

DATE: June 25, 2024
TO: SWWRPC Commission
FROM: Troy Maggied, SWWRPC Executive Director
SUBJECT: Proposed updates to the SWWRPC Personnel and Policy Manual

Dear Commissioners,

Continuing our review of the Personnel and Policy Manual begun at our April Executive Meeting, this memo summarizes one policy change and a clerical change for June discussion and possible action. All the updates proposed below fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Improved competitiveness for worker attraction and retention;
- Updates required to meet changing statutes or laws;
- Clerical or administrative updates; or
- Updates recommended due to changing technologies or business practices.

All recommended benefit changes below will help us implement the SWWRPC 2022-2025 Strategic Plan Action to “Maintain competitive market-rate compensation and benefits packages, and evaluate compensation packages every two years at a minimum.”

Recommended Action: The recommended policy change is reflected in (Section 19.c, page 13) of the Draft Personnel Manual. The language is as follows:

“Effective January 1, 2024, a qualified employee, an employee who has worked for SWWRPC for at least a year and has worked 1,250 hours within that year, may take up to 22 days of paid leave for the birth or placement of a child for adoption or foster care, including bonding time; for their own serious health condition; to care for a family member (spouse, parent, child under 18 or older with mental or physical disability) who has a serious health condition; or to care for a family member as a result of a qualifying exigency or serious injury or illness related to military duty. Employees should contact the Executive Director regarding leave. Paid Family Leave must be used within 12-months of a qualifying event. Leave not used during that time will be forfeit. Unused Paid Family Leave is not eligible to be paid out upon termination of an employee.

Paid Family Leave differs from paid Vacation or Sick leave by recognizing the value SWWRPC places on the lives of its employees, and the impact this has on productive work time, and by recognizing that there can be significant time commitments leading up to a qualifying event that can reduce an employee’s paid leave once the qualifying event occurs. It also recognizes the limitations placed on an employee’s ability to work following the birth, adoption, or fostering of an infant due to a typical two-month minimum age restriction of child care facilities. Paid Family Leave also differs from FMLA leave, which is designed to protect an employee and their position during periods of extended leave. Paid Family Leave may be used in conjunction with Vacation, Sick, or FMLA Leave.

Employees on Paid Family Leave continue to accrue benefits and seniority rights and are entitled to their former or comparable positions on return from leave.”

- Policy implications: This policy will make SWWRPC a leader in benefits, allowing us to broaden the means of competing for workforce. It also recognizes the great role SWWRPC plays in bringing new residents and families to the region, and allowing them to serve southwestern Wisconsin despite lacking the extended family networks and social supports of those who are from here, remain here, or return here. It also allows us to attract those seeking an “Encore Career” after retirement since it enables employees to care for aging family members. This is an important policy if we are to attract new residents and workers to southwestern Wisconsin.

Discussion for future consideration:

- Should SWWRPC offer time off for staff to work at local elections, if approved in advance by the Executive Director and with confirmation of volunteer time a requirement of leave. This is not a core function of SWWRPC, however election volunteering is a critical need for small rural communities and just one of the many challenges stemming from our demographic shifts.

Clerical Updates:

- SWWRPC has transitioned from the tax financing method of participation in the Unemployment Insurance program to the reimbursing method. There is no policy language change required except to remove reference to Work Study students. SWWRPC does not participate in a Work Study program with UWP (Section 28, page 22).

Future Policies: Policies, practices, or initiatives that should be evaluated in 2025

- Develop policies guiding the use of AI at work, including for plan writing and other deliverables
- Evaluation of the current reimbursement schedule, specifically Technology reimbursement
- Evaluation of sick leave accrual policies and payouts upon retirement
- Potential withdrawal from Unemployment Insurance Program
- Development of guidelines and policies for Remote Workers, including hiring policies, transitions to Remote Worker, consideration of home office supplies such as monitors, etc.
- Evaluation of Length of Service or Performance Bonuses
- Evaluate leave for election volunteering
- Complete review by legal counsel

SWWRPC Personnel Policy Manual

June 25, 2024 DRAFT



Southwestern Wisconsin
Regional Planning
Commission



SWWRPC Personnel Policy Manual

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION	TITLE	PAGE
1	Introduction	1
2	Employment At Will	1
3	Employee access to personnel records	1
4	Definitions	1-3
5	Equal Opportunity Employer (EOE)	3
6	Nepotism	3
7	Recruitment and Orientation	3-4
8	Probationary Period	4
9	Termination of Employment	4
10	Payroll	4
11	Personnel Conduct	5
12	Dress and Grooming Policies	5
13	Political Activities	5-6
14	Computer, E-mail, and Internet use	6-7
15	Social Media Use	7
16	Whistleblower Policy	8-9
17	Expenses	9-11
18	Exempt and Non-Exempt Employees	11
19	Fringes and Leave	11-15
20	Insurance Benefits	16
21	Absence Due to Weather and Building Maintenance	16
22	Work Week	17-18
23	Code of Ethics	18-20
24	Grievance Procedure	20

