

JOINT RESOLUTION AND AGREEMENT

Resolution 24C-004 Amending Resolution 23C-042

Removal of Section 9.8 Inclement weather as addressed in Section 4.3

WHEREAS, County employees are directly responsible to an elected official or the County Board;

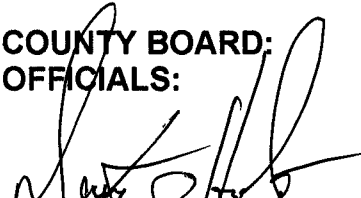
WHEREAS, elected officials, in working with their employees, may develop different employment practices and policies than used by other offices; and

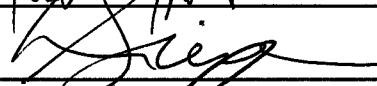
WHEREAS, different practices and policies can result in disharmony among the body of County employees;

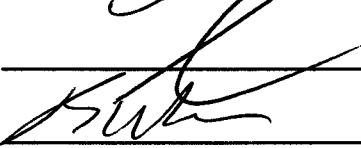
THEREFORE, the undersigned elected officials of Dakota County adopt a joint employee handbook (which is not a civil service system) that provides employment practices and policies common to all offices and departments of the undersigned.

Signed this 22nd day of January, 2024.


COUNTY BOARD:
OFFICIALS:

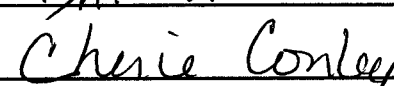









COUNTY ELECTED







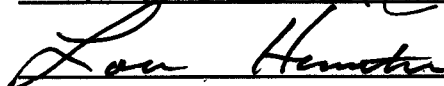












Dakota County Handbook

Effective January 1, 2024

Amended 1-22-2024 Section 9.8 Emergencies Removed

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Section 1: Purpose of the Handbook

This Employee Handbook ("Handbook") has been written to serve as a guide for the employer/employee relationship. This Handbook applies to all employees of Dakota County ("The County") regardless of job title, level within the organization, or status. There are several things to keep in mind about this Handbook. First, it contains only general information and guidelines. It is not intended to be comprehensive or to address all the possible applications of, or exceptions to, the general guidelines described. For that reason, if employees have any questions concerning eligibility for a benefit, or the applicability of a guideline or practice, employees should address specific questions to the Clerk's Office. It is primarily the employee's responsibility to read and ask questions about a guideline which they do not understand. The Elected Officials or if none, Department Heads have the right to make final decisions concerning the interpretation and application of guidelines contained in this Handbook.

Second, the contents of this Handbook do not, in any manner, constitute terms or conditions of an employment contract, either implied or expressed, between Dakota County and its employees. Employment remains "at-will", which means that either the County or the employee may end the employment relationship at any time, for any legal reason, with or without notice. Additionally no Elected Official, and if none, Department Head, or representative of the County has the authority to enter into any agreement contrary to this Handbook or for employment for any specified time, and any such agreement or terms will be unenforceable, unless the agreement is in writing signed by the employee and the Elected Official, and if none, Department Head.

Third, the County reserves the right to revise, modify, supplement, or rescind any and all policies and procedures, including those covered in this Handbook, at any time, in its sole and absolute discretion. The County will seek to notify employees of such changes by email and other appropriate means. However, such a notice is not required for changes to be effective.

Fourth, some of the topics described in the Handbook are covered in detail in official policy or plan documents. Employees should refer to these documents for specific information since this Handbook only provides a brief summary.

Finally, this Handbook becomes effective January 1, 2024 and supersedes all prior handbooks and prior oral and written policies where there is a conflict. This Handbook applies to existing employees and employees hired after the effective date.

After employees have had time to review the Handbook, sign the Handbook Receipt and Acknowledgement form contained at the end of this Handbook and return the form to the appropriate Elected Official, and if none, Department Head. The acknowledgement signifies that an employee has read the Handbook, understands the provisions contained herein, and agrees to abide by them as a condition of employment or continued employment.

