

# Personnel Policies and Procedures

## VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION OF WINNEBAGO COUNTY



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555 North Court St., Suite 300  
Rockford, IL 61103  
(815) 516-2850



Veterans Assistance Commission  
Winnebago County, Illinois

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## *Introduction to the Policy Manual*

This manual is intended solely as a means of communicating information to new and existing employees concerning the Veterans Assistance Commission of Winnebago County's (VACWC) discretionary authority in controlling the internal operations of the office. Nothing in this manual establishes contractual rights or obligations. No representative of the VACWC, no employee or agent has the authority to make any agreement contrary to the provisions of this manual except the Superintendent or the Commission.

Where any provision in this manual conflict with State or Federal statutes, the law shall take precedence over this manual to the extent of that specific conflict only.

An employee and the VACWC each have the mutual right to discharge their employment relationship at any time for any reason – with or without cause and with or without notice. Unless otherwise provided in a written contract, employees of the VACWC are employed on an “at-will” basis, and the employment relationship may be discharged at any time without notice and without cause. The decision to stay or to leave, whether it is the employee's decision or the decision of the VACWC, is at the sole discretion of the party making that decision.

The Superintendent and Commission reserves the right to add, amend, or delete portions of the Personnel Policy Manual at any time. Because this manual will be updated periodically, employees are expected to consult the Superintendent to determine whether any particular provision in the copy of the manual they possess or have referenced constitutes the current version of the manual.

Every employee shall certify receipt of a copy of this manual upon hire or as distributed to current employees.

This manual was assembled in response to Illinois Public Act 102-0732 and Illinois Public Act 102-1132. ARTICLE I through ARTICLE VII are specific to the VACWC Personnel Policy. Article VIII lists other policies to be followed by the VAC. This manual is considered dynamic and can change because of a change in the law, judicial decision, or by approval of the Commission.



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## *Definitions*

**Administrative Assistant** – Responsible for clerical tasks to ensure the staff communicates and works efficiently

**Alternate** – Those individuals selected to serve on the Commission of the various Military Veteran Service Organizations who shall have a vote on all matters of the Commission in the absence of the selected delegate

**Assistant Superintendent** – Deputy Executive Officer. Appointed by the Superintendent and confirmed by the Commission

**Chief of Staff** – Responsible for managing all Staff and the Day-to-Day Operations of the VACWC. Appointed by the Superintendent

**Child** - Child shall mean the natural or adopted minor child, a minor for who the employee is the legal guardian or a minor child with who the employee is in loco parentis. This does not include children of the employee for who the employee does not actually provide care and/or support. In the case of adult children, leave will be allowed only if the adult child is suffering from a disability, that he or she is not capable of caring for him or herself and with who the employee requesting leave is in loco parentis; and Serious Health Condition: A serious health condition means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition which is being treated by a licensed health care provider, such as a medical doctor, on a continuing basis or which requires inpatient care such as hospitalization.

**Contribution** – has the same meaning as that term defined in Section 9-1.4 of the Election Code.

**Delegate** – Those individuals selected to serve on the Commission of the various Military Veteran Service Organizations who shall have a vote on all matters of the Commission

**Department Head** – A department head is an individual who oversees and manages a specific department within the VACWC, responsible for its overall operations, strategic direction, and coordination of activities to achieve organizational goals.

**Employee** – means any full-time, part-time, and contractual employees

**Executive Administrative Assistant** – Provides high level administrative support to key management and oversees office functions, manage employees

**Advisory Committee** – Appointed individuals whom are delegate, alternates or officers of the committee

**Gift** – means any gratuity, discount, entertainment, hospitality, loan, forbearance, or other tangible item having monetary value including, but not limited to, cash, food and drink, and honoraria for



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speaking engagements related to or attributable to employment or the official position of the employee or officer of the county.

**Leave of Absence** – means any period during which an employee does not receive compensation for employment, service credit towards IMRF pension benefits, and health insurance benefits paid for by the VACWC.

**Officer** – means an appointed official; regardless of whether the official is compensated.

**Political** – means any activity in support of or in connection with any campaign for elective office or any political organization, but does not include activities relating to the support or opposition of any executive, legislative, or administrative action relating to collective bargaining; or that otherwise in furtherance of the person’s official duties.

**President** – Senior elected officer of the Commission

**Spouse** - Spouse shall mean only those domiciled with and legally recognized under Illinois law as married

**Superintendent** – Chief Executive Officer for the VACWC as selected or appointed by the Commission

**Senior Veteran Service Officers** – Responsible for managing subordinate teams of employees as directed by Superintendent or designee. Appointed by the Superintendent

**Veterans Assistance Commission** – refers to the governing body made up of representatives of most of the Military Service Organizations within Winnebago County in accordance with 330 ILCS 45

**Veterans Assistance Commission of Winnebago County (VACWC)** – refers to the government office which provides financial assistance and other services needed by the local veteran’s community per 330 ILCS 45 and related Illinois statutes

**Veterans Assistance Commission Administration (VAC-A)** – Refers to members of the Veterans Assistance Commission and/or members of the Advisory Committee

**Veterans Assistance Commission Operations (VAC-O)** – see Veterans Assistance Commission of Winnebago County

**Veteran Service Officers In Charge** – Responsible for managing Veteran Service Officers and Administrative Assistants who are assigned to each Veteran Service Officer In Charge (VSOIC). Appointed by the Superintendent

**Veteran Service Officers** – Responsible for advocating for and representing veterans, their families, and the families of deceased veterans at the local, state, and federal levels





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**Working Hours** – means any time worked by or credited to an employee that counts towards any minimum work time requirement imposed as a condition of employment but does not include any designated holidays or any period the employee is on a leave of absence. This includes compensatory time off which means any time off earned by or awarded to an employee to compensate in whole or in part for time worked in excess of the minimum work time required of that employee as a condition of employment with the VACWC.



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## *About the VACWC*

The VACWC was established to serve indigent, needy honorably discharged veterans and their families of Winnebago County who are facing challenging times. They must have exhausted all financial resources and/or not had any income in the past 30 days, and are at risk of being homeless or are homeless.

We have a long and proud history of serving veterans. Your charge is to ascertain eligibility, determine the assistance needed, explain our intake process, provide an application packet, and refer the veteran to any other needed services available in our county. You are expected to treat each veteran with the dignity and respect you would expect and you should expect the same from them. Our goal is to support them as they seek employment or disability benefits from the VA or Social Security.

## *Open Door Policy*

The VACWC promotes an atmosphere for employees to talk freely with members of the management staff. Employees are encouraged to openly discuss any problems with the Superintendent so appropriate action may be taken. The VACWC is interested in all of our employees' success and happiness and therefore welcome the opportunity to help employees, whenever feasible.

## *Operational Overview*

The Veterans Assistance Commission of Winnebago County (VACWC) is a local Government Unit created under the provisions of the Military Assistance Act 330 ILCS 45. Financial Operational oversight is the duty of the Superintendent. Development of rules and guidelines for the distribution of financial assistance, program grants, etc., in accordance with applicable laws and agreements are the responsibility of the Superintendent. The Superintendent has full authority over the financial assistance program per the Military Assistance Act.

General program oversight is provided by the VACWC. This Commission is made up of one delegate and one alternate from each member military service organization. The Commission is guided by policies and procedures approved by the VACWC.



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The duties of the Commission include but are not limited to; supervising the Superintendent on presenting periodic reports to the Winnebago County Board, approval and general oversight of discretionary functions such as transportation service and VA Claims, and approval of new programs requiring a grant.

General financial oversight is provided by the Winnebago County Board per the Military Assistance Act. Unresolved disputes between the Winnebago County Board and The Veterans Assistance Commission of Winnebago County are to be handled in accordance with the Military Assistance Act. The Chairman of the Winnebago County Board may designate a County Board member as a liaison to the Veterans Assistance Commission.

The VACWC is also a member organization of the Illinois Association of Veterans Assistance Commissions (IAVAC) and the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO). The NACVSO is also a United States Congress chartered veterans' service organization, recognized by the USDVA to represent veterans.

### *Organizational Chart*

The VACWC employs the Superintendent to whom it delegates responsibility for day-to-day administration of the agency. The Superintendent hires and manages the employees of the VACWC using policies approved by the Commission.

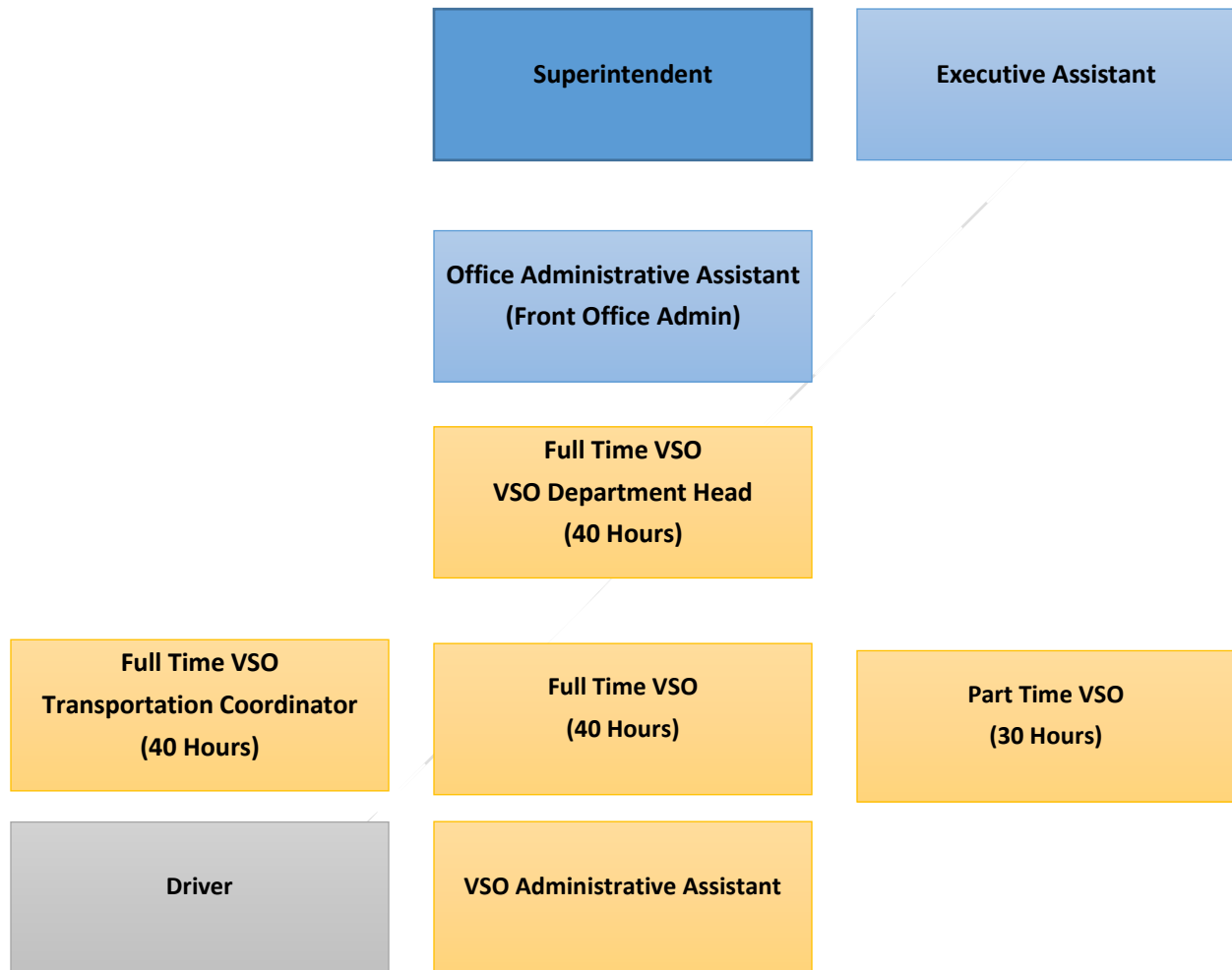
VACWC employees are accountable to the Superintendent, through whom all communication to the Commission is channeled. An employee who does not follow the stated policy of channeling information through the Superintendent is subject to disciplinary procedures up to discharge. The exception to this is a VACWC employee may direct a letter to the VACWC President with regard to any violations of law by the Superintendent.

The organizational chart (see next page) enables a chain of command protocol. This organizational chart is subject to change through various outcomes of the VACWC and its Committees, through attrition such as retirement or resignation. It can also be affected positively by an increase in clients and services.



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## Organizational Chart of the VAC-O



## Section 1. *Employment Policies and Procedures*

### **1.01 EMPLOYMENT AT-WILL**

The VACWC is an at-will employer. The VACWC may discharge the employment relationship at any time and for any reason, with or without advance notice.

It is the VACWC's policy to make all employment decisions (e.g. recruitment, hiring, training, testing, transfer, promotion, compensation, benefits, discharge, etc.) without regard to race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, citizenship status, age, gender (including gender identity, change of gender, and transgender status), sexual orientation, marital status, disability, pregnancy, veteran's status, genetic information or other protected group status as defined by applicable federal, state or local laws and regulations. It is the intent of the VACWC to follow both the letter and the spirit of local, state, and federal laws governing equal employment opportunity as those laws exist today and as they may change in the future.

Qualified individuals with disabilities are encouraged to seek positions and promotional opportunities at the VACWC. The VACWC will provide reasonable accommodation as determined through an interactive process, to disabled applicants or employees who are qualified to perform the job in question.

The organization also is committed to providing reasonable accommodations of an employee's sincere religious observances and beliefs that conflict with normal job requirements.

Persons having complaints or questions relative to this policy should bring them to the attention of the VACWC's Superintendent.

### **1.02 EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

It is the VACWC's policy to make all employment decisions (e.g. recruitment, hiring, training, testing, transfer, promotion, compensation, benefits, discharge, etc.) without regard to race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, citizenship status, age, gender (including gender identity, change of gender, and transgender status), sexual orientation, marital status, disability, pregnancy, veteran's status, genetic information or other protected group status as defined by applicable federal, state or local laws and regulations. It is the intent of the VACWC to follow both the letter and the spirit of local, state, and federal laws governing equal employment opportunity as those laws exist today and as they may change in the future.

Qualified individuals with disabilities are encouraged to seek positions and promotional opportunities at the VACWC. The VACWC will provide reasonable accommodation as determined through an interactive process, to disabled applicants or employees who are qualified to perform the job in question.



The organization also is committed to providing reasonable accommodations of an employee's sincere religious observances and beliefs that conflict with normal job requirements.

Persons having concerns or questions relative to this policy should bring them to the attention of the VACWC's Superintendent.

### **1.03 BACKGROUND CHECK POLICY**

This policy applies to every employee and candidate for employment of the VACWC.

#### **GUIDELINES**

- a. Notice - Written notification of the requirement to successfully complete a background check will be given through advertisements and/or at the time of application.
- b. Processing of Background Checks - Background checks will be initiated through the Superintendent. Authorized initiators of background checks in the Human Resources Office may initiate such checks only after receiving a completed and signed Authorization for Pre-Employment Background Check form from the employee and/or applicant.
- c. Types of Background Checks - Depending upon the requirements of the position, an applicant or employee may be subjected to a background check that includes, but is not limited to, any or all of the following:
  - criminal background check;
  - credit check (conducted in compliance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act and applicable Illinois law);
  - driver record check;
  - credentials checks for licensure, degree attainment and credentials verification;
  - verification of the authenticity of social security number information;
  - review of an individual's character, general reputation, personal characteristics, etc.
  - The type(s) of background checks to be conducted shall be determined by the Superintendent in light of the responsibilities of the position for which the applicant and/or employee is being considered, in the VACWC's discretion, and to the extent allowed by applicable law.
  - The background check must be completed before employment begins, except as otherwise provided below. Any offers made before a background check has been completed shall be expressly conditioned upon successful completion of the background check.
  - Employment may begin prior to the completion of the background check only as a conditional offer of employment and when the Superintendent establishes that there is a compelling need. In such instances, the Superintendent will provide conditional hiring language.
  - Conditional offers of employment will be withdrawn if the results of the background check are deemed to disqualify the applicant/employee from the position.



d. Results of Background Check:

- If a potentially unacceptable record is revealed as a result of the background check, a review of the potentially unacceptable background check results will be coordinated by Human Resources which, along with the Superintendent, legal counsel, and other appropriate input, will determine whether the background check results will disqualify the applicant and/or employee from the involved position.
- In considering a potentially unacceptable background check, the factors reviewed will include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- (a) the type of information, the number of offenses or misconduct and the circumstances of each;
- (b) the period of time that has passed between the incidents involved in the information and the submission of the application for employment;
- (c) other employment and applicable personal information;
- (d) evidence of the applicant's rehabilitation efforts (if any);
- (e) the severity of the offense or misconduct;
- (f) the relevance of the information to the responsibilities of the involved position. To the extent required by the Fair Federal Reporting Act or other applicable law, applicants will be informed, in writing, if the information is being used to exclude them from employment and will be provided with a copy of a notice of adverse information. The applicant will be given an opportunity to respond in keeping with applicable law. Upon conclusion of the review, written notice will be sent to the candidate regarding the VACWC's decision on eligibility for the position.

