaid leave is for absences arising from illness, injury, or pregnancy.

For a medical leave to be granted, the following conditions must be met:

1. The employee has completed ninety (90) days of employment with NWCCOG.
2. The Office Manager or Finance Director is notified by the employee as soon as possible of the need for medical leave.
3. The employee submits a written statement from the attending physician outlining the reason for leave and the estimated time needed. NWCCOG may require the employee to obtain an opinion from a medical provider selected by the NWCCOG.
4. Obtain approvals from the Executive Director prior to the leave.
5. All accrued Annual Leave is used at the beginning of the leave of absence.

When the estimated period of leave is less than three months, and an employee needs to extend the leave, another medical provider's statement is required to indicate the new estimated length of leave.

An employee ready to return to work from leave must present a doctor's statement indicating their ability to return to work. NWCCOG may reinstate an employee ready to return from a medical leave of absence when, in the opinion of NWCCOG, it is practical to do so. NWCCOG does not guarantee reinstatement of an employee in the former job. When the employee is available to return to work, the employee is free to apply for any vacancy available and may be considered along with other applicants.

NWCCOG continues insurance benefits for an employee on leave for a maximum of three months if the employee continues to pay the employee's portion of the premium.

Annual Leave will not accrue during a medical leave of absence. Holidays, bereavement pay, or employer's jury duty pay will not be accrued or granted during the leave.

Employees who fail to return at the expiration of their authorized leave may be terminated. If the employee's failure to return is due to a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or other law, additional accommodations may be provided. Employees must supply sufficient information from their medical provider indicating that they have a covered disability and when they can return to work with or without reasonable accommodation. Accommodation must not cause undue hardship to the employer. Potential accommodations will be determined in an interactive process between the employee and the Organization.

Part-time employees are not eligible for medical leave except as required for a disability.

## NWCCOG WORKPLACE MATTERS

### Whistleblower Protection

NWCCOG takes management of information seriously. In the course of employment, an employee may encounter personal and protected information as well as documents which are subject to open records laws. NWCCOG expects that an employee who has evidence of another NWCCOG employee or the organization breaking the law may disclose that evidence to the appropriate authority. NWCCOG does not initiate or administer disciplinary action against an employee for such a disclosure of information. Disclosure of information is defined as the written provision of evidence to any person regarding any action, including waste of public funds, abuse of authority, or mismanagement. The law does not protect employees who disclose information they know to be false or who disclose information without regard for truth or falsity. It does not protect those who disclose information that is Confidential under any other provision of the law ("confidential" being defined in statute as "information from public records that are closed to public inspection or that is confidential under any other provision of law").

### Data Disposal

During employment, NWCCOG will collect certain information that is classified as "personal identifying information," or PII, under applicable laws. Such information may include, but is not limited to:

Employee first and last name or initials, username(s) and password(s), Social Security number, Driver license or other identification card number, medical documentation.

NWCCOG may retain such records in paper and/or electronic format. When such documentation is no longer needed, pursuant to records retention requirements and best practices, NWCCOG will either (a) destroy the records or (b) arrange for their destruction; e.g., by shredding, erasing, or otherwise modifying the personal identifying information in such a manner as to render it unreadable or indecipherable through any means.

### Anti-Violence

Any action, which in management's opinion is inappropriate to the workplace, will not be tolerated. Such behaviors may include, but are not limited to, physical and/or verbal

intimidating, threatening, or violent conduct, vandalism, sabotage, arson, use of weapons, and bullying. Also prohibited is the carrying of weapons onto NWCCOG property, regardless of whether the employee possesses a concealed carry permit.

Employees should immediately report any such occurrence to their supervisor or to the Executive Director who will investigate complaints. When employees are found to have engaged in the above conduct, management will take action that it believes is appropriate.