The Dakota County Board ("Board") recognizes and declares the necessity of providing the most efficient and highest quality services for the citizens of Dakota County while, at the same time, providing a work environment that is both competitive within the community and equitable for its employees.

1.1 Code of Ethics

1. Employees shall not hold financial interests that conflict with the performance of their official duties.

2. Employees shall not engage in financial transactions using non-public governmental information nor allow the improper use of such information to further any private interest.

3. Employees shall not, except as may be otherwise provided by regulation, solicit, or accept any gift or other item of monetary value from any person or entity seeking official action from, doing business with, or conducting activities regulated by the employees' agency or department, or whose interests may be substantially affected by the performance or non-performance of the employees' duties.
4. Employees shall not use public office for private gain.
5. Employees shall act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any organization or individual.
6. Employees shall protect and preserve County property and shall not use it for unauthorized activities.
7. Employees are expected to disclose waste, fraud, and corruption to appropriate authorities.
8. Employees shall adhere to all laws and regulations including those that mandate equal opportunity and treatment, regardless of race, color, religion, sex/gender, national origin, age, disability, marital status, pregnancy, military status, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other prohibited basis of discrimination under applicable local, state, or federal law.

Section 2: Workplace Culture

2.0. Open-Door Philosophy

Our open-door philosophy is founded on Dakota County's commitment to communicate openly with employees. This allows for constructive problem solving, open communication, and cooperation between the County and its employees. It is also designed to provide employees with resolutions to work-related problems.

Employees are encouraged to discuss any work-related issues, ideas, or concerns with their Elected Official and if none, Department Head. If an employee feels the matter has not been addressed appropriately after speaking with the appropriate Elected Official, and if none, Department Head, or if the Elected Official, and if none, Department Head is not an appropriate person to go, employees are encouraged to speak with the Board of Commissioners.

2.1 Equal Employment Opportunity

The County is an equal employment opportunity employer and aims to provide equal opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), disability, marital status, or any other basis protected or recognized by applicable federal, state, or local law. This applies to hiring and promotion (e.g., classification, recruitment, selection); compensation (pay and benefits); discipline (including termination); and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment (e.g., training and development, relationships and associations, accommodation of disabilities and religious beliefs, freedom from workplace harassment). It is the County's policy to select the most qualified person for each position at Dakota County, whether that is a new hire, a transfer to another position, or a promotion. Nothing in this policy shall require the County to act in a manner contrary to federal, state, or local law.

The County wants our commitment to equal employment opportunity to be a success. If an employee feels the County is failing in its duty and promise of equal opportunity to all applicants or employees, the employee should report any concerns at once to the appropriate Elected Official, and if none, Department Head they feel comfortable discussing the matter. The County will take every reasonable measure to correct any unfairness and promise that the employee will

not be subjected to retaliation for bringing such matters to the County's attention in good faith. Dakota County will treat all such concerns with the utmost confidence, to the extent reasonably possible and consistent with a fair resolution of the problem.

2.2 Management Rights

In addition to all powers, duties, and rights of the County established by constitutional provisions, statute, ordinance, charter, or special act, the County (Elected Official, and if none, Department Head) expressly reserves unto itself the following powers, duties, and rights, which belong solely, exclusively, and without limitation, to the County, to wit:

- (a) The right to manage the County's operations and to direct the working force;
- (b) The right to hire employees;
- (c) The right to maintain order and efficiency;
- (d) The right to extend, maintain, curtail, or terminate operations of the County;
- (e) The right to determine the size and location of the County's operations and to determine the type and amount of equipment to be used;
- (f) The right to assign work, the right to determine methods and material to be used, including the right to introduce new and improved methods or facilities and to change existing methods and facilities;
- (g) The right at any time to determine, create, modify, and terminate jobs, job vacancies, departments, job classifications, and job duties;
- (h) The right to transfer, promote, and demote employees;
- (i) The right to discipline, suspend, and discharge employees;
- (j) The right to lay off employees at any time;
- (k) The right to enforce and require employees to observe rules and regulations set forth by the County;
- (l) The right to determine when and whether a position or job classification is vacant and when it will be filled;
- (m) The right to determine how many employees shall be in each classification and whether any employees shall be in any classification; and
- (n) The right to determine the individual and relative qualifications ability, ability to perform, and physical fitness of all employees.