All background check results will be kept confidential and will be maintained by the Superintendent. That information will be disclosed only to authorized employees who have a need to know that information in the performance of their job assignments. An applicant's/employee's failure to disclose criminal convictions or other information requested during the application process; failure to provide truthful answers in response to information requests; and/or omission of information that is appropriate for disclosure in response to such requests may result in disqualification from employment or in the discharge of employment. The VACWC shall be responsible for the costs associated with conducting background checks conducted pursuant to this policy.

#### **1.04 REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION**

As part of its commitment to equal employment opportunity for all employees, the VACWC will engage in the interactive process to ensure that every reasonable effort is made to provide reasonable accommodation for qualified employees or applicants with disabilities, or medical conditions or other common conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth, including the use of auxiliary aids and services as requested by individuals, to enable them to perform the essential functions of their positions. The VACWC will make every effort to ensure that employees or applicants who have a temporary or permanent disability or medical conditions or other common conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth are treated without discrimination in accordance with the law.

An employee with a disabling condition that limits his or her ability to perform the essential functions of a job, or a medical condition or other common condition related to pregnancy or



childbirth, is encouraged to notify the Superintendent of the disabling condition as soon as it's known. The VACWC can only act on the basis of information provided by employees. Through an interactive process, and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Illinois Human Rights Act (IHRA), the VACWC may ask the employee to submit a statement from a treating physician describing the nature of the disabling condition or the pregnancy-related or childbirth-related condition, the limitations it imposes on the employee's ability to perform his or her job duties and the length of time the physician believes the disability or the pregnancy-related or childbirth-related condition will last. Please note that if the employee is requesting a long-term accommodation of a disability or a pregnancy-related or childbirth-related condition, the VACWC may ask the employee to provide periodic updates from the physician certifying that the condition is still in effect.

The VACWC will make every effort, on an individual basis, to accommodate the employee's disability or pregnancy-related or childbirth-related condition based on the information provided by the treating physician. Accommodations may vary depending on the employee's job duties and skills, the needs of the business at the time of the request and the nature of the employee's disability or pregnancy-related or childbirth-related condition. The Superintendent has the right to deny a request for accommodation if it causes a direct threat to workplace safety or poses an undue hardship.

If you have any questions about rights under this policy you should them to the Superintendent who will provide you answers.

### **1.05 GENETIC INFORMATION NON-DISCRIMINATION ACT (GINA)**

The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA) protects applicants and employees from discrimination based on genetic information in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, fringe benefits, job training, classification, referral, and other aspects of employment. GINA also restricts employers' acquisition of genetic information and strictly limits disclosure of genetic information. Genetic information includes information about genetic tests of applicants, employees, or their family members, family medical history, and requests for or receipt of genetic services by applicants, employees, or their family members. If you have any questions about your rights under this policy, you should bring them to the Superintendent.

### **1.06 ANTI-HARASSMENT AND NON-DISCRIMINATION**

It is VACWC policy to prohibit intentional and unintentional harassment of any individual by another person on the basis of any protected classification including, but not limited to, actual or perceived race, creed, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, age, disability or handicap, sex, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, genetic information, or pregnancy. The purpose of this policy is not to regulate our employees' personal morality, but to ensure that in the workplace, no one harasses another individual.

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, or visual that is based upon a person's protected status as outlined above. The VACWC will not tolerate harassing conduct that affects tangible job benefits, that interferes unreasonably with an individual's work





performance, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. Such harassment may include, for example, jokes about another person's protected status, or kidding, teasing, or practical jokes directed to a person based on his or her protected status.

Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Epithets, innuendoes, slurs, negative stereotyping, or threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts that relate to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, or any other legally protected category;
- Written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group because of an individual's protected classification that is placed on walls, bulletin boards, or elsewhere on the employer's premises or circulated in the workplace (including e-mail, voice mail, or similar systems).

Discrimination and discriminatory harassment does not include actions that are in accordance with established rules, principles, or standards, including:

- Acts or omission of acts based solely upon bona fide occupational qualifications under the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Illinois Department of Human Rights guidelines.
- Bona fide requests or demands by a supervisor that an employee improve his/her work quality or output, that the employee report to the job site on time, that the employee comply with VACWC or departmental rules or regulations, or any other appropriate work-related communication between supervisor and employee.

If you feel that you have been subjected to conduct which violates this policy, you should follow the VACWC's procedure found in [section 1.09](#) Every report of perceived harassment will be fully investigated and corrective action will be taken where appropriate. All complaints will be kept confidential to the extent possible, but confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. In addition, the VACWC will not allow any form of retaliation against individuals who report unwelcome conduct or who cooperate in the investigations of such reports in accordance with this policy. Employees who make complaints in bad faith may be subject to corrective action, up to and including, discharge.

Conduct prohibited by this policy is unacceptable in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace, such as during business trips, profession conferences, business meetings and business-related social events.

Any employee engaging in practices or conduct constituting sexual harassment, discrimination or harassment of any kind shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

## **1.07 DIVERSITY POLICY**

The VACWC is committed to fostering, cultivating and preserving a culture of diversity and inclusion. Our human capital is the most valuable asset we have. The collective sum of the individual differences, life experiences, knowledge, inventiveness, innovation, self-expression,



unique capabilities and talent that our employees invest in their work represents a significant part of not only our culture, but of our reputation and the VACWC's achievements as well.

We embrace and encourage our employees' differences in age, color, disability, ethnicity, family or marital status, gender identity or expression, language, national origin, physical and mental ability, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, veteran status, and other characteristics that make our employees unique. The VACWC's diversity initiatives are applicable, but not limited to our practices and policies on recruitment and selection; compensation and benefits; professional development and training; promotions; transfers; social and recreational programs; layoffs and recalls; discharges; all other employment-related decisions; and the ongoing development of a work environment built on the premise of gender and diversity equity that encourages and enforces:

- Respectful communication and cooperation between all employees.
- Teamwork and employee participation, permitting the representation of all groups and employee perspectives.
- Work/life balance through flexible work schedules to accommodate employees' varying needs.
- Employer and employee contributions to the communities we serve to promote a greater understanding and respect for the diversity.

All employees of the VACWC have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect at all times. All employees are expected to exhibit conduct that reflects inclusion during work, at work functions (either on or off the work site), and at all other VACWC-sponsored and participative events. All employees are also required to attend and complete annual diversity awareness training to enhance their knowledge to fulfill this responsibility.

Any employee found to have exhibited any inappropriate conduct or behavior against others may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

Employees who believe they have been subjected to any kind of discrimination that conflicts with the VACWC's diversity policy and initiatives should seek assistance from a supervisor or the Superintendent.

## **1.08 SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

It is VACWC policy to prohibit harassment of any employee by any other employee, the public, or a vendor on the basis of sex or gender. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all employees are free from sexual harassment.

While it is not easy to define precisely what types of conduct could constitute sexual harassment, examples of prohibited behavior include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, obscene gestures, displaying sexually graphic magazines, calendars, or posters, sending sexually explicit emails and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, such as uninvited touching of a sexual nature or sexually related comments. Depending upon the circumstances, improper conduct can also include sexual joking, vulgar or offensive conversation or jokes, commenting about an employee's physical appearance, conversation about your own or someone else's sex life or teasing or other conduct directed toward a person because of his or her gender which is



sufficiently severe or pervasive enough to create an unprofessional and hostile working environment. This includes the use of VACWC equipment and/or systems to transmit or receive offensive material, statements, or pictures at any time.

If you feel that you have been subjected to conduct which violates this policy, you should follow the VACWC's procedure for reporting harassment and/or discrimination allegations (included below). Every report of perceived harassment will be fully investigated and corrective action will be taken where appropriate. Any violation of this policy will result in corrective action, up to and including, discharge. All complaints will be kept confidential to the extent possible, but confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. In addition, the VACWC will not allow any form of retaliation against individuals who report unwelcome conduct or who cooperate in the investigations of such reports in accordance with this policy. Employees who make complaints in bad faith may be subject to corrective action, up to and including, discharge.

### **1.09 REPORTING HARASSMENT AND/OR DISCRIMINATION ALLEGATIONS**

An individual wishing to file a complaint should follow the reporting procedure as set forth in the steps below:

1. **Direct Communication:** If there is harassing or discriminatory behavior in the workplace, an employee may directly and clearly express their objection to the person(s) regardless of whether the behavior is directed at them. If the employee feels harassed, they should clearly state that the conduct is unwelcome and the offending behavior must stop. An employee is not required to directly confront the person who is the source of their report, question, or complaint before notifying any of those individuals listed below. The employee is encouraged to document all incidents of harassment in order to facilitate the most comprehensive investigation possible.
2. **Report to Supervisory and Administrative Personnel:** The next step is to report the incident or behavior as soon as is practicable to the Superintendent. If the incident involves the Superintendent, the employee may communicate their position to the Advisory Committee.
3. Any employee who is not comfortable with reporting violations of this policy to a supervisor may bypass the chain of command and make the report to the Superintendent in writing.
4. **Written Incident/Complaint Report Form:** The VACWC has a written [Incident/Complaint Report Form \(included in the Appendix D\)](#) available to employees who believe that they have been subjected to harassment and/or discrimination. Employees are encouraged to use the form and submit it to the appropriate official when reporting the incident, including any and all pertinent documents and facts. Use of this written Incident/Complaint form is encouraged but is not mandatory. The employee is expected to cooperate fully with the investigative process.

After receiving information regarding an alleged violation of this policy, the Superintendent shall determine if there is any basis for the allegation and shall proceed with resolution as stated below.



1. Take prompt, appropriate action to avoid and minimize the incidence of any form of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation.
2. Stop any observed acts that may be considered harassment and taking steps to intervene.
3. Continually monitor the work environment and strive to ensure that it is free from all types of unlawful discrimination, including sexual harassment or retaliation.
4. Ensure subordinates understand their responsibility under this policy.
5. Ensure that members who make complaints or oppose any lawful employment practices are protected from retaliation and that such matters are kept confidential to the extent possible.
6. Failure to carry out these responsibilities may be grounds for discipline.

### **Non-Retaliation**

The VACWC prohibits retaliation against any individuals who make good faith reports of discrimination or harassment, participates in an investigation of such reports, or files a charge of discrimination or harassment. Retaliation against an individual for reporting harassment or discrimination, or participating in an investigation of a claim of harassment or discrimination, or for filing a charge of discrimination or harassment is a serious violation of this policy and, like harassment or discrimination itself, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

### **1.10 INVESTIGATIONS**

To facilitate a thorough and fair investigation of the alleged incident, it is strongly encouraged that all reports of harassment and/or discrimination be made as soon as practical, but preferably within seven working (7) days.

1. Upon receipt, the Superintendent shall conduct an investigation to consider appropriate resolution alternatives based on the facts uncovered, and swiftly resolve the matter.
2. All reports of harassment and/or discrimination shall be taken seriously and fully investigated. There can be no guarantee of complete confidentiality, but to the extent possible, the investigation and the identity of the parties and persons cooperating in the investigation will be kept in strict confidence and shared with only those on a need-to-know basis involved.
3. Full cooperation from all parties involved is required during the investigation. Failure to fully cooperate with such investigation may subject the employee to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge of employment.
4. All persons accused of harassment and/or discrimination are considered innocent until proven otherwise.

### **1.11 RESPONSIVE ACTION**

Following the completion of the investigation the Superintendent will make a decision based on a review of the facts and circumstances of each situation. Misconduct constituting harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be dealt with appropriately. Responsive action may include, for example, training, referral to counseling and/or disciplinary action such as warning, reprimand,



withholding of a promotion or pay increase, reassignment, temporary suspension without pay or discharge, as the Superintendent believes appropriate under the circumstances.

1. Employees who are found guilty of harassment and/or discrimination shall be subject to corrective or disciplinary action, up to and including, discharge depending on the circumstances. If upon the completion of an investigation, the alleged offender is found innocent or the allegations are unsubstantiated, then no record of the incident shall appear in their personnel file.
2. The VACWC prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports or files a good faith charge of discrimination or harassment. Retaliation is treating a person differently or engaging in acts or reprisal or intimidation against the person because he/she has engaged in protected activity, filed a charge of discrimination, participated in an investigation, or opposed a discriminatory practice. Retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including, discharge.
3. If the complainant is found to have provided false information or acted in bad faith with the intention of intimidating or retaliating against the alleged offender, the accuser may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including, discharge.

### **Additional Contacts**

While we hope to be able to resolve any complaints of harassment within the VACWC, we acknowledge an employee's right to contact federal or state entities for purposes of discussing and, potentially, filing a formal complaint. Key state and federal agencies include:

- Illinois Department of Human Rights (Chicago and Springfield)
- Illinois Human Rights Commission (Chicago and Springfield)
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (Chicago)

### **1.12 DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE**

To help ensure a safe, healthy, and productive work environment for our employees and others, to protect VACWC property, and to ensure efficient operations, the VACWC has adopted a policy of maintaining a workplace free of drugs and alcohol.

1. A drug-free workplace prohibits the unlawful or unauthorized use, abuse, solicitation, theft, possession, transfer, purchase, manufacture, dispensing, sale, or distribution of controlled substances, drug paraphernalia, and alcohol. This includes the misuse or abuse of prescription, over-the-counter, and licensed drugs.
2. Employees and other individuals who work for the VACWC are also prohibited from reporting to work or working while they are using or under the influence of alcohol or any controlled substance, except when the use is pursuant to a licensed medical practitioner's instructions and the licensed medical practitioner authorized the employee or individual to report to work. The workplace is defined as entry upon or presence on VACWC property or any site where a VACWC employee or employees perform VACWC business.



3. The VACWC seeks to retain valuable employees and maintain productivity and service by identifying personal problems at early stages and motivating employees to seek assistance for these problems. However, it is each employee's responsibility to seek assistance before a substance abuse problem affects judgment, performance, or behavior.
  - a. Employees who request or voluntarily agree to participate in a Federal or State approved rehabilitation program to correct a substance abuse problem, may be given an opportunity to do so, with pending disciplinary action being suspended, provided he/she maintains satisfactory participation in, and completes the program.
  - b. Applicable charges may be covered under the employee's health insurance, and this shall be the extent of the VACWC's cost liability for the employee to participate in an assistance or rehabilitation program. Costs that are not covered by the employee's insurance will be the employee's responsibility.
4. An employee convicted of violating a criminal drug statute while in the workplace must inform the Superintendent of such conviction (including pleas of "No Contest") within five (5) working days of the conviction as required by the Federal Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988. Failure to inform the VACWC subjects the employee to disciplinary action, up to and including, discharge for the first offense. The VACWC reserves the right, at its discretion, to offer employees convicted of violating a criminal drug statute in the workplace, participation in an approved rehabilitation or drug abuse assistance program as an alternative to discipline. If such a program is offered and accepted, the employee must satisfactorily participate in the program as a condition of continued employment.
5. Any violation of this policy or outside involvement in illegal drug activities leading to arrest or resulting in anything other than a "not guilty" verdict, may cause disciplinary action to be taken, up to and including, discharge.

This policy is not intended to cover, and should not be regarded as covering, every possible situation that could occur. It does, however, put forth the VACWC's intent and a foundation from which to work. Unique and/or unusual circumstances that arise will be dealt with on an individual basis. Illegal substances found in the workplace will be confiscated and turned over to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Depending on the circumstances, other action, including notification of appropriate law enforcement agencies, may be taken with respect to a violation of this policy.

### **1.13 REQUIRED TESTING**

The VACWC may require employees to submit to drug/alcohol testing ([See Appendix C](#)) at a time and place designated by the VACWC, under the following circumstances:

#### **Reasonable Suspicion**

Employees are subject to testing based upon (but not limited to) observation of apparent workplace use, possession, or impairment. The Superintendent shall be consulted before sending an employee for testing.