25	Drug-Free Workplace Requirements	21
26	Sexual Harassment Policy	21
27	Discipline and Discharge	21-22
28	Unemployment Compensation	22
29	Worker's Compensation Insurance	22
30	Salary Adjustments	22
31	Sick-Leave Conversion Credit	22-23
	Reimbursement Rate Sheet	24
	Manual Acknowledgement Form (attached)	25

1. Introduction

It's our pleasure to welcome you to Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SWWRPC). We value each one of our employees, and we hope that you find your work here rewarding and satisfying. This manual contains the policies and procedures to be observed by employees of SWWRPC. Please read it carefully so that you can better understand who we are and what we do. We think we are a special place—made all the more so by the hard work and dedication of our employees.

SWWRPC is a public agency, charged by the State Statutes and our own by-laws with the responsibility to perform research, planning, and local services in the advancement of local and area-wide regional planning interests. In particular, our mission is to serve the needs of the people of our five-county Region (Grant, Green, Iowa, Lafayette, and Richland Counties) in the areas of community development planning, economic development, and transportation. Our work is the work of the public and the public provides our resources. This imposes on us a great responsibility to serve the public's interests well.

The remainder of this manual will familiarize you with the privileges, benefits and responsibilities of being a SWWRPC employee. Please understand that this manual is provided for informational purposes only, and can only highlight and summarize our policies and practices. For detailed information, you will have to talk to your Executive Director.

In this organization, as in the rest of the world, circumstances are constantly changing. As a result, we may have to revise, rescind or supplement these policies from time to time. Nothing in this manual is a contract or a promise. The policies can change at any time, for any reason, without warning.

We are always looking for ways to improve communications with our employees. If you have suggestions for ways to improve this manual in particular or employee relations in general, please feel free to bring them to the attention of your Executive Director.

2. Employment At Will

We sincerely hope that your employment here will be a positive and rewarding experience. However, we cannot make any guarantees about your continued employment with SWWRPC. Your employment here is "at will." This means that you are free to quit at any time, for any reason, just as we are free to terminate your employment at any time, for any reason, with or without notice, with or without cause.

No employee or SWWRPC representative, other than the Executive Director with the formal approval of SWWRPC, has the authority to change the at-will employment relationship or to contract with any employee for different terms of employment. Furthermore, the Executive Director, only with the formal approval of SWWRPC, may change the at-will employment relationship, and this can only be done in a written contract signed by the Executive Director and the employee. Nothing in this manual constitutes a contract or promise of continued employment.

3. Employee Access to Personnel Records

a. Employees' Access Rights

All employees may review records maintained in their own personnel files in accordance with Wis. Stat. s. 103.13. SWWRPC also reserves the right to limit the number of times an employee may access his or her file during a 12-month period. These restrictions will be consistent with applicable state laws governing employee access to personnel files.

Employees interested in reviewing the contents of their personnel files should contact the Executive Director and provide at least two days' notice of their desire to schedule a mutually convenient time for an appointment.

b. Accuracy of Information

To ensure that personnel files are up-to-date and contain accurate, complete information, employees are asked to notify their Executive Director of any changes that need to be made to their contact information or other relevant work-related information.

4. Definitions

Anniversary Date: The calendar date on which an employee was hired for their present position not affected by promotion, demotion, leave of absence, etc.

Administrative: The function of typing, clerking, secretarial bookkeeping, etc., for SWWRPC and its various programs.

Commissioners: Fifteen members (three per county) from SWWRPC's five-county Regions who decide the general programs and policies of SWWRPC (similar to a Board of Directors).

Continuous Service: The period of employment with SWWRPC with paid status.

Grievance: Any unresolved question or dispute regarding discipline, termination, or workplace safety.

Immediate Family: The immediate family is defined as spouse, child, parent, guardian, brother, sister, grandchildren, grandparents, father/mother-in-law, step parents, and step children of employee.

Secondary Family: In addition to the immediate family as defined herein, the secondary family includes, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, aunt, uncle, cousin, niece, nephew, son-in-law and daughter-in-law.

Job Classification: A generalized grouping of staff positions (professional planners, specialized professionals, planning technicians, draftsmen, and administrative) with similar duties, responsibilities, and required abilities and distinguished varying degrees of responsibility and ability (e.g., Planner I, II, III, IV and V).