2.3 Harassment, Discrimination, and Offensive Conduct

The County is committed to providing a work environment free of harassment and discrimination. All forms of harassment or discrimination directed to or suffered by any employee based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), disability, marital status, or any other basis protected or recognized by applicable federal, state, or local law is prohibited.

Each employee has the right to work in a professional environment that promotes equal employment opportunities and is free from discriminatory practices, including without limitation, harassment. Statements or actions employees make with regard to fellow employees, whether done jokingly or otherwise, may create feelings of ill will and interfere with productivity. The desired standard of employee behavior is one of cooperation and respect for each other, despite any differences.

In general, statements, slurs, jokes, and other verbal or physical conduct relating to any of the protected classes, characteristics, or bases listed above, constitute unlawful harassment when they unreasonably interfere with the person's work performance or create an intimidating work

environment. Such conduct is strictly prohibited. Prohibited conduct may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Epithets, racial “jokes”, slurs or negative stereotypes, intimidating or hostile acts based upon protective classification, and/or written or graphic material that belittles or shows hostility or aversion to persons of a protected class that is posted or circulated on County property.
- Verbal harassment and unwelcome discussions relating to or motivated by a person’s protected characteristic or class.
- Unwelcome requests or demands for sexual favors. This includes subtle or blatant expectations to engage in sexual relations and pressure for dates, especially when submission to such conduct is a condition of employment, or when submission or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting the individual.
- Unwelcome or unwanted sexual advances, such as patting, pinching, brushing up against, hugging, cornering, kissing, fondling, sexual flirtations, or any other similar contact.
- Using coercive sexual behavior to control or affect the career, salary, or performance review of another employee.
- Verbal harassment or unwelcome kidding of a sexual nature, such as telling “dirty” jokes and comments about body parts, appearance, or clothing, where such comments go beyond mere courtesy or are unwelcome.
- Making threats of retaliation a term or condition of employment (explicitly or implicitly).

Of specific concern is sexual harassment, which is a violation of both state and federal law. It includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical contact and other verbal, physical, or visual forms of conduct of a sexual nature when submission to that conduct is either explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of employment or is used as a basis for employment decisions or when the conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. Sexual harassment does not have to involve conduct of a sexual nature in order to constitute improper behavior. For example, abusive, offensive, or demeaning behavior that is directed to members of one gender only (whether male or female) may be deemed a form of sexual harassment, even though the conduct was not motivated by sexual desire or gratification. In addition, harassment of a male by another male, or a female by another female also constitutes a form of sex discrimination. Likewise, disparate treatment motivated by any other protected characteristic is discrimination and will not be tolerated.

If there are questions about whether conduct is permissible under this policy, employees should refrain from the conduct. Any person found to be engaging in any type of discrimination or harassment may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Any employee with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination or harassment in the workplace are encouraged to bring issues to the County’s attention by immediately reporting concerns or conduct to the County Clerk’s Office.

Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of retaliation. The County prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, or participates in an investigation of such reports. If an employee feels they have been retaliated against, report such conduct to the County Clerk’s Office immediately.

All new hires should take a sexual harassment training course through NIRMA within ninety days of starting employment. The Webinar course information is included in an employee’s new hire packet. The elected official or department head responsible for that employee should notify the

Clerk's Office when the course has been completed and provide written documentation of the same to the Clerk.