Under no circumstances will the employee be allowed to drive himself or herself to the testing facility. A member of management must escort the employee. The employee's supervisor will make arrangements for the employee to be transported home.

### **Post-Accident**

Employees are subject to testing when they cause or contribute to accidents that seriously damage VACWC property, equipment, vehicle, machinery, or and/or result in an injury to themselves or another employee requiring off-site medical attention. A reasonable suspicion circumstance will be presumed to arise in any instance involving work-related accident or injury in which an employee who was operating a motorized vehicle is found to be responsible for causing the accident. In any of these instances, the investigation and subsequent testing must take place within two (2) hours following the accident, if not sooner.

Under no circumstances will the employee be allowed to drive himself or herself to the testing facility. A member of management must escort the employee. The employee's supervisor will make arrangements for the employee to be transported home.

### **Follow up**

Employees who have tested positive, or otherwise violated this policy, are subject to discipline, up to and including, discharge. Depending on the circumstances and the employee's work history/record, the VACWC may offer an employee who violates this policy or tests positive, the opportunity to return to work on a last chance basis pursuant to mutually agreeable terms, which could include follow-up drug testing at times and frequencies determined by the Superintendent for a minimum of one (1) year but not more than two (2) years as well as a waiver of right to contest discharge resulting from a subsequent positive test. If the employee either does not complete their rehabilitation program or tests positive after completing the rehabilitation program, he/she will be subject to immediate discharge from employment.

An employee who refuses testing will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

## **1.14 PRESCRIPTION, OVER-THE-COUNTER, AND LICENSED DRUG USE**

Employees who use a prescription drug that may cause adverse side effects (i.e., drowsiness or impaired reflexes or reaction time) are required to inform their supervisor that they are taking such medication/substance on the advice of a physician's diagnosis if it prevents them from performing the essential functions of the job, or presents a threat of imminent harm to other employees or the public. Employees are responsible for informing their supervisor of the possible effects of the drug on work performance and expected duration of use. If the usage of such medication poses a safety risk for the employee or others, the employee may not work until a release is obtained from the employee's treating physician. Any use of a controlled substance shall fall under this policy.

## **1.15 RECRUITMENT**

It is the policy of the VACWC to fill job openings with qualified applicants and shall select, as far as possible, Veteran Service Officers and other employees from among military veterans,



including those who have served or may still be serving as members of the Illinois National Guard or a reserve component of the armed forces of the United States, who did not receive a bad conduct or dishonorable discharge or other equivalent discharge thereof, or their spouses, surviving spouses, or children. Employees of the Commission shall be at-will employees. The following comments summarize the major elements of our hiring policies:

**Preference for Internal Candidates:** Job openings are filled by qualified persons within the VACWC when possible. Preference is given to internal candidates over external candidates when both are equally qualified. However, internal candidates are not guaranteed the position(s) for which they apply.

**Job Openings:** Instructions for applying are posted on the office bulletin board and VACWC website. VACWC may begin an external search for applicants simultaneously with the job posting.

**Testing/Screening:** Applicants for certain positions may be required to fill out a standard screening instrument ([see Appendix C](#)) and take a test as a condition of being considered for employment.

**Interviewing:** Once the cutoff date has occurred, the applicants will be screened for by the Superintendent or designee. The top three candidates will be presented to the Superintendent who will interview and select the individual to be hired. This will be for all positions except the Superintendent. Procedures for hiring the Superintendent will be established by the Advisory Committee subject to Commission approval.

**Security:** Post offer, pre-employment background checks are run on all candidates. A background check authorization form will be provided to all employees for their review and signature prior to running the background checks.

**Prior Employment References:** References will be checked on all candidates to whom job offers may be made, and follow-up security checks are mandatory prior to certification.

**Pre-Employment Drug Testing:**

All applicants must pass a drug test before beginning work (post offer pre-employment). Refusal to submit to testing will result in disqualification of further employment consideration.

## **1.16 IMMIGRATION AND EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY**

The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 requires employers to verify employees' authorization to work in the United States. In compliance with this law, each new employee is required to complete and sign the employee portion of an Employment Eligibility Verification Form (I-9) and to present documentation establishing identity and authorization to work in the U.S. within three (3) days of hire. A list of acceptable documents is included in the I-9 instructions and is included in the hiring packet.

Former employees who are rehired must also complete an I-9 if they have not completed one with the VACWC within the past three (3) years, or if their previous I-9 is no longer on file or valid.





If you have any questions or are seeking more information on immigration law issues, you are encouraged to contact the Superintendent. You may raise questions or complaints about immigration law compliance without fear of reprisal.

### **1.17 PROBATIONARY EMPLOYMENT PERIOD**

New employees have a probationary employment period of adjustment to learn about the VACWC and their job responsibilities. During this time employees will have an opportunity to find out if they are suited to their new positions.

Additionally, the probationary employment period gives the VACWC a reasonable period of time to evaluate the employee's performance and to determine if the employee appears to possess the attitude and skills necessary to meet the required standards and expectations of the position. The probationary employment period for all employees is their ninety (90) days of active employment.

Employees may be discharged at any time during this period if the Superintendent concludes that they are not progressing or performing satisfactorily. Additionally, the successful completion of this introductory period does not change the at-will nature of the employment relationship.

At the end of the probationary employment period, the Superintendent will conduct a performance evaluation.

### **1.18 HIRING**

It is the policy of the VACWC to maintain written hiring particulars for all staff positions - paid, intern, and volunteer.

- VACWC's hiring particulars must contain the following elements: title, salary/wage range, periodic increases in salary/wage, participation in the VACWC Retirement Plan, PTO and holiday allowances, and any other compensation such as ancillary benefits and cafeteria plans.
- In the event new major responsibilities or other major responsibilities or other significant changes occur, the hiring particulars shall be updated and/or rewritten to reflect these changes.
- Hiring particulars will be placed in each employee's personnel file.

### **1.19 JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

It is the intent of the VACWC to maintain a written job description for all staff positions, paid, intern, and volunteer. All job descriptions must maintain standards of performance required.

- VACWC's job descriptions must contain the following: elements, title, compensation range, summary of job duties, performance requirements, standards of performance, and definition of the essential duties.



- Job descriptions are to be as detailed and explicit as possible. However, employees occasionally may be required to perform related duties not specified in the job description
- In the event new major responsibilities or other major responsibilities or other significant changes occur, the job description shall be updated and/or rewritten to reflect these changes.
- Job descriptions will be maintained in a separate file.

## 1.20 CLASSIFICATION AND STATUS OF EMPLOYEES

For the purpose of determining eligibility for benefits and payroll status, the following classifications are defined:

- Exempt employees are classified as such if their job duties are exempt from the overtime and compensatory provisions of the Federal and State Wage and Hour Laws. Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime pay. Their salaries are calculated on an annual basis.
- Non-exempt employees receive overtime pay or compensatory time in accordance with our overtime and compensatory time policies. Their salaries are calculated on an hourly basis. Non-exempt employees must use a time clock and/or time sheets to document hours worked.

Employees will be advised of their exempt or non-exempt status at the time of hire and/or assignment to a new position.

### **Regular Full-time Employee:**

A regular full-time employee is one who is regularly scheduled to work thirty-seven and a half (37.5) hours per week, year-round on a continuous basis, and has completed their probationary period. All regular full-time employees are expected to work additional hours as necessary to properly complete all assigned tasks and as needed during busy periods.

### **Part-time Employee:**

A part-time employee is one who is regularly scheduled to work less than thirty-seven and a half (37.5) hours per week on a continuous basis and has completed their probationary period. All part-time employees are expected to work the number of hours necessary to properly complete all assigned tasks and as needed during busy periods.

### **Seasonal Employee:**

A seasonal employee is one who is employed for a specific function, for any number of hours per week, for a temporary, limited period of time. The term seasonal employee includes those who are employed by the VACWC for only a specific operating season, but may also include individuals rehired for successive seasons.

## 1.21 NEPOTISM



It is the intent of the VACWC to recruit, hire, promote, compensate, transfer, reward, and discipline on the basis of individual merit in order to avoid the suggestion of favoritism in the making of such decisions.

This policy applies to the following “covered relationships”:

- **Family Member:** Spouse, child, parent, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, as well as in-law and step relative.
- **Members of the Same Household:** Family members or others residing, fully or partially, in the same residence as another employee of the VACWC.
- **Like or Similar Relationships:** Other relationships that may or may not involve family members or members of the same household but that may create similar opportunities for favoritism.

Regular employees, in a “covered relationship”, may be employed anywhere in the VACWC except within the span of control of one another (i.e. position where one may exercise direct control, or may influence employment decisions affecting wages, work hours and other conditions of employment.) In all other instances, employees in a “covered relationship” may be employed anywhere in the VACWC provided it is not in a direct reporting relationship.

If a “covered relationship” develops which results in violation of this policy, the VACWC will use its best efforts to work on a transfer, where possible. However, no employee is guaranteed a similar position, the same pay or continued employment. Such issues must be resolved within the time limits established by the VACWC.

Situations that have been previously “grandfathered” will be allowed to continue despite their failure to comply with this policy. However, in those circumstances, all employment decisions that may create the opportunity for favoritism will require approval by the next higher supervisory level. Additionally, if either of the involved employees moves to another position where the “covered relationship” no longer exists, the employee may not thereafter return to positions with the VACWC that would violate this policy.

The VACWC may recommend exceptions to this policy. Exceptions will be allowed only in the case of extreme circumstances and with appropriate safeguards so that the intent of the policy may be maintained. The Superintendent must approve all such exceptions to this policy prior to hiring, transfer or other employment decision making.

If any employee feels that circumstances have arisen or may arise that result in a violation of this policy, such circumstances must be immediately reported to the Superintendent. Such reports will not result in retaliation towards the reporting employee. Failure of any employee to report a relationship that is in violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

## **1.22 EMPLOYEE PERSONNEL RECORDS**

It is the policy of the VACWC to establish a record keeping system in regard to personnel information. Each employee’s individual personnel file is regarded as confidential information and



is treated as such. The only persons with access to the file shall be the Superintendent, and the Executive Assistant. Employee's access to personnel files will be on a need-to-know basis.

VACWC employee personnel records will include, as a minimum, the following items:

- Application and resume
- Letters of appointment and acceptance
- Signed job description
- Ongoing performance evaluations
- Any correspondence or documents relating to performance which are of current relevance
- Memoranda concerning unusual job changes or transfers
- Letters of commendation or other indications of exceptional performance
- Warning letters, incident reports, and records of all disciplinary actions
- Training records, including grades and notations of those who have completed or are presently taking in-house training programs
- Leave of absence information (not health related)
- Other documentation as required by this manual or other official authority

You are responsible for notifying the Executive Assistant or the Superintendent of any changes, such as name, address, telephone number, and/or family status (births, marriage, civil union, death, divorce, legal separation, immigration status, etc.) within thirty (30) days of the change because income tax status and insurance eligibility may be affected by these changes. This information is held as confidential unless specifically requested by the employee to be released.

You can access your company and personal information, such as pay statements and pay history, retirement accounts (IMRF), personal time off (PTO) etc. per instructions provided at time your time of hire. For information on how to access this information, please contact the executive assistant or Superintendent.

### **1.23 CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The VACWC respects the rights of all employees to engage in personal activities outside of work. However, each employee has the responsibility to avoid activities which conflict or appear to conflict with our job responsibilities or the interests of the VACWC. Any employee activity which may involve a conflict of interest or even the appearance of a conflict of interest must first be reviewed with and approved by the employee's Department Head.

THE FOLLOWING ARE EXAMPLES OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

- Engaging in employment or any other activity that interferes with the employee's ability to devote the required time and attention to their job responsibilities with the VACWC
- Holding a significant financial interest in a current or prospective customer or supplier of the VACWC, or serving as an employee, consultant or director of that business
- Directing VACWC business to a supplier that is owned or managed by a relative of an employee of the VACWC
- Engaging in employment that is in direct conflict with the interests of the VACWC



- Directly supervising the job performance or determining the compensation of a relative
- Improperly using the organization's confidential information or its assets for the employee's economic/personal benefit or for the economic or personal benefit of others

## 1.24 SOCIAL MEDIA

In the rapidly expanding world of electronic communication, social media can mean many things. Social media networks include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Next door, and others. Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's blog, personal web site, social networking or affinity web site, web bulletin board, or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with the VACWC, as well as any other forms of electronic communication.

Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. If any of your conduct adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow employees, VAC-A, or otherwise adversely affects the community the VACWC serves, the VACWC's vendors, the people who work on behalf of the VACWC, or the VACWC's legitimate business interests, said conduct may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

This policy is not intended to create arbitrary rules for social media usage or curtail constitutionally protected free speech.

Employees must ensure that social media activity does not interfere with work commitments. Know and follow the rules Carefully read these guidelines, and all VACWC Personnel policies, and ensure your postings are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, threats of violence, or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

a. Be respectful.

- Always be fair and courteous to fellow employees, members of the public, vendors, or people who work on behalf of the VACWC. Employees are encouraged to resolve work related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers, supervisor, or the Superintendent than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. However, if you decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video, or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparage employees, members of the public, vendors, suppliers, and any organizations associated or doing business with the VACWC, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation, or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, disability, or any other protected class status in accordance with applicable federal or state law or policy.

b. Be honest and accurate



- Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly, and disclose when posts have been edited. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about the VACWC, fellow employees, VAC-A, members of the public, customers, vendors, and people working on behalf of the VACWC or competitors.
- c. Post only appropriate and respectful content.
- Maintain the confidentiality of the VACWC's internal or confidential information. This may include information regarding the development of systems, processes, products, know-how and technology. Do not post internal reports, policies, procedures, or other business-related communications intended for internal use or may contain confidential, private, or security information.
  - Abide by all state and federal laws, including privacy laws, including but not limited to private, personal medical/health information under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Follow all copyright laws, trade secret or other propriety right, public records laws, retention laws, fair use, financial disclosure laws, and any other laws that might apply to the VACWC or your functional area.
  - Do not create a link from your blog, website or other social networking site to a VACWC website without identifying yourself as a VACWC employee.
  - Express only your personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for the VACWC. If the VACWC is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that you are an employee, but that your views do not represent those of the VACWC, fellow employees, vendors, or people working on behalf of the VACWC. If you do publish online content related to the work you do or subjects associated with the VACWC, make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of the VACWC. It is best to include a disclaimer such as "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the VACWC."
  - For safety and security reasons VACWC employees shall not disclose employment information of Sheriff's Department, Circuit Court, or State's Attorney employees. Employees shall not display Sheriff's Department logos, uniforms or similar identifying items on personal social or sites. Employees shall not post personal photographs or provide similar means of personal recognition that may cause employees to be identified as a sworn officer of the department.
  - Employees cannot advertise or sell VACWC, VAC-A, or County-owned property, products, or services through social media, unless they have received approval from the County Administrator and/or the Superintendent, consistent with County Code pertaining to asset management and disposal.
- d. Use of social media at work prohibited
- Employees are not allowed to use social media while on work time, or on VACWC, VAC-A, or County-owned equipment unless authorized in writing by their department head. Do not use VACWC email addresses to register on





social networks, blogs, or other online tools utilized for personal use. Additionally, employees may not use their personal social media sites to conduct VACWC business. The VACWC reserves the right to monitor and review the uses of the VACWC's IT systems, and to block content that violates the VACWC's policies, rules, and guidelines. The VACWC has the right to monitor all communications on County-issued computers, laptops, cell phones, and any other device. It is impossible to guarantee that any information sent on County-owned equipment can remain private. All VACWC social media sites are subject to the Illinois Local Records Act, the Freedom of Information Act and e-discovery laws, and therefore, content must be able to be managed, stored, and retrieved to comply with these laws. Any use of personal social media sites for VACWC business is also subject to the Illinois Local Records Act, the Freedom of Information Act, and e-discovery laws.

e. Retaliation prohibited

- The VACWC prohibits taking negative action against any employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any employee who retaliates against another employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. Employees should have no expectation of privacy while using any County-owned equipment and facilities for any purpose, including the use of social media.

## **VIOLATIONS**

The VACWC will investigate and respond to all reports of violations of this Social Media Policy or any related VACWC policies, rules, and guidelines. All reports of alleged violations are to be directed to the Superintendent.

## **PENALTIES**

Any employee who violates this policy or any related VACWC policies is subject to the discipline process, up to and including discharge.