Workplace bullying is repeated mistreatment through verbal abuse, offensive conduct/behavior and work interference. If subjected to workplace bullying, the employee should contact the Office Manager or Executive Director. Employees should directly contact law enforcement and/or emergency services if they believe there is an imminent threat to the safety and health of themselves or co-workers. NWCCOG has adopted a Safety Program, as well as an Building Evacuation Procedure. For more information on these programs, see the Office Manager. These can be found on the Shared Drive under Employee Resources.

## Accommodation for Nursing Employees

A private space will be provided, and reasonable time will be permitted for nursing employees to express milk during the workday for up to two years following the birth of a child. The time permitted typically will run concurrently with the time already provided for meal and rest breaks. If the breaks cannot run concurrently and/or additional time is needed, human resources and the employee will agree upon a schedule that might include the employee using unpaid leave (if non-exempt), annual leave/vacation time, arriving at work earlier, or leaving later. In the event unpaid leave is used, the employee will be relieved of all work-related duties during any unpaid break.

Employees will be provided with the use of a room, office, or other private area, other than a bathroom or toilet stall, shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public. NWCCOG will make a reasonable effort to identify a location within close proximity to the work area for the employee to express milk.

Nursing employees are responsible for using anti-microbial wipes to clean milk expression areas, and for keeping the general lactation space clean for the next user. This responsibility extends to other areas where expressing milk is permitted, equipment is cleaned, and milk storage areas. NWCCOG reserves the right to not provide additional break time or a private location for expressing breast milk if doing so would substantially disrupt the Organization's operations. NWCCOG will not demote, terminate, or otherwise take adverse action against an employee who requests or makes use of the accommodation and break time described in this policy. Family Friendly Workplace Standards can be found on the Shared Drive under Employee Resources.

## Drug-Free Workplace

NWCCOG is committed to a safe, healthy, and productive work environment for all employees that is free from the effects of substance abuse. Abuse of alcohol, drugs, and controlled substances impairs employee judgment, resulting in increased safety risks, injuries, and faulty decision-making. This includes working after the apparent use of marijuana, regardless of marijuana's legal status.

In accordance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, NWCCOG prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance during Company time, on Company premises, or other work sites.

Any employee who is convicted or pleads guilty or no-contest under a criminal drug statute for a violation occurring in the workplace must notify NWCCOG within five days of such conviction or plea.

Employees who violate any aspect of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Please contact the Supervisor with questions.

## Inspections

NWCCOG may conduct searches of employees' personal effects after notice is given and with the employee's consent. This may include, but is not limited to, lunch bags, boxes, purses, personal computers, packages, or vehicles.

NWCCOG may conduct searches of the above items without employee consent if we have a reasonable suspicion to believe that illegal activity is taking place and after obtaining a warrant to do so. Any illegal and unauthorized articles discovered may be taken into custody and will be turned over to law enforcement representatives.

Employees do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy in vehicles, lockers, desks, cabinets, or file drawers, all of which are keyed by NWCCOG and copies of those keys are kept by NWCCOG.

## WORKPLACE ETHICS AND USE OF ASSETS

### Colorado Open Records Act (CORA)

NWCCOG is a public entity subject to CORA. NWCCOG has adopted a CORA Policy establishing parameters and procedures for responding to records requests from the public. Employees at NWCCOG should be aware that communications or other records on nearly every media platform they utilize in the course of employment may be requested by a citizen and “made public” under the provision of CORA requiring disclosure of public records (subject to limited exceptions). If an employee has questions about the Colorado Open Records Act and an employee’s responsibilities, please speak with a Supervisor. The CORA policy can be found on the Shared Drive under Employee Resources.

### Confidentiality

Employees of NWCCOG will have access to confidential information about the Company and our clients. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, information concerning our client financial information, employee records, information protected by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), and other Personally Identifiable Information (PII) accessed through various programs that require such access. For more on PII, see IT Policy on Shared Drive under Employee Resources.

If uncertain of the status of information, contact your supervisor.

This non-disclosure prohibition applies both during and after an employee’s employment. Any copying, reproducing, or distributing of confidential information in any manner must be authorized by management. Confidential information remains the property of the employer and must be returned to NWCCOG upon separation or at any time upon demand.