NIRMA | Nebraska Intergovernmental Risk Management Association - LocalGovU
<https://www.localgovu.com/nirma/>

2.4 Reporting Harassment, Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and/or Offensive Conduct

All employees of Dakota County have a responsibility to promote equal employment opportunities, and the County expects everyone to share this commitment. If an employee believes they have been subjected to any form of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and/or offensive conduct, the employee must take the following action immediately:

Step 1: Ask the offending party to stop, unless confronting the offending party would be uncomfortable or place the employee in danger, and;

Step 2: Report the complaint to the employee's immediate Elected Official, and if none, Department Head. If the employee's immediate Elected Official, and if none, Department Head is unavailable or if the immediate Elected Official, and if none, Department Head is the person responsible for the discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, or offensive conduct, or if the employee believes it would be inappropriate to contact the Elected Official, and if none, Department Head or would feel uncomfortable doing so, the employee must immediately report the complaint to the County Clerk's Office.

Note that the complaint must be reported in accordance with Step 2, even if the offending party is asked to stop. The County will not know of the discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, or offensive conduct unless it is reported, and the County cannot correct it if the County does not know about it.

If an employee has reason to believe someone else has been subjected to discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, or offensive conduct, the employee must report the conduct in accordance with Step 2 above.

Dakota County takes all discrimination and harassment complaints seriously and will immediately investigate any concerns and/or complaints. The County will take appropriate disciplinary action under the circumstances after completion of an investigation, including but not limited to separation from employment. The County will maintain confidentiality of all complaints to the extent possible when conducting an investigation.

If any employee feels in good faith that they have been subjected to harassment by a co-worker, Elected Official, Department Head, or any non-employee, the employee is to immediately report it to any one of the following:

- (1) the employee's immediate Department Head;
- (2) the employee's Elected Official;
- (3) if the complaint is about an Elected Official, and if none, Department Head, or the employee is not satisfied with the handling or outcome of the complaint or feels more comfortable bypassing the other steps, the employee should take it to the County Clerk's Office.

Such complaints will be promptly addressed (and investigated if necessary) and appropriate action taken if warranted. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible under the circumstances. If the County believes that a violation of this policy may have occurred or that the behavior in question was inappropriate for any reason, then it will take appropriate action, which

may include disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. If an investigation is necessary, it will be conducted quickly, thoroughly, and confidentially, and every effort shall be made to protect the rights of the accuser, as well as the accused. All parties and witnesses involved in the investigation will be informed that the fact of the complaint and the issues under investigation are confidential and not to be discussed with anyone without first informing the individuals conducting the investigation of the claimed need for third party involvement. Failure of any employee involved as a party or witness in the investigation to follow this directive shall constitute a separate violation of this policy and shall result in disciplinary action. The County reserves the right to provide information about a harassment complaint to the necessary legal authorities if, in the County's sole discretion, it believes illegal conduct has occurred.

The following procedures will be followed in the investigation of a complaint of harassment or retaliation:

- (1) The employee shall file a written complaint immediately with their respective Elected Official, and if none, Department Head of the alleged harassment. If the employee believes they are being harassed by the Elected Official, and if none, Department Head, they shall file the written complaint with the County Clerk's Office within thirty (30) days of the alleged harassment.
- (2) If at all possible, the investigation shall begin the day the conduct is reported.
- (3) The complainant will be interviewed in a private area. The interview will be thoroughly documented and reviewed for accuracy with the complainant at the end of the interview.
- (4) The alleged harasser will be interviewed in a private area. The interview will be thoroughly documented and reviewed for accuracy with the alleged harasser at the end of the interview.
- (5) Any witnesses will be interviewed in a private area. The interview will be thoroughly documented and reviewed for accuracy with the witness at the end of the interview.
- (6) Upon completion of a thorough investigation, the investigators will determine whether the complaint is substantiated or unsubstantiated.
 - a. Substantiated Complaint: Disciplinary action will be taken. The disciplinary action taken will depend on the severity of the harassment. However, the disciplinary procedure outlined in this manual will be followed in all cases. A record of disciplinary action taken will become part of the harasser's personnel file. Once disciplinary action is taken, the complainant is encouraged to communicate the actions effectiveness and Elected Officials, and if none, Department Heads will ensure its effectiveness by continuing to monitor the situation.
 - b. Unsubstantiated or Inconclusive Complaint: No disciplinary action will be taken. The complainant will be encouraged to come forward again if they perceive harassment and the County's policy against harassment will continue to be enforced.
- (7) Whether substantiated or unsubstantiated, the investigators will meet with both the complainant and alleged harasser to notify them of the results of the investigation and any disciplinary measures that will be taken.
- (8) An investigation report will be prepared summarizing interviews, conclusions, and discipline taken, if any.