## **1.25 BUSINESS ETHICS AND CONDUCT**

This policy affirms the VACWC's commitment to the highest ethical standards, business conduct expectations and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The VACWC's as an organization expects all employees to comply strictly with all laws and regulations which are applicable to its operations. In addition, they are to maintain the standards of the Ethics and Business Conduct stated in this policy; and to remain free of interests and relationships which may be potentially detrimental to the best interests of VACWC as an organization.

This policy shall be applied and enforced with respect to every employee of the VACWC.

## **EMPLOYEE OBLIGATIONS**



Each employee of the VACWC is expected to familiarize themselves with this policy and standards of conduct and to review/attend the policy/training opportunities as they are instituted by the organization. Each employee is encouraged to report to management any violations to this Ethics and Business Conduct Policy through means as outlined in this policy. Each employee is expected to be fully familiar with the standard operating procedures, work rules, general orders, or policies applicable to their job responsibilities. Deviations or flagrant violations of those requirements (as determined by the Superintendent) will be viewed as ethical violations and subject to provisions of this policy. All relationships among employees must be based on the highest standards of ethical and legal conduct. Employees shall not use their position in the organization for a purpose that is, or gives the appearance of being motivated by, the desire for private gain for themselves or others. Employees should specifically avoid use of their positions to obtain services of any kind, with or without compensation, for themselves, their family or relatives or another with whom they have personal, business or financial ties.

## **MANAGEMENT OBLIGATIONS**

Officials, Managers and Supervisors are required to ensure that the employees under their reporting structure familiarize themselves with the requirements of this policy and have employees sign per Section VII. This includes not only the review of the policy but the hands-on involvement through on-going interaction, to ensure that employees are aware of their obligations under this policy and the requirements of their positions.

Management Staff are further required to review any/all reports by employees of an ethical violation or other violation of business conduct at the VACWC and provide a copy of any/all reports to the Superintendent. Management Staff will treat all such reports as confidential and assist in the investigation of the report in question.

It is a violation of this policy for any management staff to retaliate against an employee for any good faith report of an ethics or business conduct violation.

## **BUSINESS PRACTICES**

### **OUR EMPLOYEES**

We are committed to fair employment practices and to following applicable employment laws throughout our organization. This includes complying with laws that prohibit improper employment discrimination.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The VACWC is committed to be an environmentally responsible organization and to providing a safe and healthful workplace for its employees. It will comply with all applicable environmental, health and safety laws and regulations in all facilities in which the VACWC conducts business.

### **POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND ACTIVITIES**

Financial contributions of VACWC funds, use of the organization's assets or facilities/equipment for the benefit of a political party or candidate are strictly prohibited. The VACWC encourages all employees to participate personally in the political process and to support political parties and





candidates of their choice. However, engaging in political activities or the display or distribution of political information during working hours, or on Winnebago County property, is considered detrimental to work performance and is prohibited by this policy.

#### **GIFTS, ENTERTAINMENT AND IMPROPER PAYMENTS**

Unless properly approved in advance by the employee's Department Head or the Superintendent, VACWC employees should not give or receive gifts, favors, personal discounts of more than normal value to or from entities with which the organization conducts business. The giving or receiving of financial items as listed above of a value of \$50.00 U.S. or greater requires the approval of the Superintendent. Any of these items which are not permitted or have not been approved per the policy should be declined or turned over to the Superintendent. Gifts of a ceremonial, commemorative or business recognition nature may be accepted/given by management staff on behalf of the VACWC, but must be reported to the Superintendent.

The giving or receiving of reasonable and customary meals and entertainment in the normal course of business is permitted. Giving or receiving of lavish meals or inappropriate/illegal entertainment is prohibited.

Payment or acceptance of bribes, kickbacks or other improper payments while conducting VACWC business is prohibited. This prohibition applies to dealings with current or potential customers, suppliers, representatives, consultants or other business partners seeking to establish a relationship with the VACWC.

#### **CUSTOMERS, SUPPLIERS AND BUSINESS PARTNERS**

The VACWC has worked to build strong business relationships with our customers and suppliers based on lawful, honest business practices and the best interests of the VACWC. We are committed to the pursuit of excellence in all of the services that we provide, and strive to meet or exceed our customers' expectations for quality, integrity, safety, and reliability. When we contract for goods and services on behalf of the VACWC, we will avoid doing anything that might compromise our objectivity or impair the VACWC's reputation. Our purchasing decisions will always be based on appropriate business criteria such as price, quality, technical leadership, reliability and the reputation of the supplier.

VACWC's business partners are an extension of our organization and are chosen and monitored carefully. When agents, representatives, consultants, contractors, and joint venture partners are engaged with VACWC in business matters, they are required to comply with applicable laws and to adhere to standards of business conduct consistent with the VACWC's Ethics and Business Conduct Policy.

#### **PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION**

It is the VACWC's policy that we must take appropriate steps to protect information relating to individuals, whether they are employees, customers, constituents or suppliers. We are responsible for collecting, processing and transferring personal data only for lawful and legitimate business purposes. Care must be used to safeguard the confidentiality and security of personal data and to respect individual privacy. The VACWC will utilize its legal counsel to ensure that the use and transmitting of personal data does not in any way violate laws governing this data.



## **EDUCATION AND AWARENESS**

The VACWC is committed to fostering a working environment where integrity is valued and forms the foundation for every decision. This environment includes a culture in which open and honest communication is expected and employees at all levels appreciate the importance of demonstrating highly ethical behavior. The VACWC's Ethics and Business Conduct Policy certification occurs every two years. Employees certify every two years that they will adhere to the policy, which outlines the ethical business conduct required of employees in the performance of their County related responsibilities. Individuals certify that they will not engage in conduct or activity that may raise questions as to the organization's honesty, impartiality or reputation or otherwise cause embarrassment to the organization. Employee certification is mandatory for all employees of the VACWC.

## **REPORTING VIOLATIONS/RAISING QUESTIONS**

All VACWC employees are responsible to promptly report suspected or known violations of the Ethics and Business Conduct Policy, Federal, State, or municipal laws or violations of other of the organization's policies. An employee may choose to make a report to the VACWC Commission President, Superintendent, States Attorney, or Department Head. There will be no reprisals or retaliation against any employee for reporting in good faith a suspected or known violation. Reports can be accepted on an anonymous basis through the Integrity Hotline System. Concerns about accounting, internal accounting controls, auditing matters or other financial concerns may also be reported to the Superintendent. Suspected concerns will be investigated by appropriate Management staff and/or Agencies.

Where investigation reveals the need to take corrective action, changes to systems or in, practices and procedures will be implemented in addition to appropriate disciplinary/corrective measures. Violations to the Ethics and Business Conduct Policy are subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge of employment. In many instances, a violation of this policy may also have legal ramifications, subjecting the employee to civil and/or criminal penalties, fines and other sanctions.

### **1.26 CONFIDENTIALITY**

It is the policy of the VACWC that employees will, to the best of their ability, ensure confidentiality and privacy regarding the history, records, and discussions about the people we or our membership organizations serve. The very fact that an individual is served directly or indirectly by VACWC or any membership organization must be kept private and confidential; disclosure can be made only under specific conditions that are described below.

For reasons relating to Federal, State, and local laws, as well as, the fulfillment of our mission, VACWC employees shall not disclose any information about a person, including the fact that the person is or is not served by our agency or membership organizations, to anyone outside this agency or membership organizations unless authorized by the individual or other personnel. The principle of confidentiality must be maintained in all programs, functions, and activities.



- No information requested by someone outside of VACWC will be given over the telephone. Employees are instructed to respond with statement: “VACWC policy does not permit me to give out this information”. This includes whether or not a person is or has been served by our agency or membership organizations.
- Release of information form will be explained and completed in the presence of the person about whom any information may be released, before it is released.
- If records are inspected by an outside agency, the individual(s) who inspect the records must be specifically authorized to do so by the Superintendent. The taking of notes, copying of records or removal of records is specifically prohibited in such cases.
- Employees will not discuss any individual’s record with unauthorized individuals, whether on or off duty. All employees are to sign a confidentiality statement ([See Appendix M](#)) acknowledging their responsibility and commitment in regard to client and the agency information.

### **1.27 SPEAKING TO THE MEDIA**

It is the policy of the VACWC that employees do not speak to the news media as an official or unofficial spokesperson of the VACWC without prior clearance from the Superintendent. All inquiries from the media must be referred to the Superintendent.

### **1.28 USE OF TELEPHONES (INCLUDING CELLULAR PHONES), FAX AND VOICEMAIL**

Telephone (including VACWC-issued cellular phones), fax, and voicemail services are business tools. As a general rule, they should not be used for non-business purposes. Personal calls should be kept short and should not take up work time. A failure to limit personal calls may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

This guideline also applies to the use of cell phones during working hours, whether supplied by the VACWC or you personally. The sound function of personal cell phones should be turned off or placed on vibrate mode during working hours. When meeting with a business contact, always turn off your cell phone or turn it on vibrate mode unless monitoring an emergency situation.

Employees assigned a VACWC cell phone must sign an agreement ([See Appendix B](#) regarding Technology and Cell Phone Use) to use it for business purposes only and that, should they fail to return the cell phone when required by the VACWC or at time of discharge, the cost of the phone may be deducted from their final paycheck.

Employees with access to a cell phone and other wireless devices (whether personal or VACWC provided) while driving should remember that their primary responsibility is driving safely and obeying the rules of the road. Employees should exercise caution while using cell phones to conduct business while driving and should safely pull off the road and come to a complete stop before dialing, talking on the phone, or using a device unless hands-free equipment is being utilized. Employees who are charged with traffic violations resulting from the use of their cell phone while driving will be solely responsible for all liabilities that result from such actions.



The VACWC also provides employees with voicemail through which they can send and receive business messages. For those employees who will utilize the voicemail system, it is important that you learn how to use it by reading the voicemail manual or asking your supervisor.

As with all VACWC assets, voicemail is only intended for authorized business use in the course of your assigned business duties. Inappropriate use may result in loss of access privileges and disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Inappropriate use includes, but is not limited to:

- Unauthorized attempts to access another person's voicemail box
- Transmission of sensitive or proprietary information to unauthorized person
- Transmission of obscene or harassing messages or material to any other individual
- Any illegal or unethical activities or any activity that could adversely affect the VACWC or the VACWC's image
- Solicitation of others for any non-business-related purpose during worktime

The VACWC will have unrestricted access to information stored in the voicemail system and may review the contents of stored voicemail records. For example, if you are on vacation, business trips or leaves of absence, your supervisor may access your voicemail messages to better serve our veterans and other business needs. **Employees should not expect any documents or messages stored in phone systems or other electronic media to be private.**

This policy is not intended to and does not prohibit protected concerted activity.

## 1.29 COMPUTER HARDWARE/SOFTWARE/NETWORK SECURITY

As with all VACWC assets, our computer systems, hardware, and software are intended to be used for authorized business use. If you have access to or use the VACWC's computer systems, hardware, and/or software, you are required to follow this policy. **Inappropriate use of computer hardware and/or software is prohibited and may result in loss of access privileges and disciplinary action, up to and including discharge**

Inappropriate use includes, but is not limited to:

- Unauthorized attempts to access another employee's e-mail account
- Unauthorized sharing of any access codes or passwords
- Transmission of sensitive or proprietary information to unauthorized persons or organizations
- Transmission or storage of sexually explicit images, cartoons, or messages; any transmission containing ethnic slurs, racial or religious epithets, or anything that may be construed as harassment or disparagement of others based on their age, sex and sexual orientation, gender, race, national origin, color, disability, religious beliefs or other protected classification; materials containing graphic depictions of violence; and any similarly inappropriate content



- Any illegal, unprofessional, or unethical computer-related activities or any computer-related activity that could adversely affect the VACWC or the VACWC's image

The VACWC will have unrestricted access to information stored in the computer systems, as any information created, transmitted, or stored on VACWC computer systems is VACWC property. **Personal passwords should not be considered a guarantee of privacy. Employees should not expect any information stored on the VACWC's computer system to be private.** From time to time, especially if you are absent, management may access your computer or files for legitimate business purposes. The confidentiality of all [client/customer] information and documents stored on our system should be protected as described in the VACWC's confidentiality section of this handbook.

### 1.30 E-MAIL AND INTERNET ACCESS

Electronic mail is part of VACWC business. VACWC e-mail and Internet access are intended to be used for business purposes. E-mail and Internet use is monitored to control costs and for risk management purposes.

If you have access to or use VACWC e-mail or the Internet, you are required to follow this policy. Inappropriate use of e-mail and/or the Internet is prohibited and may result in loss of access privileges and disciplinary action, up to and including discharge

Inappropriate use includes, but is not limited to:

- Use of the VACWC's computers, systems, e-mail, Internet access, etc. for personal entertainment purposes, such as accepting or transmitting chain letters, gambling, or game playing.
- Additionally, using any of the VACWC's computers, systems, e-mail, Internet access, etc. for personal reasons that may tax the VACWC's local and wide area network (i.e., streaming audio and video).
- Use of the VACWC's computers, systems, e-mail, Internet access, etc. for personal outside business ventures (i.e., home-based business, solicitation, and/or outside group and organization communication/postings).
- Use of the VACWC's computers, systems, e-mail, Internet access, etc. for downloading or transmitting excessively large files or pictures and other uses that could cause system malfunctions.
- Use of the VACWC's computer, e-mail, and Internet access systems that is disruptive, threatening, derogatory, harassing, discriminatory, or offensive to others.
- In the event that you receive an e-mail in violation of this policy, the appropriate action is to delete it immediately.
- Accessing any website that may violate copyright infringement rights.
- Accessing or submitting messages to any news or blog group for non-business reasons.

The VACWC reserves the right to, and may, monitor and review e-mail messages and usage of online networks to which the VACWC has provided access to (1) ensure that VACWC policy is



followed, (2) ensure that such e-mail and online networks are used primarily for business purposes, and (3) protect the VACWC's rights.

The VACWC reserves the right to implement additional policies and procedures regarding the use of e-mail and any online network access. Violation of this policy or the VACWC policies and procedures implemented and communicated to employees in the future may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge of employment.

This policy does not and is not intended to prohibit protected concerted activity.

### **1.31 ATTENDANCE**

Attendance is an essential part of our total job performance and is critical to the smooth and consistent operation of the VACWC. Absenteeism or tardiness place an unfair burden on fellow employees, and are both expensive and disruptive. It is important that employees report to work regularly, promptly and are ready to perform the assigned duties at the beginning of their workday. Excessive absenteeism and lateness reduce an employee's chances for advancement and recognition in the organization and may, in some circumstances, result in disciplinary action or discharge of employment.

If an employee is going to be late or absent for any reason, they (or someone else for them if they are unable to make the call) must telephone the Executive Assistant prior to their scheduled starting time. If the Executive Assistant is not available, the employee must contact the next level of authority. If the employee is unable to contact with either individual, the employee may leave a voice mail. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that proper notification is given.

The notice must include a reasonable explanation for their absence or tardiness, and a statement as to when they expect to arrive at or return to work. The employee may be required to present a doctor's note or other documentation substantiating the length of and reasons for their absence or tardiness.

This notice requirement applies to each day of absence or tardiness, including consecutive days. Failure to satisfy these requirements may result in loss of pay for the time in question and/or subject the employee to disciplinary action. Moreover, if the employee fails to report to work for three (3) consecutive working days without notifying the Superintendent, they will be considered to have voluntarily abandoned their employment with the VACWC and will be discharged from employment.

Employees who must leave work early because of an illness or personal emergency, must make every reasonable effort to promptly advise their immediate supervisor.

Attendance is an essential function of every job. Even though the employee provides proper notice of their absence or tardiness, continued irregular attendance or excessive absenteeism or tardiness, as determined by the VACWC, constitutes unsatisfactory performance and will be subjected to disciplinary action to include discharge from employment. Absenteeism that is covered by an approved Leave of Absence will not be covered under this policy.





### **1.32 EMPLOYEE DRESS CODE**

It is the policy of the VACWC the employees, as representatives of the agency, exhibit a neat and well-groomed appearance when conducting agency business. Radical departure from conventional dress or personal grooming (including but not limited to: dirty hair, tank tops, shorts and shower thong type footwear is not permitted).

- VACWC will not be held liable for damage to clothing or accessories while you are at work.
- If the Superintendent decides that an employee is in violation of the dress code the employee will be asked to correct the violation. If time away from the job is required it will be unpaid time off.