In addition, employees are prohibited from purchasing or selling securities based on information not generally available to the public.

### Conflicts of Interest

NWCCOG requires that employees protect organization information and avoid outside activities or relationships, which do or could improperly influence their decisions or actions on the job.

**Self-Dealing and Gifts:** Other examples of conflict of interest could be: Serving as a board member or director of a firm, holding financial interest in a business, or being self-employed in an occupation which provides goods or services to NWCCOG, or ownership, partnership, or personal involvement in supplier companies or distribution outlets related to NWCCOG business. Employees may not accept gifts in the amount of \$65.00 or more in value per State Law.

**Other work with NWCCOG resources:** Conflict of interest situations, which could arise while moonlighting for a contractor of NWCCOG, should also be avoided. Any employment, activity, or enterprise which involves the use of NWCCOG time, facilities, equipment, work products, supplies, prestige, or influence for private monetary gain.

**Hiring:** No Employee, officer or agent, may review, influence or participate in the selection, award or administration of any form of contract, grant or employment (hiring) through with an entity from which they may have a real or apparent Conflict of Interest or actually gain financially from the granting of that employment or form of contract through which that person, or any member of that persons immediate family, his or her partner, or organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for a contract.

**Conflicting Representation:** NWCCOG employees are encouraged to be involved in their communities. When another role results in an appointment which places that employee on NWCCOG Council while being employed with the Organization, that employee must consult with both the NWCCOG Council Chair and NWCCOG Attorney in order to avoid the appearance or situations in which the employee would individually impact decisions related to funding their program or employment of staff leadership at NWCCOG. More can be found in Council Rules of Conduct on the Shared Drive under Employee Resources.

If employees have any question whether a situation is a conflict of interest, employees should discuss the matter with their supervisor. If it remains unresolved, refer the matter to the Executive Director for a final determination. Both a Vintage Specific and NWCCOG General Conflict of Interest Policy can be found on the Shared Drive under Employee Resources.

## Fraud, Waste, and Abuse

The federal government's definition of fraud or abuse is any intentional deception designed to unlawfully deprive the government or the company of something of value or to secure from either party for an individual a benefit, privilege, allowance, or consideration to which they are not entitled.

Fraud practices include, but are not limited to:

- the offer, payment, or acceptance of bribes or gratuities
- making false statements
- submitting false claims
- using false weights or measures
- evading or corrupting inspectors or other officials
- deceit either by suppressing the truth or misrepresenting material fact
- adulterating or substituting materials
- falsifying records and books of accounts
- arranging for secret profits, kickbacks, or commissions

The term also includes conflict of interest cases, criminal irregularities, and the unauthorized disclosure of official information relating to procurement and disposal matters.

Waste is the extravagant, careless, or needless expenditure of government funds or the consumption of government property that results from deficient practices, systems, controls, or decisions.

Abuse is the intentional or improper use of government resources that can include the excessive or improper use of one's position, in a manner contrary to its rightful or legally intended use. Examples include misuse of rank, position, or authority or misuse of company resources used for a government contract.

Contact the Executive Director or Council Chair when fraud, waste, or abuse is suspected.



## USE OF COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

### Work Data is Proprietary to the Organization

The Organization's computer network, access to the Internet, e-mail and voice mail systems are business tools intended for employees to use in performing their job duties. Therefore, all documents and files are the property of the Organization. All information regarding access to the Organization's computer resources, such as user identifications, modem phone numbers, access codes, and passwords are confidential Organization information and may not be disclosed to non-Organization personnel.

All computer files, documents, and software created or stored on the Organization's computer systems are subject to review and inspection at any time. This includes web-based email employees may access through Organization systems, whether password protected or not. Employees should not assume that any such information is confidential, including e-mail either sent or received. Computer equipment should not be removed from NWCCOG premises without written approval from the employee's Director. Upon separation of employment, all communication tools must be returned to NWCCOG.