The report, along with notes, written complaints, statements, and copies of relative documents will be maintained in a separate, confidential file by the Elected Official, and if none, Department Head.

- (9) Retaliation against an individual for bringing harassment allegations to our attention is strictly prohibited in accordance with the County's retaliation policy. In addition, individuals who participate in this complaint process as potential witnesses are assured of non-retaliation.
- (10) If the Elected Official, and if none, Department Head finds the complaint to be unsubstantiated and the employee is unsatisfied with this result; the employee shall file their appeal with the Chair of the County Board within ten (10) days of the date of the Elected Official's, and if none, Department Head's decision.

2.5 Employee Protection (Whistleblower) Policy

If any employee reasonably believes some policy, practice, or activity of the organization is in violation of law, a written complaint must be filed by that employee with the County Sheriff's or Attorney's Office.

Anyone filing a complaint or concern must do so in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation of the code. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense.

All employees are protected from victimization, harassment, or disciplinary action as a result of any disclosure, where the disclosure is made in good faith and is not made maliciously or for personal gain. All complaints will be kept as anonymous as possible, though in some situations it may not be possible.

If at any point in time an employee is not satisfied with the resolution of or response to their complaint, or if the complaint is not resolved in a timely manner, the employee should bring the matter to the attention of the Board of Commissioners

It should be emphasized that this policy is intended to assist individuals who believe they have discovered malpractice or impropriety. It is not designed to question financial, or business decisions taken by the County.

2.6 Grievance Procedure

The County strives to ensure that all employees are treated fairly. This policy seeks to support the achievement of this goal by providing a just and equitable method for resolving grievances without discrimination, coercion, or reprisal against employees who may submit or be involved in a grievance.

A grievance is defined as any dispute concerning corrective action (suspension or discharge only) or written policy/procedure interpretation or application between an employee and the County. The grievance procedure will not be used to change but rather to clarify expressed provisions of County and/or department policies and procedures. An appeal of a corrective action (suspension or discharge only) starts at Step 3 of this procedure. If the grievance is a complaint of unlawful harassment or retaliation for reporting or supporting a claim of harassment, the employee must follow the complaint procedure in the Reporting Harassment, Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and/or Offensive Conduct procedure instead of this grievance procedure.

The County will use a Grievance Board consisting of five (5) people. The Elected Official, and if none, Department Head, and employee involved in the grievance will each select two (2) people from a predesignated list. The four (4) people selected will then select the fifth member from the list. The Grievance Board will designate a Grievance Board Chair.

The County Board shall determine by random selection the predesignated list (15) of potential Grievance Board members annually by a Resolution of the County Board at the January reorganizational meeting.

Step 1

Employees who feel the County has violated a written policy(ies) or procedure(s) may request to meet with their immediate Elected Official, and if none, Department Head within five (5) business (Monday – Friday) days from the date the alleged violation took place. The immediate Elected Official, and if none, Department Head shall review the employee's concerns and advise the employee, in writing, of their decision regarding the grievance, normally within five (5) business days of receipt of the grievance.

Step 2

If the employee is not satisfied with the immediate Elected Official, and if none, Department Head's response, the employee may appeal the grievance to the Elected Official, and if none, Department Head within five (5) business days from the date of the immediate Elected Official, and if none, Department Head's response. In submitting the grievance to the Elected Official, and if none, Department Head, the grievance must be in writing and contain the following information:

- Name of person filing the grievance.
- Details of the alleged grievance.
- Names of persons violating County policy.
- Dates of alleged violation.
- Names of witnesses.
- Citation of the County policy(ies)/procedure(s) that have allegedly been violated.
- Requested remedy.