### **1.33 DISCIPLINARY ACTION (ALSO SEE APPENDIX O FOR RELATED FORM)**

All employees are expected to abide by the VACWC standards of work performance, engage in acceptable conduct, and satisfactorily perform one's duties under the policies, guidelines and rules contained in this manual. In addition, each employee is expected to follow any other VACWC policies, rules and guidelines, performance standards, the directions of the Superintendent, and to act in accordance with federal, state and local law. Work performance encompasses many factors, including attendance, punctuality, personal conduct, job proficiency and general compliance with the VACWC's policies and procedures. In instances where an employee's conduct or performance is determined by the VACWC to not be in compliance with these standards, the VACWC may, under appropriate circumstances, take appropriate corrective action.

The purpose of corrective action is to identify the unacceptable conduct and performance in which the employee is engaged and advise the employee of the expected standards while providing the employee with a reasonable timeframe within which the employee may improve performance. Where applicable, this process is designed to encourage development by providing employees with guidance in those areas that need improvement.

However, in some circumstances it is acknowledged that the severity of the conduct and/or performance issues may make it necessary to proceed to discharge without advance notice. In such instances, the VACWC reserves the right to proceed with the discharge of employment without advance warning.

Where progressive discipline is determined, in the VACWC's discretion, to be appropriate, an employee may be dismissed from employment if such disciplinary action has not resulted in changes to any substandard performance or conduct on the employee's part. However, while every reasonable effort will be made to provide advance warning to employees regarding unacceptable conduct and/or performance, an employee may be dismissed by the VACWC without prior warning.

The following are general guidelines that may be used in the disciplinary process. These guidelines are in no way a guarantee that an employee will necessarily receive each and every "step" prior to



dismissal. In the VACWC's discretion, the following steps may or may not be followed and, therefore, an employee may be dismissed without prior disciplinary action:

### **Oral Warning**

Oral warnings may be issued by the Superintendent or Department head. Oral warnings are issued for the purpose of expressing disapproval of conduct or poor work performance and/or attendance, to clarify applicable procedures or guidelines, and to warn the employee that repetition of the conduct or failure to improve work performance and/or attendance may result in more severe discipline including discharge. The Superintendent or Department head imposing the oral warning will discuss the warning with the employee and suggest how to correct the offending conduct. Documentation of an oral warning will be placed in the employee's personnel file.

### **Written Warning**

Written warnings consist of a conference between the employee and the person of authority imposing the warning, and a written memo expressing disapproval of conduct or poor work performance and/or attendance and warning that repetition of the conduct or failure to improve may result in more severe discipline including discharge.

Employees are required to sign the written warning indicating their receipt of the warning and understanding of the reasons for the warning. An employee will also be given an opportunity to provide written comments on the form. If an employee refuses to sign, another employee will be asked to witness the refusal. A copy of the written warning will be placed in the employee's personnel file.

### **Suspension**

A suspension is defined as temporarily relieving an employee from duty. Depending on the circumstances, a suspension may be with or without pay. The Superintendent will meet with the employee and provide a written memo outlining the details of the suspension, including the reasons for and duration of the suspension. During this meeting, the employee will be given an opportunity to respond to the reason(s) for the suspension. Unpaid suspensions of non-exempt employees will be based on daily increments. To the extent permitted by law, unpaid suspensions of exempt employees will be based on weekly increments. Employees are required to sign the written notice of suspension indicating their receipt and understanding of the reason provided in the suspension memo. Employees will also be given an opportunity to provide written comments on the notice. If an employee refuses to sign, a member of the VACWC will be asked to witness the refusal. A copy of the notice will be placed in the employee's personnel file.

### **Involuntary Dismissal**

An involuntary dismissal is a discharge of employment initiated by the Superintendent. An employee may be dismissed for any lawful reason at any time.





If an employee is dismissed, they will receive written notice of the reasons for the dismissal including effective date. The Superintendent, or designee may meet with the employee, explain the reasons for dismissal, and offer the employee the opportunity to respond. The employee is required to sign the written notice of dismissal indicating their receipt of the notice and understanding of the reason for the dismissal. If an employee refuses to sign, a VACWC employee member may be asked to witness the refusal. A copy of the notice will be placed in the employee's personnel file. An employee may further respond to those charges, if any, through the formal review procedure outlined below.

Employees may be warned, suspended, and/or dismissed whenever it is determined, in the VACWC's sole discretion, to be in the VACWC's best interests. Nevertheless, listed below are some examples of reasons for disciplinary action. This list, however, does not constitute an exhaustive list of all of the acts that may subject an employee to disciplinary action including discharge and does not change the employment-at-will relationship between the employee and the VACWC. Instead, the following list sets forth some of the more typical cases that arise in the course of an employment relationship. The VACWC reserves the right to determine when these standards have been violated. They include but are not limited to:

- Failing to adhere to VACWC policies and/or procedures including, without limitation safety, financial, personnel, and administrative policies, ordinances and procedures
- Being absent from duty without permission, habitual tardiness, excessive absenteeism, or misrepresentation of material facts relating to the use of leave
- Extending breaks or lunches and/or not taking breaks or lunches at scheduled times
- Leaving work during working hours without permission
- Failing to obey any lawful official rule, regulation or order, or failure to obey any proper direction made or given by a supervisor
- Being uncooperative, hostile or having a discourteous attitude or conduct toward a supervisor, the VACWC members, co-workers or members of the public or threatening or striking any person who is in or on VACWC property or participating in VACWC activities
- Being wasteful of or the destruction of VACWC supplies, materials, vehicles, equipment, tools, working time or other VACWC property
- Failing to wear safety equipment (e.g., safety shoes, glasses, etc.) or the failure to wear appropriate clothing for duties as required
- Endangering one's safety and/or the safety of others because of failure to act properly and safely in the performance of job duties
- Failure to follow any federal, state, local rule or regulation or engaging in criminal activity while on duty or while in or on VACWC property
- Failing to report an accident or known hazardous condition to the immediate supervisor
- Gambling or fighting while on duty
- Being under the influence or possession of intoxicants or illegal drugs while on duty or on VACWC property or failing to notify the VACWC that the employee is taking legal drugs when such notice is required
- Theft or misappropriation of the careless, negligent or improper use of VACWC funds



- Theft of property, whether from the VACWC, a resident, or co-worker. Employees should seek permission before removing VACWC materials, tools, or other items, including damaged goods, scrap material, or any other material
- Possessing weapons in or on VACWC property or while on duty.
- Incompetent, inefficient or negligent performance of duties; inability or failure to perform duties properly
- Failing to maintain valid driver's license or another license or certification which may be required for the employee's position
- Smoking, including vaping, in restricted non-smoking areas
- Physical violence or threats of physical violence
- Harassing other employees, volunteers, or clients, including violations of the VACWC's harassment policy
- Being dishonest; lying to VACWC personnel or falsifying or providing misleading information on forms, records or reports provided to or on behalf of the VACWC including accident reports, financial reports, expense or reimbursement reports, employment application/resumes, insurance claims submitted under the VACWC's health care program, Workers' Compensation program, and departmental reports
- Unauthorized possession, use or copying of any records that are the property of the VACWC
- Sleeping on duty
- Horseplay, practical jokes, and pranks
- Failing to report to work on three (3) consecutive days without notifying a Department head or Superintendent
- Violating VACWC employment rules, rules or guidelines or engaging in any conduct determined by the VACWC not to be in its best interests

### **Additional Information Regarding Disciplinary Action**

It is the policy of the VACWC to discharge an employee when other disciplinary action has failed to achieve improvement or when the employee commits a serious offense. Prior to dismissal, the Superintendent should assure that the employee has been counseled in writing covering any deficiencies in performance, given sufficient time to correct these deficiencies, and informed that failure to correct them may result in discharge.

Some offenses warrant immediate dismissal. These include but are not limited to:

- Theft-including, but not limited to, the removal of other employees or clients property without prior authorization
- Drugs/Alcohol - possession, use, sales, purchase, or distribution of any illegal drugs or illegally possessed drugs or alcohol at on around commission or VACWC facilities
- Falsifying or altering VACWC or client records with intent to defraud, cheat or for personal financial gain
- Sabotaging or willfully damaging VACWC, County, Client, or property of other employees
- Fighting or provoking a fight



### **1.34 PROBLEM RESOLUTION PROCESS**

Recognizing that misunderstandings and disagreements are inevitable whenever individuals work together, the VACWC has provided employees access to an Employee Appeal Process. Its purpose is to ensure that all employees have an opportunity to seek review of their concerns.

If an employee has a job-related concern that has resulted in disciplinary action or concerning the application of any other provision of this manual, the employee may pursue further review of that concern.

Any employee may appeal any disciplinary action or the application of any other provision of this manual using the following procedure:

1. The employee should discuss the action with their immediate supervisor in an attempt to resolve the problem. Within three (3) working days after discussing the action, the supervisor shall notify the employee, in writing, of the decision.
2. If the employee wishes to appeal the decision, it must be done in writing to the Superintendent, within five (5) working days of the date the decision was communicated. The Superintendent will review the matter to ensure fair treatment. The employee and the supervisor will be notified, in writing, of the decision within five (5) working days of the appeal and in such instances the decision will be final.

Nothing in this section shall limit or restrict the VACWC's right to dismiss an employee at any time, with or without cause.

The VACWC's failure to strictly adhere to the time limits or the descriptions given in this section shall not affect the resolution of any disciplinary action. This policy should be followed to the extent that it is practicable under the circumstances. The VACWC reserves the right to proceed directly to the right to dismiss an employee at any time, with or without cause.

### **1.35 GRIEVANCES [\(SEE APPENDIX P FOR REPORTING DOCUMENT\)](#)**

It is policy of the VACWC to grant any employee who has a complaint concerning disciplinary action, discharge, demotion, denial of promotion or merit increase, layoff, or discrimination based on a category; i.e., race, age, disability – as recognized by federal and local civil rights laws has the right to file a grievance according to procedures outlined in this policy.

1. No employee will be discriminated against, harassed, intimidated, or suffer any reprisal as a result of filing a grievance or participating in the investigation of a grievance. If an employee feels that he or she is being subjected to any of the above, that employee has the right to appeal directly to the Superintendent.
2. Employees should attempt to resolve the problem informally with the Superintendent as soon as possible.



3. All complaints will be handled in a timely manner. As a goal, the VACWC attempts to resolve a complaint within 20 working days from the time of its initiation. If an extension of the time limit becomes necessary, all involved parties will be notified.
4. Failure to return VACWC issued equipment i.e., keys, material, or other items may result in delay in payment of final pay until all VACWC property is returned. If these items are damaged or lost, their value may be deducted from the employee's final pay.

### **1.36 VEHICLE POLICY**

VACWC employees must be mindful that while driving they are representatives of the VACWC. Their conduct in adhering to the rules of safety and courtesy on the road is a reflection on the entire VACWC. Employees are responsible for the care and conservation of VACWC owned or leased vehicles and shall report accidents, breakdowns, and/or malfunctions promptly so that necessary repairs can be made.

EMPLOYEES shall:

1. Follow defensive driving practices that are established for the protection of themselves, their fellow employees, and the citizens of the County and the State of Illinois.
2. Not drive when under the influence of alcohol or drugs as identified by State of Illinois law. Any such use shall be considered a violation of work rules and may be the grounds for disciplinary action up to and including discharge.
3. Not transport alcoholic beverages (whether opened or unopened, narcotics, firearms or other explosive materials unless designed as part of the employee's job responsibilities.
4. Shall notify the Superintendent if their drivers' license is revoked, suspended, or restricted in any way by the issuing state.
5. Be personally responsible for the cost of all traffic citations and parking tickets.
6. Be responsible for enforcing seat belt usage by all occupants at all times.
7. Not park in front of or in parking areas associated with taverns or liquor stores unless on official VACWC business. Restaurants serving liquor are not included in this prohibition.
8. Not use vehicles for vacations, transporting family members, car-pooling, or for personal gain, such as delivering goods or services, or operating private pools where the riders pay the driver.
9. Not affix signs, stickers, antennas, trailer hitches, bike racks, ski racks, etc. to VACWC or leased vehicles. Towing or hauling loads for personal reasons are not permitted.
10. Not jump-start other vehicles except in emergencies, and then only to start another VACWC owned or leased vehicle.
11. Upon leaving the vehicle unattended, remove the keys, close all windows, and lock all doors.
12. Not Park overnight on the street when possible and ensure the vehicle is secured.
13. Not smoke or vape in VACWC owned or leased vehicles.
14. Not operate vehicle outside the County unless on official VACWC business as assigned and approved.
15. Operate VACWC owned or leased vehicle in a manner that ensures maximum fuel savings including compliance with the following fuel saving tips:
  - a. Eliminate unnecessary trips



- b. Plan all travel routes in advance
  - c. Remove excess weight in vehicle
  - d. Operate vehicle at the speed limit
  - e. Avoid unnecessary idling of vehicle
  - f. Develop and maintain proper driving habits, i.e., do not over accelerate, avoid constant braking, and maintain properly inflated tires
  - g. Take vehicles for schedule maintenance
16. Immediately report all accidents, theft, and/or damage to the Superintendent.
17. Contact local law enforcement to report all accidents and/or damage to VACWC vehicles.

### **1.37 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, CERTIFICATION & ONGOING TRAINING (TBD)**

### **1.38 TRAVEL FOR BUSINESS PURPOSES (TBD)**

### **1.39 PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS & MEMBERSHIPS**

Veteran service officers hired to assist veterans with Veterans Benefits Administration claims must become a member of and receive accreditation with the National Association of County Veteran Service Officers. Membership dues and training cost will be paid for by the VACWC. Members of NACVSO must maintain their membership in good standing at all times or forfeit their membership rights and accreditation with the Veterans Administration Office of General Counsel.

### **1.40 TOBACCO FREE AND SMOKE FREE ENVIRONMENT POLICY**

Employees of the VACWC are prohibited from tobacco use (including, but not limited to, smoking) within any Winnebago County facility and/or the VACWC, including any vehicle owned, leased or operated by any government agency. This policy also prohibits tobacco use and/or smoking within 15 feet of any entrances, windows, and/or ventilation intakes to facilities that are owned, leased and/or operated by any government agency. This policy applies to employees, customers, and visitors.

The prohibition on tobacco use includes not only cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos, smoking pipes, or other devices/equipment but also applies to the use of chewing tobacco or other tobacco products that may be consumed by means other than smoking.

The prohibitions subject to this policy also include, but are not limited to, any type of smoking device, including electronic smoking devices, regardless of whether those devices contain tobacco, nicotine, or any other substance (or whether they contain no substance(s) at all). An “electronic smoking device” is an electronic device that can be used to deliver nicotine or other substances to the person inhaling from the device, including, but not limited to, an electronic cigarette, cigar, cigarillo, pipe or other device/equipment. The use of any smoking device, including electronic smoking devices, is prohibited in all places and at all times that the use of tobacco products is prohibited under this policy.

Failure to comply with this policy may lead to disciplinary action.



## 1.41 WEAPONS FREE WORKPLACE POLICY

General Rule Prohibiting Weapons on County/VACWC Property:

- Employees MAY NOT carry any Handguns and/or or Other Dangerous Weapons onto the premises of any County Offices/Buildings.

General Rule Prohibiting Weapons in County/VACWC Vehicles:

- Employees MAY NOT carry any Handguns and/or other Dangerous Weapons in any County-owned/VACWC-owned vehicles.

Staff or security personnel will request any employee or visitor found in possession of a Handgun or Other Dangerous Weapon to remove it from the facility. When deemed appropriate by the County, law enforcement authorities will be notified promptly.



## Section 2. *Compensation Policies and Procedures*

### **2.01 WORK SCHEDULES**

The VACWC typically operates Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM, with a Thirty (30) minute, unpaid break for lunch.

Work schedules are established by the Superintendent based on the needs of the department. At the Superintendent's discretion, work schedules may change from time to time. Any change in work schedules may not be made without the prior approval of Superintendent.

### **2.02 LUNCH AND REST PERIODS**

Under the current eight (8) hour work day, employees are encouraged to take the period for lunch, recreation, exercise, or other tasks away from the office. No business-related activities should be performed during this time.

Employees are responsible for ensuring that they not exceed the time allowed for their lunch break 30 minutes. Abuse or falsification of this use of time will result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

### **2.03 PAYDAYS, PAYROLL PERIODS AND PAY PROCEDURES**

VACWC employees are paid bi-weekly (every other Friday) for the two-week work period which ends at midnight the preceding Sunday. The workweek begins on a Monday and ends on the second Sunday. There is a total of twenty-six (26) pay periods in any given calendar year.