### Personal Use of the Internet

Employees typically need to access information through the Internet to do their job. Use of the Internet is for business purposes during the time employees are working. Incidental and occasional personal use of the Internet is permitted but should not be on business time, rather, it should be limited to before or after work or during breaks or lunch period. Regardless, NWCCOG prohibits the display, transmittal, or downloading of material that is in violation of NWCCOG guidelines or otherwise is offensive, pornographic, obscene, profane, discriminatory, harassing, insulting, derogatory, or otherwise unlawful at any time.

### Personal Use, Copywrite and Speech

Personal use of social media is never permitted during work by means of NWCCOG's computers, NWCCOG-issued mobile devices, networks, and other IT resources and communications systems. Use of personal mobile devices during work time should be kept to a minimum. Postings by an employee on a blog, wiki, chat room, or social networking site are considered personal communications and are not NWCCOG communications. All social media postings on behalf of NWCCOG must be preapproved and sent by authorized employees. Personal postings by an employee concerning NWCCOG are not prohibited, provided they comply with guidelines set forth below or in this handbook.

If you post any comments that promote or endorse NWCCOG products or services in any way, the law requires that you disclose that you are employed by NWCCOG.

You must comply with all applicable laws, including copyright and fair use laws. You may not disclose any sensitive, proprietary, confidential, or financial information about NWCCOG. Confidential information includes trade secrets or anything related to NWCCOG's inventions, strategy, financials, or products that have not been made public, internal reports, procedures, or other internal business-related confidential communications. Further detail is provided in the "Confidentiality" section of your employee handbook.

We encourage you to make complaints to NWCCOG using the complaint process. Complaints to NWCCOG regarding these issues should be made consistent with the complaint process in this handbook so that NWCCOG can address them.

Nothing in this guideline is meant to interfere with employees' right under state law to engage in protected and concerted activity, including employees' ability to discuss terms and conditions of their employment.

## Political Participation

NWCCOG encourages employees to participate in matters of responsible citizenship. NWCCOG will not interfere with the conduct of organization employees engaged in political activity, if the activities are confined to hours when the employees are not on duty, are not campaigning in their official organization uniforms, and that the activities do not impair the employee's job efficiency or that of others. Employees will not be discriminated against for political views but may be asked not to discuss controversial issues or "politics" during working times by discretion of management.

Employees whose principal employment is in connection with federally financed activities are subject to the following federal requirements as a condition of such employment.

Employees may not use their official authority or influence for the purposes of interfering with or affecting the results of elections or nominations for office.

In addition, they may not coerce, attempt to coerce, command, or advise other covered employees to pay, lend, or contribute anything of value to a party, committee, organization, agency, or person for political purposes.

Political beliefs, activities, and affiliations are the private concern of the employee. An employee's work status is not affected by participating or not participating in lawful civic and political activities. No employee of NWCCOG can directly or indirectly coerce or command any other employee to pay, lend, or contribute salary, compensation, service, or anything else of value to any political party, group, organization, or candidate.

Any NWCCOG employee may be a candidate for a partisan political office provided that the involvement does not interfere or present a conflict of interest with their job. If involvement is necessary during normal working hours, the individual must take vacation leave or leave without pay. Employees whose salary comes in part or in whole from federal government sources are subject to the Federal Hatch Act and its revisions.

## Software and Copyright

NWCCOG fully supports copyright laws including software licensing. Employees may not copy or use any software, images, music, or other intellectual property (such as books or videos) unless the employee has the legal right to do so. Employees must comply with all licenses regulating the use of any software and may not disseminate or copy any such software without authorization. Employees may not use unauthorized copies of software on personal computers housed in NWCCOG facilities.

## Unauthorized Use

Employees may not attempt to gain access to another employee's personal file of e-mail messages or send a message under someone else's name without the latter's express permission. Employees are strictly prohibited from using NWCCOG communication systems in ways that management deems to be inappropriate. If you have any question whether your behavior would constitute unauthorized use, contact your immediate supervisor before engaging in such conduct.