The Elected Official, and if none, Department Head may meet with the employee to discuss the grievance but must respond to the grievance, in writing, normally within ten (10) business days from the date of receipt of the grievance.

Step 3

If the employee is not satisfied with the Elected Official, and if none, Department Head's response, the employee may request a review of this decision by the Grievance Board. Employees shall submit a written request to the Grievance Board, indicating their desire to appeal the decision of the Elected Official, and if none, Department Head within five (5) business days of receipt of the Elected Official, and if none, Department Head's response. This written request must include all information as indicated in Step 2 and, in addition, the written response of the Elected Official, and if none, Department Head. The Grievance Board may conduct a hearing concerning the grievance within twenty-one (21) business days from receipt of the appeal. The hearing shall be conducted under the rules adopted by the Board. The Grievance Board's decision is final.

2.7 Workplace Accommodations

Dakota County complies with all applicable federal, state, and local fair employment practices law and is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals with disabilities, including disabilities related to pregnancy, childbirth, and related conditions. Consistent with this commitment, the County will provide reasonable accommodations to otherwise qualified individuals where appropriate to allow the individual to perform the essential functions of the job, unless doing so would create an undue hardship on the business.

If an employee requires accommodation because of a disability, it is the employee's responsibility to notify their respective Elected Official, and if none, Department Head. Employees may be asked to provide medical certification from the employee's doctor including relevant information such as: (1) confirmation the employee has a medical condition requiring an accommodation; (2) a description of the proposed accommodation; (3) the reason the employee needs an accommodation; (4) how the accommodation will help the employee perform the essential functions of their job; and (5) how long the employee may need the accommodation.

Requests for accommodation will be processed as quickly as reasonably practicable under the circumstances. Any individual who requests an accommodation is required to fully cooperate in the process, including providing relevant information and providing any required HIPAA consent in order for the County to contact and obtain information from the employee's health care provider.

If the individual fails or refuses to provide any needed accommodation request and HIPAA consent, the County will terminate its processing of the individual's request for accommodation. If the individual is an employee, they will be expected to fully perform all essential functions of their job without accommodation and may be subject to disciplinary or performance-related actions, up to and including discharge, if they are unable to perform all essential functions of the job. If the individual is an applicant, their application for employment will be withdrawn from consideration.

The County encourages employees to suggest specific reasonable accommodations that the employee believes would allow them to perform their job. However, the County is not required to provide the specific accommodation requested by the employee and may provide an alternative accommodation, to the extent any reasonable accommodation can be made without imposing an undue hardship on the County.

If an employee is not satisfied with their Elected Official, and if none, Department Head's response to the request for a reasonable accommodation, employees must bring the matter to the attention of the County Clerk's Office.

While a request for accommodation is being processed, an employee may be placed on paid or unpaid leave of absence, assigned to a different job, or provided with light or modified duty, as determined by the County. An employee's base rate of pay will not be changed while the employee's request for accommodation is being processed.

If leave is provided as reasonable accommodation, such leave may run concurrently with leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act and/or any other county provided leave where permitted by applicable state and federal law.

Dakota County will not discriminate or retaliate against employees due to a disability, for requesting an accommodation, or for engaging in the interactive process.

Section 3: Employment Relationship

3.0 At-Will Employment

As stated in Section I of this Handbook, unless otherwise altered by written agreement signed by the employee and the Elected Official, and if none, Department Head, all employees are at-will employees. This means that either the County or the employee may end the employment relationship at any time and for any lawful reason, or no reason at all, with or without prior notice.

Disciplinary action noted through the Handbook is not all inclusive and does not restrict the County the right to terminate employment at-will. Cause is not needed to terminate any employee.

Also, please understand that no one has the authority to alter this employment-at-will status through an oral employment contract on behalf of the County, and only the County Board can enter into a written employment contract that changes the employment relationship from employment at will.