Employees may be paid by check or through direct deposit of funds (preferred) to either a savings or checking account at their bank of choice (providing the bank has direct deposit capability). To activate direct deposit, a direct deposit authorization form may be obtained from the VACWC Executive Assistant or Superintendent. The employee must complete the form and submit to the VACWC Executive Assistant or Superintendent, along with any other documentation required by the VACWC's payroll processor.

Any questions or discrepancies in pay are to be brought to the attention of the VACWC Executive Assistant or Superintendent for resolution.

In the event of a lost paycheck, the VACWC Executive Assistant or Superintendent must be notified in writing as soon as possible before a replacement check can be issued.

### **2.04 PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS**

Automatic payroll deductions will be made for mandatory federal and state income tax purposes, social security tax, and any other item ordered by a court or applicable law. Voluntary deductions





may be made, for elective programs such as retirement, health insurance deductions, contributions supplemental life insurance, etc.

With each paycheck the VACWC employee receives a statement of deductions and earnings which itemizes the various deductions made, as well as appropriate cumulative totals.

It is the employee's responsibility to maintain current payroll deduction information. Employees wishing to add or change their payroll deductions should contact the VACWC Executive Assistant or Superintendent.

## **2.05 RECORDING HOURS**

Accurately recording time worked is the responsibility of every employee. Federal and State laws require the VACWC to keep an accurate record of time worked in order to calculate employee's pay and benefits.

Altering, falsifying, or tampering with time records, or recording time for another employee's time record may result in disciplinary action, up to and including, discharge of employment.

It is the employee's responsibility to sign his/her time records to certify the accuracy of all time recorded. If there is an error in a time record, the change should be made and initialed by both the employee and the Superintendent. The Superintendent will review and then approve the time record before submitting it for processing. The Superintendent may authorize the Executive Assistant to make the appropriate changes. For the purpose of Recording Hours, the VACWC utilizes a desktop software sign in/out program for all employees.

## **2.06 OVERTIME**

Employees may occasionally be asked to work beyond their normally scheduled hours. When this occurs, the VACWC will provide as much advance notice as possible. Overtime is regulated. Overtime requires the approval of the Superintendent.

- Attendance at mandatory VACWC meetings for all full-time personnel shall be paid.
- Attendance at mandatory VACWC meetings for all part-time personnel shall be paid.
- Voluntary attendance at non-mandatory meetings during which a VACWC employee does not perform any work shall be unpaid.
- Examples of mandatory meeting include, but are not limited to, a committee and/or Advisory Committee meeting(s).

The VACWC compensates all employees in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Non-Exempt employees not covered by a collective bargaining agreement are entitled to overtime compensation for hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours in a single work week. Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime pay. Unworked, paid time, such as Paid Holidays and/or PTO, does not count toward overtime calculation.

Overtime pay is calculated at the rate of one and one-half (1-1/2) times the regular hourly rate.



## **2.07 SALARIES AND WAGE RANGES**

It is the policy of the VACWC that salary/wage ranges for each job position exist in writing. Changes to existing ranges or creation of new salary ranges for job positions (as determined by periodic salary reviews) are recommended by the Superintendent.

Salaries/Wages for each job position are commensurate with the nature of the position, taking into consideration the following:

- The diversity and complexity of duties
- The amount of responsibility and judgment exercised
- Placement of position within the organizational chart

Qualifications required:

Total compensation to employees includes salaries, ancillary benefits, fringe benefits and other compensation, and shall also be based on the following:

- Prevailing rates for similar work in other governmental/not-for-profit organizations
- National as well as local salary patterns
- Applicable legal requirements
- Standards established by professional organizations

Each employee's salary/wage is reviewed annually. These reviews take into account the employee's performance, comparisons between similar types of positions, national trends and VACWC's financial position.

## **2.08 RAISES**

It is the policy of the VACWC that a comprehensive salary/wage schedule is developed for each staff classification. All salaries/wages are gross salaries, and are subject to mandatory and voluntary deductions.

- Salary/wage increases are based on merit and performance as indicated in the written annual evaluations performed by the Superintendent not more than 30 days prior to the anniversary date of the employees hiring date. The fulfillment of a certain period of time in a position does not, in itself, justify a salary increase or level.
- Salary/wage ranges for all job classifications may be increased (or decreased) in time of financial difficulty by the VACWC.
- Salary/wage increases are dependent on VACWC's ability to meet its budget. That income from property taxes is not entirely the total source for funding wages. Grants and donations



may be dedicated to this purpose and will affect the organizations' ability to retain staff and provide raises.

- The provisions of this section may apply to part time and temporary employees. Said wages for part-time staff is determined by the VACWC prior to the Superintendent advertising and hiring said individuals.
- Cost of living adjustments may be made at the discretion of the Superintendent and implemented when approved by the VACWC. Such adjustments depend on overall financial status of VACWC and are not automatic nor granted on any regular basis.

## **2.09 PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS**

It is the policy of the VACWC that employees receive a performance evaluation a minimum of once each year which will objectively assess their performance and accomplishments relative to the job description. Evaluations will occur no later than 30 days prior to an employee's anniversary of employment.

Standardized forms will be used to record all formal performance evaluations, and all individuals supervising the employee being evaluated will contribute to the review. These records will be used to help determine salary reviews, advancements, transfers, layoffs and other personnel actions which are based on performance ([see Appendix I](#)).

- All employees must be given the opportunity to review and make copies of performance reviews.
- Employees are encouraged to include written comments on the review, if appropriate.
- Employees who disagree with evaluations are encouraged to discuss areas of disagreement with Superintendent.
- Employees must sign and date their evaluation after all comments have been noted.
- Performance evaluations become a permanent part of the employee's personnel record. This information will be held in strict confidentiality, and may only be released to a third party with the prior written approval of the employee.



## Section 3. *Employee Benefits*

### 3.01 HOLIDAYS

A full-time or part time employee who has completed their first sixty (60) days of employment shall be entitled to paid Holidays based on the following:

The VACWC offers a paid holiday schedule for all full-time employees. Each calendar year, the Superintendent will issue the declared holiday list. In order to ensure the efficient operation of the department, the holiday list shall mirror that of the Winnebago County. The extent that it is practicable, the following shall generally be the declared holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving Day (Thursday)
- Thanksgiving Holiday (Friday)
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

Holidays are granted based on the day they are observed. Holiday pay is based on a workday of six (6) hours for active, full-time employees. Active, part time employees shall receive holiday pay for any regularly scheduled hours that would normally be worked.

In order to be eligible for Holiday pay, the employee must have worked the scheduled workday immediately preceding the holiday and the scheduled workday immediately after the holiday in order to qualify for holiday pay unless on pre-scheduled, pre-approved paid time off (PTO).

When an employee is called in to work from his or her holiday, in addition to the Holiday pay as set forth in this section, the employee shall be paid for all hours worked at their regular rate of pay (unless overtime would otherwise apply).

When a holiday falls during an employee's pre-scheduled, approved PTO, the employee shall have the option of receiving a regular day's pay for the holiday or having an additional day off at the beginning or end of his/her PTO. This election must be made by the employee when he/she schedules his/her PTO.



## **3.02 VACATION TIME**

### **Eligibility**

Vacations are earned for service during the past year of employment (with the eligibility for earned vacation calculated from each employee's last date of hire into full-time employment with the VACWC). Vacation payments may be paid in advance of the time actually used for the vacation if a written request is submitted to the employee's supervisor at least two (2) weeks in advance of the vacation.

### **Accrual of Vacation Credit**

Full time employees shall start to accumulate vacation credit upon commencement of employment. All other employees will accumulate 1 hour for every 40 hours worked following the commencement of employment. Employees shall be entitled to begin using paid leave 90 days following commencement of their employment Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the department head, an employee shall not accrue vacation leave for any pay period during which they are on layoff, nor shall an employee accrue vacation leave while they are on an unpaid leave of absence; an employee on leave must be in a compensated status through Winnebago County's payroll system in order to accrue additional vacation and, therefore, does not accrue vacation during leave periods when they are not compensated through that payroll system (including, but not limited to, during periods when they are receiving IMRF benefits, worker's compensation benefits or other benefits that are not paid through Winnebago County's payroll system).

All vacation shall be taken immediately following the employee's anniversary year in which the vacation accrues. If the employee does not request the carryover of vacation to the following anniversary year and/or if that carry over is not approved by the Department Head, such vacation shall be lost. Only in exceptional circumstances, with prior approval of the Department Head, in writing, may the employee accrue a vacation and postpone it until the next anniversary year.

Vacation days may be accumulated to a maximum amount of double the involved employee's annual amount (including the approved carry over of vacation from the prior anniversary year and/or continued accrual of vacation for the employee's current anniversary year).

### **Use of Vacation for Other Purposes**

To the extent that sick leave may be exhausted, an employee may request and use vacation leave for purposes other than taking a vacation.

### **Request for vacation**

In order to assure the orderly performance and continuity of services provided by the employees in their respective departments, each employee wishing to schedule a vacation should request such vacation leave as far in advance as reasonably possible (minimum of 24 hours).



Vacation requests must be approved in advance by a supervisor/manager. A supervisor/manager has the right to restrict vacation if the dates requested disrupt the department's operations. Vacation time should be taken in a minimum of 2 hour increments except in an emergency situation after approval is obtained from the employee's supervisor. Insufficient advanced notice may result in the vacation request not being approved.

### **Cancellation and rescheduling**

In the case of an emergency as determined by the department head, the department head may cancel and reschedule any or all approved vacation leaves in advance. In the event of any cancellation, the VACWC shall, upon submission of proper written documentation, reimburse the employee for any actual out of pocket expenses incurred by reason of recall from vacation.

### **Holidays during vacation period.**

If a holiday occurs during the period when an employee is on approved vacation leave, such holiday may be considered as a holiday and shall not be counted as part of the employee's vacation.

### **Separation from employment.**

In the year in which an employee quits or is discharged, the employee shall receive a vacation benefit prorated on the number of months actually worked (assuming that the employee has successfully completed the ninety (90) day benefit eligibility period).

### **Payment on death of employee.**

Upon the death of an employee, the VACWC shall pay to the legal representative of the estate an amount equal to the vacation benefit due.

### **Rehired Employees**

Employees who have been rehired into full-time employment shall accrue vacation time as of their rehire date, unless the employee is separated for less than thirty days.

## **3.03 SICK LEAVE**

Full-time employees (40 hrs/week) will earn 8 hours a month of sick leave at the commencement of employment. All other employees will earn 1 hour of Sick leave for every 40 hours worked. Employees shall be entitled to begin using paid leave 90 days following commencement of their employment. Sick leave should be taken in a minimum of 2 hour increments except in an emergency situation after approval is obtained from the employee's supervisor.

Upon retirement, accrued sick days may be converted to pension credit.



Employees shall be allowed to carry over any unused sick pay from year to year of continuous service up to the maximum amount of 1768 hours.

Sick pay is reserved for absences due to incapacitating illness or injury. Sick pay may also be used for scheduled medical and dental appointments; however, employees must attempt to schedule appointments so as not to unduly disrupt the VACWC's operations.

An employee may use up to one-half of the amount of sick pay earned each year for absences due to an illness, injury, or medical appointment of the employee's child, spouse, sibling, parent, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandchild, grandparent, or stepparent, for reasonable periods of time as the employee's attendance may be necessary, on the same terms upon which the employee is able to use sick leave benefits for the employee's own illness or injury.

The rate of pay shall be at the employee's regular straight time hourly rate of pay in effect for the employee's regular job at the time of the incident requiring sick pay.

Sick pay accumulation may be converted to pension service credits in accordance with Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund regulations. Sick pay accumulation shall not be converted into any other form of compensation. Accrued unused sick pay shall be forfeited at the time of discharge of employment or retirement, except as otherwise provided.

Employees shall report illness to their supervisor not later than one (1) hour prior to the employee's scheduled starting time on the day they are ill. Employees in continuous coverage departments shall report illness to their supervisor not later than 1.5 hours prior to the employee's scheduled starting time on the day they are ill. All other employees shall notify their supervisor of illness not later than fifteen (15) minutes prior to their scheduled starting time on the day they are ill. All employees shall call their supervisor and report on their condition every working day they are absent, unless in a particular instance, a supervisor excuses an employee from this requirement.

The Superintendent or Department Head may request, prior to granting sick pay for an absence, evidence which may be in the form of written medical certification for the absence if reasonable grounds exist to suspect abuse or if the absence has exceeded three (3) consecutive work days.

Abuse of sick time may be grounds for discipline, up to and including discharge.

### **3.04 PERSONAL DAYS**

On January 1st of each calendar year, one (1) personal day will be granted to a full-time employee who has completed 6 months or more of full-time employment with the VACWC as of that date. Employees may be granted up to two (2) additional personal days based on sick hour balances on his/her employment anniversary date, in keeping with the following schedule.

- On the full-time hire anniversary date, an employee has a balance of 96 or more sick hours (but of less than 192 sick hours), one (1) personal day will be granted.
- On the full-time hire anniversary date, an employee has a balance of 192 or more sick hours, two (2) personal days will be granted.





There will be no duplication of personal days granted on an employee's full-time hire anniversary date. An employee will not be granted more than two (2) personal days on his/her full-time anniversary date under the above schedule.

### **GUIDELINES**

- These personal days must be used within one year of initial accrual or they are purged from the employee's accruals.
- The employee is responsible to accurately report their time reflecting Personal Days used.
- An employee who separates employment with the VACWC will not receive payment for unused Personal Days.
- Except for emergency situations, - that preclude the making of prior arrangements, personal days need to be scheduled with the consent of the employee's supervisor sufficiently enough in advance as to not adversely impact the operational needs of the VACWC.

### **3.05 EDUCATION ASSISTANCE**

### **3.06 EDUCATIONAL LEAVE**

A leave of absence for a period not to exceed one (1) year may be granted to an employee in order that the employee may attend a recognized college, university, trade or technical school, high or primary school, provided that the course of instruction is reasonably related to his/her employment for the potential benefit of the VACWC. Leave granted under this policy shall be at the discretion of the Superintendent and shall not be paid. An employee granted a leave of absence under this policy shall not continue to accrue benefits or seniority during the period of the leave. Group health insurance benefits shall be continued under the same terms and conditions as existed prior to the beginning of the leave period as noted in the health insurance section below. No other leaves or paid time off may be used in conjunction with this section of the policy. Although the VACWC will endeavor to return an employee taking leave under this policy to the same or a substantially similar position as that held before the leave began, it is not guaranteed. An employee requesting a leave of absence under this policy must submit to the Superintendent a written request including satisfactory evidence that the college, university or other school has accepted him/her as a student and, on the expiration of each semester or other school term, shall submit proof of attendance during such term. Leave granted under this policy may be extended for additional periods of up to one (1) year upon written request of the employee and submission of evidence to the Superintendent of the successful completion of the course(s) of study for which the original leave was granted. If an employee is attending training for the purpose of maintaining licensure or necessary certification for his/her employment with the VACWC, unpaid time off and/or compensation will be provided in accordance with applicable wage and overtime laws and/or applicable collective bargaining agreement.

### **3.07 BEREAVEMENT**

Employees who wish to take time off due to the death of an immediate family member should notify their supervisor immediately. Employees of the VACWC shall be afforded to up to three



(3) consecutive scheduled work days for the purpose of attending the funeral or other related matters involving the death of an immediate family member, as defined in this policy. The VACWC defines “immediate family” as current spouse, current partner of civil union, child, step-child, sibling, parent, step-parent (to include a person who stood in "loco parentis" for the employee when the employee was a child,), current mother or father-in-law, current brother or sister-in-law, current son or daughter-in-law, grandparent or grandchild.

Bereavement pay is calculated based on the base pay rate at the time of the absence for standard scheduled hours for each day of leave taken. This pay will not include any special forms of compensation, such as shift differential or weekend premium. Paid time off, pursuant to this policy, will not be counted as hours worked for purposes of the calculation of overtime.

Bereavement leave will normally be granted unless there are unusual business needs or staffing requirements. Employees may, with their supervisor’s approval, use available paid leave for additional time off as necessary.

In the event of death of a relative other than the employee's immediate family as defined above, an employee may utilize accrued leave, or in the absence of any other eligible accrued leave, an employee may utilize two (2) days leave without pay, unless such absence would unduly interfere with the administrative, personnel or operational needs of the VACWC.