## E-mail

E-mail is to be used for business purposes. While personal e-mail is permitted, it is to be kept to a minimum. Personal e-mail should be brief and sent or received as seldom as possible. NWCCOG prohibits the display, transmittal, or downloading of material that is offensive, pornographic, obscene, profane, discriminatory, harassing, insulting, derogatory, or otherwise unlawful at any time. No one may solicit, promote, or advertise any outside organization, product, or service through the use of e-mail or anywhere else on NWCCOG premises or equipment at any time. Management may monitor e-mail from time to time. Employees should be aware that emails might be public records and subject to public disclosure.

Employees are prohibited from unauthorized use of encryption keys or the passwords of other employees to gain access to another employee's e-mail messages.

## Voice Mail

NWCCOG's voice mail system is intended for transmitting business-related information. Although NWCCOG does not monitor voice messages as a routine matter, NWCCOG reserves the right to access and disclose all messages sent over the voice mail system for

any purpose. Employees must use judgment and discretion in their personal use of voice mail and must keep such use to a minimum.

## Telephones/Cell Phones/Mobile Devices

Employee work hours are valuable and should be used for business. Excessive personal phone calls can significantly disrupt business operations. Employees should use their break or lunch period for personal phone calls.

Employees should take the utmost care when discussing Confidential information on a cell phone or via any mobile device. Phones and mobile devices with cameras should not be used in a way that violates other NWCCOG guidelines such as, but not limited to, EEO/Sexual Harassment and Confidential Information. Employees' use of a cell phone or mobile device to access NWCCOG systems is restricted/prohibited without prior authorization. Such access, once authorized, may subject the employee's personal device to discovery requests or NWCCOG action. Employees authorized to access NWCCOG systems and information using a personal device must immediately inform the Organization if the device is lost or stolen.

In adherence to Colorado State Law, employees should avoid "handheld" use of cell phones and mobile devices to make calls while driving unless their vehicle is equipped with Bluetooth 'hands free' technology. Employees are encouraged to park whenever they need to use a cell phone. Employees are prohibited from using a cell phone or other device to text while operating a motor vehicle.

## CREDIT CARDS, WORK HOURS, MISC.

Under no circumstances will the purchase of alcoholic beverages be allowed on NWCCOG issued Cards. NWCCOG issued credit cards are for job-related use only. Employees are responsible for safekeeping and responsible use of the NWCCOG Credit Card, including saving all receipts for purchases and accurately coding of charges. Employees will be responsible for purchases which do not have a receipt of other acceptable forms of documentation. Use for personal purchases will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Employees are responsible for saving receipts to be attached to the monthly credit card statement (or upload to the Certify app). NWCCOG Credit Card Policy can be found on the Shared Drive under Employee Resources.

## Travel and Business Expenses

NWCCOG Employees are responsible for notifying vendors of NWCCOG's exemption from Sales Taxes, particularly on purchases over \$50.

Generally, NWCCOG prefers that employees utilize a company-issued credit card for business or travel expenses, yet if they do use their own card employees are reimbursed by NWCCOG including those approved uses as reasonable and necessary to properly conduct NWCCOG business.

Employees using a personal card or cash to pay for business expenses may request reimbursement by filing an Expense Report. Receipts supporting expenses for lodging, commercial transportation, auto rental, business entertainment, and other single expenditures of \$25 or more must accompany expense reports. Employees are asked to document the purpose of the expense and the nature of the business conducted. Expense reports should be turned in within one month from the time the expense is incurred.

Employees authorized to travel by personal car for business purposes are reimbursed at the Internal Revenue Service's allowable rate per mile. Tolls and parking fees are also reimbursable.

## Schedules and Hours of Work

NWCCOG's business hours are Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The starting times, ending times and workweek schedule may vary according to the needs of a program and may change from time to time according to the needs of the organization.