3.1 Job Descriptions

Dakota County attempts to maintain a job description for each position. If an employee does not have a current copy of their job description, the employee should request one from their immediate Elected Official, and if none, Department Head. Job descriptions are written by Elected Officials, and if none, Department Heads in conjunction with oversight from The Board of Commissioners.

Job descriptions prepared by the County serve only as an outline of job expectations. Due to organizational needs, employees may be required to perform job duties that are not within their written job description. Furthermore, the County may have to revise, add to, or delete from the employee's job duties per organizational needs. On occasion, the County may need to revise job descriptions with or without advance notice to employees.

If employees have questions regarding their job description or the scope of their duties, employees should speak with their immediate Elected Official, and if none, Department Head.

3.2 Promotions/Job Postings

The County believes in promoting employees from within when possible. As a result, the County has a job-posting program designed to give all employees an opportunity to apply for positions in which they are interested and qualified. While most vacancies will be posted on the County's bulletin boards, there may be some cases where the County will determine it is in the County's best interests to seek outside candidates for a position, and outside candidates may be recruited simultaneously with an internal posting.

All applicants for a vacancy to be filled through the promotional process must complete a County Application for Employment to be eligible for promotion.

All applicants must be filed with the appropriate Elected Official, and if none, Department Head, or their designated representative on or before the closing date specified in the job announcement.

3.3 Introductory Period

All newly hired employees are required to complete an introductory period of six (6) months. The introductory period is used by the Elected Official, and if none, Department Head to observe the employee's ability to satisfactorily perform assigned duties and responsibilities. During the introductory period, employees are expected to demonstrate the necessary skills and abilities to perform the duties for which they have been employed. During this time, employees have the opportunity to demonstrate:

1. That the employee is capable of performing the job for which they were hired;
2. That the employee understands County policies and procedures;
3. That the employee is suitable for employment at the County; and
4. That the employee is able to establish a sound record of attendance and punctuality.

Any new hire serving an introductory period shall not be entitled to benefits (except insurance and holidays as provided below). The County may have specific policies explaining the benefits and eligibility for such benefits.

- A. **New Hire Introductory Period (Including Rehire).** All new employees must serve an introductory period of six (6) months. Any new hire serving an introductory period shall not be entitled to benefits (except insurance and holidays as provided in Section 6). Former employees of the County are eligible for rehire at the discretion of the Elected Official, and if none, Department Head or Board of Commissioners. All rehires will be considered new employees. An employee shall be removed from introductory status on the day following the end of the introductory period, unless notified of extension or termination by the Elected Official, and if none, Department Head. Transfers between County offices will not be considered rehires.
- B. **Introductory Period for Promotions.** All employees who are promoted must serve an introductory period of six (6) months in the new job classification before being confirmed in the new position. Any change in compensation becomes effective immediately and all benefits will remain the same.
- C. **Transfer During Introductory Period.** The introductory period of an employee who is transferred (promotion, demotion, lateral move, or move to a lower position) within a department while serving an introductory period may be extended, at the Elected Official, and if none, Department Head's discretion.
- D. **Transfer Outside of Introductory Period.** In the case of personnel actions (lateral move or move to a lower position), employees may be required to serve an introductory period. The length of the introductory period is at the Elected Official, and if none, Department Head's discretion but will not normally exceed six (6) months, beginning on the date of the transfer. If an employee does not perform satisfactorily in the position to which they are transferred, the employee may be involuntarily transferred to another position of either the same salary grade or a lower salary grade. If no other position is available for transfer, the duties of the employee may be reassigned, the employee may be reclassified to a lower salary grade, or the employee may be terminated.

Extension of Introductory Period. At the County's discretion, an Elected Official, and if none, Department Head may extend the introductory period of an employee beyond the initially agreed upon introductory period, for reasons of performance or transfer, for a period not to exceed a total of one (1) year from the date of hire or rehire or transfer. The employee will be notified, in writing, of the extension.

This notification of extension will include the specific period of extension. In cases of extension for performance reasons, the employee may be provided specific performance improvement requirements.