If the Superintendent or Supervisor has reason to suspect abuse, the Superintendent may require satisfactory evidence of the need for such absence. Abuse of this benefit may result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

### **3.08 JURY DUTY & SUMMONSES**

The VACWC will not aid or assist any employee in avoiding jury duty. If the administrative, personnel or operational needs of the VACWC so require, it may assist an employee who receives a summons for jury duty in delaying service.

Fulltime employees who are called to jury duty will be compensated at their regular hourly rate for their standard scheduled hours for each day of service. Any compensation received from the court for jury service shall be surrendered to the Human Resources Department or its designees. Payment under this policy shall not exceed four weeks (160 hours). If required to serve longer than four (4) consecutive weeks, jury duty leave shall be unpaid and employees may keep compensation received from the court. Upon reaching unpaid time off under this section, all accrued benefits shall stop accruing and payment under this policy may not be used in conjunction with any other paid time off or leave. Employees who are summoned for deposition or other testimony in their capacity as employees or agents of the VACWC must make their Department Heads aware of the receipt of any such summons or subpoena as soon as it is received or reasonably possible.

Time incurred in responding to summonses and subpoenas shall constitute hours worked for purpose of the calculation of overtime and shall be paid at the employee’s regular hourly rate.

Employees who are required to appear in court or give deposition for personal or non-work-related reasons may use a personal day, vacation day or request an unpaid absence. Granting time off to



respond to a summons or subpoena will be at the discretion of the employee's Department Head. Employees required to personally appear as a defendant in a criminal matter shall be subject to discipline as provided for elsewhere in VACWC policies.

### **3.09 FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT**

Employees who are eligible may be granted up to twelve (12) weeks of Family and Medical Leave during any 12-month period, in accordance with the Family Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) and up to twenty-six (26) weeks of leave in any 12-month period in compliance with the expansion for Injured Service member Act of 2007. This leave shall be unpaid and the VACWC will require any employee taking leave under this policy to use all accrued and unused vacation, sick time, and personal time in conjunction with the FMLA qualified unpaid leave. This includes employees absent from work due to a work-related injury or illness within the meaning of the Illinois Workers' Compensation Act.

#### **Eligibility**

Generally, employees of the VACWC who have been employed for at least twelve (12) months (which may include part time and temporary service and may not have to be consecutive employment); and have worked at least 1,250 hours (which does not include paid time off, i.e., vacation, sick pay, etc.) in the twelve (12) month period preceding the request.

#### **Qualifying Events**

Eligible employees may request FMLA leave for one or more of the following reasons:

- a. The birth or adoption of a child of or by the employee;
- b. To care for a spouse, child, or parent of the employee with a serious health condition;
- c. A serious health condition of the employee (including work related injuries/illnesses); or
- d. Under the Injured Service Member Act, to care for an injured or ill service member. This law allows an eligible employee to take up to 26 weeks during a single 12-month period to care for a spouse, child, parent or next-of-kin who is injured or recovering from an injury suffered while on active military duty and who is unable to perform his or her military duties.

#### **Duration of FMLA Leave**

An eligible employee can take up to twelve (12) weeks (or up to twenty-six (26) weeks of leave to care for an injured or ill service member) under this policy during any 12-month period. The VACWC will measure the 12-month period as a rolling 12-month period measured backward from the date an employee first uses any leave under this policy. Each time an employee takes leave, the VACWC will compute the amount of leave the employee has taken under this policy in the last 12 months and subtract it from the 12 weeks (or up to 26 weeks of leave to care for an injured or ill service member) of available leave, with the balance remaining being the amount the



employee is entitled to take at that time. The twelve (12) weeks granted under this policy does not expand nor is it in addition to leave provided under the state Victims Economic Security and Safety Act.

If spouses are both employees of the County, and both want to take leave for the same event, such as the birth of a child, or due to the serious health condition of one, they will only be allowed a total combined 12 weeks, to be divided between them as requested. In the case of the spouses requesting time to care for the same service member under Injured Service Members Act, the combined leave total will be limited to 26 weeks.

Leave does not have to be taken concurrently and in some cases will be allowed “intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule.” For example, an employee may be allowed to be absent 4 hours, twice a week, in order to undergo dialysis. In no case will FMLA qualified leave exceed 12 work weeks (or 26 weeks of leave to care for an injured or ill service member) over a 12-month rolling leave period.

### **Limitations on FMLA Leave**

This policy is intended to provide information to employees and is not intended to be comprehensive. Every situation will be addressed based on the needs of the employee as well as the operational, administrative and personnel needs of the VACWC. The Family Medical Leave Act and the regulations of the U.S. Department of Labor may be consulted to address questions and situations not covered by this policy. Intermittent and reduced schedule leave will be scheduled with minimal disruption to an employee’s job. In exercising rights under this policy, employees are expected to cooperate by, for example, scheduling appointments during scheduled time off or outside of working hours.

### **Utilizing FMLA Leave**

It is each employee’s responsibility to give the VACWC notice of the need for leave. In cases where the need for leave is foreseeable, such as “bonding leave” requested for the birth or adoption of a child, employees will be expected to provide notice at least thirty (30) days in advance. In every case, notice of the need for FMLA qualified leave should be provided as soon as is possible.

In a case where an employee fails to provide 30 days notice of the need for leave in a foreseeable situation and no reasonable explanation can be provided for the failure or delay to provide notice, the VACWC may require delay of the beginning of leave for up to 30 days from the date notice is given in order to meet the operational and administrative needs of the VACWC.

In a situation where an employee is absent and the VACWC believes the reason for the absence may be due to an FMLA qualified event, the VACWC will designate the leave as qualified and provide the employee with a written designation and verification form. The employee is responsible for completion and return of the verification form within 15 days of receipt. If the reason for leave involves treatment by a health care provider, that provider must complete the verification form or provide written verification of the health condition being treated, the reasons for leave, restrictions, limitations and/or accommodation requested, and expected return date. The



failure to return the fully completed verification form may result in the leave not being qualified as FMLA protected in which case the leave will be treated as an absence under other applicable absenteeism and/or attendance policies. The submission of false or fraudulent information under this policy may result in discipline up to and including discharge. Any information provided to the Human Resources Department or its designees under this policy under will be maintained confidentially and in accordance with ADA and HIPAA guidelines.

An employee who fails to return to work and does not contact the Human Resources Department or Department Designee at the expiration of an FMLA qualified leave will be assumed to have voluntarily abandoned his or her position with the County. Upon return from an FMLA qualified leave of absence, the employee will be returned to the same position held prior to the leave or to an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, seniority. Employees returning from an FMLA qualified leave taken due to a serious health condition will be required to provide verification from a health care provider of fitness for work, restrictions and/or accommodations needed. The VACWC may, at its expense, require a returning employee to undergo an independent medical examination in order to determine fitness for work, restrictions and/or accommodations needed. An employee must be otherwise entitled to reinstatement in order to be returned to employment at the end of an FMLA qualified leave.

### **3.10 DISCRETIONARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

*(For situations that do not qualify under FMLA)*

Employees who are not eligible for FMLA qualified leave or have exhausted FMLA qualified leave, who are not absent due to a work-related injury or illness, and are unable to report/return to work may make a written request to the Superintendent or its designees for a discretionary leave of absence. The employee making the request should outline the reason for and expected duration of the leave. The Superintendent shall have the right of final approval of a request under this policy. The Superintendent may request documentation and/or verification of the reason for any request under this leave. The failure to provide verifiable documentation or verification under this policy may result in the leave being treated as an absence under other applicable absenteeism and/or attendance policies. The submission of false or fraudulent information under this policy may result in discipline up to and including discharge. Information provided to Superintendent or its designees under this policy shall be maintained confidentially and in accordance with ADA and HIPAA guidelines.

Unpaid discretionary leaves of absence will not be granted unless/until all accrued and unused paid time off (except that sick pay will be used only if leave is for applicable reason under sick pay policy) is used and exhausted. During a period of unpaid leave under this policy no benefits will accrue. Group health plan benefits will be continued on the same terms and conditions as existed at the beginning of the leave period as noted in the health insurance section below.

Leave granted under this policy will be entirely at the discretion of the Superintendent except that request may not be arbitrarily or capriciously denied. In considering requests under this policy, the Superintendent will consider such factors as the requesting employee's tenure and work record, the nature of the position held as well as the administrative, personnel and operational needs of the VACWC. No leave granted under this policy will be greater than twelve (12) weeks in duration.



An employee who has been off of work in excess of (12) twelve months may be discharged. Prior to the expiration of a leave granted under this policy, it is the employee's responsibility to request an extension if an extension is desired. An employee returning to work from a discretionary leave taken for medical or health reasons must provide a written verification from a health care provider of his or her fitness for work, restrictions and/or accommodations needed. In such a case, the VACWC may, at its expense, require a returning employee to undergo a medical examination to determine fitness for work, restrictions and/or accommodations needed.

Although it will endeavor to return an employee to the position held at the time leave commenced under this policy, the Superintendent does not and cannot guarantee that an employee granted leave pursuant to this policy will be returned to the same position or a substantially similar position. If an employee is returned to a different position than that held when the leave commenced it will be at the level of pay, benefits and seniority incumbent with the position offered.

### **3.11 SCHOOL VISITATION**

Employees are expected to use vacation or personal days in order to attend parent/teacher conferences or other school related functions for their own children. If, however, an employee has expended all paid time off or is otherwise ineligible, the VACWC will grant him/her up to four (4) hours of unpaid time off per year for attendance at school functions.

### **3.12 MILITARY LEAVE**

Employees who are called to active duty in any component, regular, reserve or National Guard, of the U.S. Armed Services (the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps and Navy) will be granted an unpaid leave of absence not to exceed five (5) years for that period of active duty. An employee returning to employment following a period of active duty shall be treated by the VACWC as though he/she had been continuously employed in terms of seniority, pay, benefits, promotions, etc. Employees are expected, to the extent possible, to provide the VACWC with a copy of orders or other notice of a period of active duty. Additionally, employees must notify the Superintendent or its designee, of their intent to return to work within 90 days of the end of a period of active duty or will be considered to have voluntarily resigned their positions.

Pursuant to the terms of the Illinois Military Leave of Absence Act and as public employees, employees shall continue to receive their compensation during leaves for annual training. In the event of a leave for specialized or advance training or basic training of up to sixty (60) days, employees will be paid the difference between their military pay and their pay as public employees if the military pay is less than regular pay, based on a scheduled work week without overtime. After sixty (60) days, the differential pay shall cease and further leave shall be unpaid. Employees activated for service shall continue to be paid the difference between their military pay and their pay as public employees if the military pay is less than regular pay, without overtime. (See 5 ILCS 325/0.01 et seq.).

### **3.13 VICTIMS' ECONOMIC SECURITY AND SAFETY ACT OF 2003**





Employees of the VACWC who are victims of domestic abuse or who have children that are victims of domestic abuse may request unpaid time off in order to attend to matters such as obtaining domestic orders of protection or recovery from injuries received as the result of domestic abuse. Additionally, the VACWC will act to reasonably accommodate employees under this policy where requested. Leave granted under this policy shall not exceed twelve (12) weeks in any year based on a rolling leave period which begins with the first day of leave. The twelve (12) weeks granted under this policy does not expand nor is it in addition to leave provided under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act. Employees taking leave under this policy will be required to use accrued and unpaid time off such as sick pay, personal days and vacation concurrently with leave granted under this policy.

### **3.14 ABSENCE WITHOUT LEAVE**

If an employee is absent without notice for three (3) consecutive workdays, they will be considered to have voluntarily resigned their position. Where the employee's absence is determined excusable because prior approval was not possible, the absence may be considered PTO, approved time off without pay or, in the case of illness, FMLA leave.





## Section 4. *Safety in the Workplace*

VACWC employees are expected to help maintain a safe, comfortable workplace. As an organization, the VACWC can provide plans and guidelines, but must rely on employees to alert the VACWC when a potentially unsafe situation exists.

Safety has many elements in the workplace. Some of these elements can vary from being cautious of frayed electrical cords to responding appropriately when someone threatens to do physical harm to a coworker. Please read the following section carefully, and make sure any questions you may have are answered.

All employees are required to comply with the VACWC safety standards. Current employees who pose a direct threat to the health and/or safety of themselves or other individuals in the workplace will be placed on appropriate leave until an organizational decision has been made in regard to the employee's immediate employment situation.

### **4.01 SECURITY**

Security is everyone's responsibility. Report any suspicious people in or around our facilities to your supervisor. The VACWC has taken precautions to ensure employee safety; however, the VACWC assumes no responsibility for personal articles that may be stolen or lost and encourages you not to bring personal items of value to the workplace. Be sure to take precautions with your personal property (i.e., do not leave purses in plain sight or wallets in coat jackets hanging on doors). Let your supervisor know immediately of any incidence of theft.

### **4.02 VISITORS**

From time to time, client(s) and others visit the VACWC facility. Visitors should be announced and referred to the person(s) they are calling upon and they should be accompanied by VACWC personnel while in the VACWC facility.

You may only bring in guests (if not business related) with the approval of your supervisor. Any personal visitors will be asked to contact you at lunch or at the end of your workday and should remain in the reception area or outside the building.

### **4.03 WORKPLACE VIOLENCE**

It is the philosophy of the VACWC to expressly prohibit any acts or threats of violence against an employee on or about VACWC facilities.

Workplace violence is an act, statement (verbal or written), expression, or behavior that indicates a direct or indirect threat of physical harm.



## **Workplace Violence Assessment Team**

Acting under the direction of the VACWC commission, the VACWC Superintendent, in cooperation with the Winnebago County Sheriff's Department and City of Rockford Police Department will investigate any reported acts of workplace violence.

## **Prohibited Conduct**

In keeping with the spirit and intent of this policy and to ensure that the VACWC's objectives in this regard are attained, the VACWC will not tolerate any type of workplace violence committed by or against employees. Employees are prohibited from making threats or engaging in violent activities.

This list of behaviors, while not all inclusive, provides examples of conduct that are prohibited:

- Causing physical injury to another person
- Making threatening remarks or statements (verbal or written)
- Aggressive or hostile behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury to another person or subjects another individual to emotional distress
- Intentionally damaging VACWC property or the property of another employee
- Possession of a weapon while on VACWC property or on VACWC business
- Committing acts related to prohibited harassment or domestic violence

## **Employee Responsibility**

While we do not expect employees to be skilled at identifying potentially dangerous persons, employees are expected to exercise good judgment and to inform the Superintendent if any employee exhibits behavior that could be a sign of a potentially dangerous situation. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Discussing weapons or bringing them to the workplace
- Displaying overt signs of extreme stress, resentment, hostility, or anger
- Making threatening remarks
- Sudden or significant deterioration of performance
- Displaying irrational or inappropriate behavior

In addition, employees have a "duty to warn" the Superintendent of any suspicious workplace activity, situations or incidents that they observe or of which they are otherwise aware that involve other employees, former employees, customers, or visitors.



## **Reporting Procedures (See Appendix D for Incident Reporting Document)**

Any potentially dangerous situations must be reported immediately to the Superintendent. Reports may be made anonymously and all reported incidents will be investigated by the Assessment Team. Reports or incidents warranting confidentiality will be handled appropriately and information will be disclosed to others only on a need-to-know basis. All parties involved in a situation will be counseled and the results of investigations will be discussed with them.

If there is an immediate threat of physical harm to any person covered by this policy, the police shall also be notified. (CALL 911)

### **Enforcement**

Threats, threatening conduct, of any other acts of aggression or violence in the workplace will not be tolerated. Any employee determined to have committed such acts will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge. Non-employees engaged in violent acts in VACWC facilities or parks will be reported to the proper authorities and fully prosecuted.

#### **4.04 REPORTING IMPROPER OR UNSAFE ACTIVITY**

Employees are expected to act and conduct themselves at all times in the best interests of the VACWC. If an employee reasonably suspects or knows that another employee is engaged in or has engaged in unlawful conduct while on duty, they must report such misconduct, together with any supporting information to the Superintendent.

Employees who report or disclose information in good faith will not be threatened, harassed, disciplined, demoted, or discharged in reprisal for having done so.

This policy will not, however, protect an employee who is determined to have made allegations or disclosed information in bad faith; with an intent merely to embarrass another; or without a reasonable basis for believing that the conduct described, in fact has occurred, or is about to occur.

An Incident Report shall be completed and forwarded to the Superintendent.