## Remote Work

Remote work is an arrangement by which an employee performs job duties from an alternative location other than at the office on an ad hoc or regularly scheduled basis.

Not every position is appropriate for this type of arrangement. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and NWCCOG will consider factors such as:

- the nature of the job or project requirements.
- whether the nature of the work lends itself to remote work.
- the amount of time to be spent working remotely.
- employee work performance.
- the ability of the employee to work independently; and
- the impact the arrangement may have on collaboration and coworkers.

Employees who would like the Company to consider the option of remote work should contact their Supervisor. Employees permitted to work remotely must sign a written agreement that specifies the effective date of the arrangement, the employee's telecommute schedule, and the terms and conditions of the arrangement. This policy and any associated written agreement do not alter the employment at-will relationship, and either the Company or the employee can terminate the employment relationship at any time without cause or notice.

## Inclement Weather

NWCCOG employees travel across a vast and remote region in Northwestern Colorado at all times of year, so it is expected that employees understand, respect and anticipate the changing natural conditions and how it impacts the risks of travel. Therefore, NWCCOG employees have discretion if because of late work hours, anticipation of hazardous conditions, or inclement weather to choose to stay where they are for the night as a travel expense.

If the Company does officially close as a result of weather conditions, the following alternatives are available to nonexempt employees to make up missed time:

1. With your supervisor's approval, time can be made up within that workweek.

2. If available, a day of annual leave can be taken.
3. Time missed can be considered a day off without pay.

Lost time cannot be made up if the NWCCOG program that the employee works for has not officially closed for business.

## “Smoking”

It is our objective to provide a smoke-free, tobacco-free environment within NWCCOG. This prohibition includes all forms of tobacco and the use of electronic smoking devices (ESD - vape) (“Smoking” means inhaling, exhaling, burning, or carrying any lighted or heated cigar, cigarette, or pipe or any other lighted or heated tobacco or plant product intended for inhalation, including marijuana, whether natural or synthetic, in any manner or in any form. “Smoking” also includes the use of an ESD.). Smoking is prohibited within all areas of the building and within 25 feet of the main entrance into the building. Employees may smoke in designated outdoor areas. This restriction applies to employees as well as visitors at all times, including non-business hours.

## Appearance and Attire

At NWCCOG, professionalism, personal appearance, attire, and courtesy are very important. A professional image must be maintained to elicit confidence and reflect favorably on NWCCOG. Employees are allowed freedom to select their work attire and may dress in NWCCOG identifying gear. Employees must use safety clothing and/or personal protective equipment when required. It is very important that employees choose appropriate attire for their jobs. Dress should be consistent with good hygiene, safety, and public relations. This policy also applies to employees who have been granted remote work privileges, who may be representing NWCCOG via video conferencing. In such situations, employees may be in dress “casual” but should be aware of their appearance and surroundings on video calls to maintain an appropriate professionalism.

## Post Employment References

NWCCOG does not furnish open letters of recommendation addressed "To Whom It May Concern." If an employee receives a call inquiring about a former employee, it will be referred to the Executive Director to respond at their discretion. Restrictions include recommendations made regarding work performance on social media sites.

## Reporting Injury or Accidents

If an employee is injured on the job, no matter how minor, they must report this fact in writing as soon as they are able within 10 days after the injury to their Supervisor or in the case of the Executive Director, to the Office Manager.

If medical treatment for an on-the-job injury is needed, it must be obtained from a physician designated by NWCCOG. If not, the employee may be responsible for the cost of medical treatment. Reporting of Vehicular accidents is covered in the Claims Management Procedure on the Shared Drive under Employee Resources.

## Separation from Employment

NWCCOG has checklists and forms related to employee benefits, especially Retirement and Health Insurance that extends beyond or terminates upon separation.

## Completion of the Employee Handbook Review

An acknowledgement form accompanies this document, the employee's signature and date on which is required for every update of the Employee Handbook in order to continue employment.

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