#### **4.05 THE RIGHT TO INSPECT**

The VACWC reserves the right to search all VACWC property, including all employee desks, files, workstations, and lockers. We also reserve the right to make reasonable searches of employee property brought into the workplace if a VACWC official has a reasonable, legitimate business-related suspicion of improper conduct, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Theft or the removal of VACWC or veteran property or proprietary information
- Workplace substance abuse
- Workplace violence



- Violation of VACWC policies and rules

These inspections may be conducted during or outside of business hours, in the presence or absence of the employee, and with or without notice. Only VACWC-authorized locks may be placed on any VACWC property. Unauthorized locks may be removed by the VACWC.

All employees are expected to cooperate with any VACWC investigation. Refusing to cooperate, providing false information, or omitting information may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. Additionally, if a search produces material(s) in violation of this or any other VACWC policy, the VACWC may take disciplinary action against the employee deemed to be in possession of the material, up to and including discharge. In addition, any illegal acts committed by employees may be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency.



## Section 5. *Separation of Employment*

Employment with the VACWC is on an at-will basis. This means that both employees and the VACWC have the right to discharge employment at any time with or without cause or notice.

### 5.01 **EMPLOYEE INITIATED RESIGNATION**

As an at-will employee, resignation from the employee's position with the VACWC may occur at any time, with or without notice or cause. However, the VACWC requests that an employee give the Superintendent sufficient notice of their intention to resign to allow the VACWC to minimize departmental hardship and to make proper provisions for the filling of the position. The VACWC requests that the employee give written notice to the Superintendent at least ten (10) working days prior to the last workday. Vacation days or personal days may not be included in the 10-day notice period. An employee may leave anytime during the ten (10) days with the supervisor's consent and remain in good standing. If the employee fails to resign in good standing, they may not be eligible for rehire unless they demonstrate good cause for leaving early.

An employee who fails to return to the available position on the first day after a leave of absence has expired, will be considered to have voluntarily resigned.

### 5.02 **RETIREMENT**

Employees may retire for the purpose of collecting retirement or Social Security. Please contact the Executive Assistant or Superintendent so that preparation for retirement can be completed in a timely manner.

### 5.03 **WORKFORCE REDUCTION**

While the VACWC strives to provide a secure environment in which to work, under certain circumstances, it may become necessary to reduce or eliminate positions. This may include separation, involuntary demotion, reassignment or reduction in hours.

#### **Layoffs**

It is the intent of the VACWC to minimize the negative impact on current employees if a reduction in the work force becomes necessary. However, from time to time, cutbacks or reductions may be unavoidable due to forces beyond VACWC control. In some cases, a program may have to be reduced in size or discharged entirely if funds for its operation are no longer available.

If this type of cutback must occur, the VACWC Personal Committee and the Superintendent will reduce staff progressively, using the following steps:

1. Voluntary reductions in the work force. This includes employees who take early retirement, leaves of absence, or reduction in hours



2. An attempt will be made to transfer employees from discharged positions to other vacant positions within VACWC if the employee can meet the qualifications of the position and has satisfactory performance evaluations
3. In determining which regular employees are laid off, the Superintendent may implement a seniority system giving consideration to factors such as, but not limited to the following:
  - a. Special training
  - b. Performance evaluations
  - c. Job specialty and responsibilities

The Superintendent will provide notice to employees affected and inform them of the beginning day of layoff. Within 30 days of the layoff date, the employee will be paid for unused accrued PTO.

#### **5.04 INVOLUNTARY DISMISSAL**

An involuntary dismissal is a discharge of employment initiated by the VACWC. An employee may be dismissed for any lawful reason at any time.

#### **5.05 RETURN OF VACWC PROPERTY**

Before officially separating from the VACWC's employment for any reason, the employee must return all VACWC property including, keys, uniforms, cell phones, tools, equipment, and credit cards.

#### **5.06 EXIT INTERVIEW**

If possible, the Superintendent will conduct an exit interview when separating from the VACWC. At this meeting, the employee is required to return all VACWC property not previously returned. Additionally, the employee will receive information regarding any particulars and continuation and other related matters.



## 5.07 FINAL PAY

An employee shall receive pay for work performed through his/her separation date reduced by any prior, authorized deductions. Any other payments they have earned in accordance with these policies and applicable employment laws will be paid with the next available, regular pay date following the separation date. Separation date for all employees is the last day of actual work or approved leave.

Any unused, accrued PTO time will be paid to the employee (or the employee's heirs) at the employee's rate of pay as of the separation date. These hours will be paid with the next available, regularly scheduled pay date following the separation date.

Final pay received by an employee will not be construed to extend his or her employment with VACWC beyond the separation date.

## 5.08 EMPLOYMENT REFERENCES

Information provided by the VACWC in response to requests for employment references is generally limited to the employee's start date, end date, job title, and job description.

It is the policy of the VACWC that all requests for information about a current, retired or discharged employee must be transferred to the Superintendent, who may disclose prospective employers only the former employee's dates of employment, final title or position, job location and eligibility for rehire. With the employee or former employee's permission, the Superintendent may give an employment and salary/wage history.

- Information requested by a law enforcement agency will be provided if it is believed that an applicant, employee or former employee has been engaged in illegal activities.
- If actions of the individual threaten physical injury to VACWC property, other employees, or persons served, or to protect the legal interest of VACWC, any release of information will be made only if approved by The Commission.







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## ***VACWC Personnel Policies Manual Appendix***



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**Personnel Policies Manual Acknowledgment**

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the Veterans Assistance Commission of Winnebago County Personnel Policies Manual. I agree and represent that I have read this manual in its entirety and agree that if there is any policy or provision that I do not understand, I will seek clarification from my supervisor or the Superintendent.

I understand that this Manual is only a reference guide and is not intended to create nor does create an employment contract, either express or implied, on the part of the VACWC. I understand that the policies, benefits, and rules contained in this manual can be changed or discontinued at any time, with or without advance notice. I understand that my employment with the VACWC is at-will unless provided otherwise by a written agreement signed by an authorized member of management (including a collective bargaining agreement).

In the event of a conflict between any term of this Manual and the provisions of a collective bargaining agreement or plan document, the collective bargaining agreement or plan document would govern in all cases.

I understand and will comply with all policies within this Manual and acknowledge that violating any policy within this Manual or any other VACWC policy, rule, or guideline will subject me to disciplinary action, up to and including, discharge.

Employee Name \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Witness title \_\_\_\_\_



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## ***Appendix A Internet, Email, Computer Use, Cellular Phone, and Technology Acknowledgement***

I hereby acknowledge that I have received and read the VACWC's technology policies in the Personnel Policies Manual. I understand that my use of the VACWC email, internet, computer, and cellular phone systems constitutes my consent to all the terms and conditions of the policies. I understand that all information transmitted by, received or stored in any of the above-mentioned systems are the property of the VACWC and should only to be used for business purposes during my working time.

I further acknowledge that I have no expectation of privacy in the connection with the use of these electronic systems or with the transmission, receipt, or storage of information in these systems.

Employee Name \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Witness title \_\_\_\_\_



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## **Appendix B      Consent to Drug & Alcohol Screening**

I hereby voluntarily consent to submit to drug and/or alcohol screening or testing by a physician, clinic, laboratory, or medical facility chosen by the VACWC at the VACWC's expense. I hereby consent to the physician, clinic, laboratory, or medical facility taking and analyzing a sample or specimen of my breath, urine, saliva, blood, and other similar substance. I also authorize the physician, clinic, laboratory, or medical facility to disclose his, her or its findings, conclusions and opinions regarding the drug and/or alcohol screening or testing to a VACWC official or a designated representative.

I hereby further consent to the VACWC contacting my physician or pharmacist to verify my reported use of legal drugs in accordance with the VACWC's Drug & Alcohol Policy and authorize my physician or pharmacist to provide all information requested by the VACWC regarding my use of such drugs, including without limitation the possible effects of such use on my performance of job functions.

I also acknowledge receiving, reading, and understanding the VACWC's Drug & Alcohol policy. I understand that, in accordance with this policy, failure to execute this document and submit to drug and/or alcohol screening or testing, or failure to report to the VACWC the use of legal drugs as required by this policy, may result in disciplinary action, up to and including, discharge.

Employee Name \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Witness title \_\_\_\_\_





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**Appendix D Request for Leave of Absence without Pay**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title/Position \_\_\_\_\_

Department \_\_\_\_\_

Period for which the leave is requested (provide actual service dates):

From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of leave (be specific):

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Please describe how we can contact you during your absence.

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*(Continued)*



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***Appendix E (Cont'd) Request for Leave of Absence without Pay***

I understand that all positions in the VACWC are subject to elimination. Absolute assurance of reinstatement cannot be given by the VACWC. I understand further that once granted this leave, I am not entitled to accrual of the benefits for the duration of the leave and that continuation of any group health or life insurance plans will be at my expense. I also understand that my anniversary date may be extended at the discretion of the Superintendent by the same length of time I am on a leave of absence without pay.

Employee Name \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Witness title \_\_\_\_\_





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**Appendix E Sworn Statement for Taking Leave under VESSA**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ swear that I am taking leave under the Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act and that either I am a victim of domestic or sexual violence or have a family or household member who is a victim of domestic or sexual violence.

Employee Name \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Witness title \_\_\_\_\_



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## Appendix F Illinois School Visitation

### IL DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Fair Labor Standards Division  
Compliance Processing Section  
160 North LaSalle, Suite C-1300  
Chicago, IL 60601-3150  
Tel # (312) 793-2804  
Fax #: (312) 814-1210



### School Visitation Form

For Office Use Only

Please print or type all information.

Illinois School Visitation Rights Act (820 ILCS 147/30)		
This form is suggested to document and verify leave taken under the above Act. This leave is for an employee to "attend necessary educational or behavioral" conferences at the school attended by his or her child. <sup>1</sup>		
Employer Information		
Name of Employer:		
Employee Information		
Name of Employee:		
School Information		
Date of School Conference:		
Exact Time Conference Began:		
Exact Time Conference Ended:		
Name of School:		
School Address:		
City:	State:	Zip Code:
School Administrator's Name:		
School Telephone Number:	( )	
School Administrator Signature:		

<sup>1</sup> Under the Act, "child" includes biological, adopted, foster, stepchild of the employee and/or a legal ward of the employee.



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**Appendix G Appointment Particulars**

**JOB TITLE**

**APPOINTMENT PARTICULARS**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Employee:** \_\_\_\_\_

The following particulars were offered and accepted by \_\_\_\_\_ at the time of appointment to the position of \_\_\_\_\_ (Exempt or Non-Exempt At-Will)  
(Circle designation)

1. Basic salary: \$\_\_\_\_\_/hour/year
2. Retirement fund: IMRF
3. Paid time off: See Handbook Policy

\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee



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**Appendix H**  
TBD

**Evaluation Worksheet**

**Appendix I Hiring Guidelines & Rating Sheet**  
TBD



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## Appendix J Incident reporting Form

Use this form to report any workplace accident, injury, incident, close call or illness.  
Return completed form to the Operations Supervisor, or Management.

This is documenting an:

Lost Time/Injury  First Aid  Incident  Close Call  Observation

**Details of person injured or involved** (to be filled in by person injured / involved if possible)

Person Completing Report: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Person(s) Involved: \_\_\_\_\_

Equipment or Vehicle ID: \_\_\_\_\_

### Event Details

Date of Event: \_\_\_\_\_ Location of Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of Event: \_\_\_\_\_ Witnesses: \_\_\_\_\_

**Description of Events** (Describe tasks being performed and sequence of events):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\*If more space is required please use the back of this sheet

**Was event / injury caused by an unsafe act (activity or movement) or an unsafe condition (machinery or weather)?** Please explain:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

TO BE COMPLETED ONLY IF LOST TIME/INJURY OR FIRST AID WAS REQUIRED	
Type of injury sustained:	
Cause of lost time/ injury or first aid:	
Was medical treatment necessary?	Yes _____ No _____ If yes, name of hospital or physician:

Signature of Employee: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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## ***Appendix K      Debit Card and Purchasing Policy***

This policy applies to all employees of the VACWC who are eligible to make purchases on behalf of the VACWC and/or are assigned a VACWC Debit Card. Employees with purchasing authority and cardholders are responsible for ensuring that they adhere to this policy, thereby ensuring adequate controls are exercised to minimize the risk that VACWC funds and debit cards are used for fraudulent and unauthorized purposes.

### **Issuance**

VACWC bank funds and debit cards are the property of the VACWC. Debit cards are issued to authorized VACWC staff in the name of the VACWC. All cardholders will sign a document acknowledging receipt of a debit card. The document will include the date of issuance, name of card issued, credit limit, and a copy of this policy. The employee will retain a copy of this documentation and the original forms will be placed in the employee's personnel file.

Bank and debit card statements shall be addressed jointly to the VACWC and the individual assigned the Debit Card. Copies of expenses receipts will be required for reconciliation purposes as described below.

### **Record of Cardholders**

The Superintendent will be responsible for keeping a current list of all cardholders, card numbers, card limits, statements, and expense history.

### **Required Documentation**

Employees must submit the original receipt to the Superintendent within the same month the expense is incurred in order for the monthly statements to be reconciled. When submitting receipts, information should be included that describes the purpose for the purchase and the account number to which the expense is to be charged. If the original receipt is misplaced, the cardholder must attach a memo containing the above information.

### **Disputed Charges**

In the event there are disputed charges, the Superintendent will work with staff to investigate the charges.

### **Unauthorized Charges**



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The VACWC debit card is to be used only for official VACWC business. Charging personal transactions to the VACWC bank funds or a VACWC debit card is not acceptable under any circumstances. Transactions will be scrutinized and audited to ensure compliance with this policy.

Infractions of the conditions of this Policy could result in cancellation of the card and withdrawal of purchasing and debit card privileges. Breach of this policy can lead to disciplinary action against the employee up to and including discharge. In all cases of misuse, the VACWC reserves the right to recover any reimbursement owed the VACWC.

### **Return of Goods/Services Purchased**

In the event there are merchandise returns, the subsequent statement(s) must be reviewed for confirmation of credit and the credit slip attached to the statement when auditing the statements. If a credit slip is not obtained, attach other documentation explaining the return. If a credit does not appear by the second subsequent statement, the Superintendent will follow up with the appropriate company.

### **Lost or Stolen Cards**

It is the direct responsibility of each cardholder to report lost or stolen debit cards immediately to the Superintendent.

### **Responsibilities of Debit Card Holders**

All purchases with the VACWC Debit Card should be made according to the following guidelines:

- Debit Cards may only be used for VACWC business. No personal use of the card will be allowed.
- A purchase should not be made with a debit card unless it is the most efficient and cost effective purchasing method.
- Debit cards may not be used to obtain cash advances.
- Debit cards should not be used to replace proper expenditure planning.
- VACWC is tax exempt. Please insure that cash purchases as well as debit card purchases do not include sales tax. It is important to obtain the VACWC's tax exempt identification number/certificate prior to making any purchases with or without a Debit Card.
- Limits will be set for purchasing requirements. Please review all current purchasing limits prior to using VACWC bank funds or the VACWC debit card.





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- Prior to departure or discharge of duties with the VACWC, the Cardholder must reconcile all expenditures made since the last statement. It is the responsibility of the departing employee to ensure that the accounting is settled prior to departure.
- Any Debit Card issued to an employee must be surrendered before or upon discharge of employment.

Employee Name \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Witness title \_\_\_\_\_



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## ***Appendix L      Confidentiality Statement***

I hereby acknowledge that I have received and read the VACWC Confidentiality Policy (section 4.0) in the Personnel Policies & Procedures Manual. I understand that in the course of my duties will have access to the private and personal records and information of the people (clients) I serve. As such, I will keep those records and information private and confidential. Any authorized disclosure will be made in accordance with the policies outlined in the confidentiality policy section noted above.

Employee Name \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Name/Title \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_





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## ***Appendix N      Disciplinary Action Letter***

1. Type action: Oral Warning/Written Warning/Suspension/Involuntary Separation/Other
2. Statement of facts causing action taken
3. Include references to Policy Sections
4. Specific action taken
5. Corrective action required with timelines

Attachments for Record (as needed)

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

Accept\_\_\_\_\_

Decline\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

Witness Name/Title\_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Optional Employee Response (must be on this form or attached)

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

Attachments for Record (as needed) Dated\_\_\_\_\_



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## ***Appendix O      Appeal of Employment Action***

1. Type action: Appeal or Grievance
  
2. Reference reason for letter; e.g.:
  - A. Prior actions taken giving rise to letter request.
  - B. Other
  
3. Problem resolution efforts taken prior to submitting letter.
  
4. Statement of facts by employee and desired outcome/remedy.

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Attachments for Record (as needed)