Job Description: A statement of each job classification's distinguishing features; general (and at time specific) duties and responsibilities; required knowledge, skills, and abilities; and acceptable training and experience. Employees are required to acknowledge their job's responsibilities by signing their Job Description.

Part-time Employee: A regular employee who is hired to work less than 40 hours per week.

Regular Employee: An employee hired to serve on a regular basis in one of SWWRPC-approved personnel positions to provide on-going planning services to the Region or administrative support services in the office. (Does not include project employees.)

Student Intern: An individual serving on a temporary part-time basis and who is enrolled in a planning or planning-related course, usually at the graduate level.

Probationary Period: The working test period, which is the three-month period from the initial date of hire in any position, during which an employee is required to demonstrate fitness by actual performance of the duties of the appointed position. During the probationary period, an employee may only utilize 24 hours (3 days) of vacation. Sick leave is not prohibited. Exceptions to this policy may be made only by the Executive Director. The probationary period shall be deemed successful only after completion of such three-month period and upon certification by the Executive Director that such probationary period has been successfully completed.

Professional: Those positions classified as Assistant Planner (Planner I) and above.

Professional Evaluation Period: Whenever a project employee is appointed to a regular position or when a regular employee is promoted, that employee is subject to a three-month period for performance evaluation. Unlike during an employee's Probationary Period, during this three-month professional evaluation period, the employee shall be entitled to utilize any vacation and sick leave which have accrued.

Project Employee: Those employees hired for the completion of a specific project, sometimes referred to as a limited term employee (LTE). Such employees are treated as regular employees except for the duration of their position/termination.

Region: Herein this document, Region refers to the five-county area (Grant, Green, Iowa, Lafayette and Richland) served by SWWRPC.

Compensation Adjustment: This is any change in an individual's pay rate due to one of the following reasons: (1) promotion of the individual to a position at a different pay grade; (2) reclassification of an individual's position to a different pay grade; (3) a cost-of-living adjustment to the salary schedule; and (4) merit increases based on performance and made within a given pay grade.

SWWRPC: Herein this document, SWWRPC refers to Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

Technical: An individual who is hired to perform a support function for the professional in providing expertise in the areas of drafting, cartography, research, etc.

Termination of Employment: This is any severance of the employment relationship with SWWRPC, including, but not limited to, retirement, discharge, job abandonment, voluntary quit, or termination due to position reduction.

Work Day and Week: Our regular business hours are from 8 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday.

Work Study Student: An individual hired on a part-time basis and who qualifies for assistance under the college work study program.

5. Equal Opportunity Employer

SWWRPC provides equal employment opportunities (EEO) as required by law. Employment is based on capabilities and qualifications without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetics, or any other category identified by law. In addition to federal law requirements, SWWRPC complies with applicable state and local laws governing nondiscrimination in employment. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including recruiting, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfers, leaves of absence, compensation and training.

6. Nepotism

SWWRPC is committed to a policy of employment and advancement based on merit and qualifications and will not discriminate in favor of or in opposition to the employment of immediate family. If you have an immediate family member whom you think would be perfect to fill an open position with us, please don't hesitate to refer this person to us.

There are times, however, when employing immediate family is inappropriate and has the potential to affect the morale of other employees and to create conflicts of interest for the immediate family involved. Therefore, no person shall be hired while either they or a member of their immediate family serves on the Board of Commissioners or in an Executive Director capacity on the staff of SWWRPC. For purposes of this anti-nepotism policy only, immediate family includes: spouse, father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother, sister, son, daughter, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, or legal guardian.

7. Recruitment and Orientation

a. Recruitment Methods

Our recruitment methods may include recruitment from within and/or public posting. Employees may share with their supervisor ideas on recruitment

b. Additional Personnel

Requests for additional personnel may be initiated by the Executive Director or provided to the Executive Director. Requests should be based on whether an employee feels additional staff is required to proceed with the program in a professional and efficient manner. All requests must be submitted in writing to the Executive Director. Among other things, they should consider the need for the position, the availability of funds, availability of personnel in other areas who may not be utilized fully, the lack of office space to house additional personnel, etc. If the request is rejected, the individual may request to meet with the Executive Director to discuss possible alternatives to more staff. If the request is endorsed by the Executive Director, the Executive Director will refer the request to the Commissioners who also may reject or endorse the proposal. Rejection of the request at this level is final. Approval of an additional position initiates the recruiting procedure outlined below.

c. Recruitment Process

Step 1 – Preparation of a Job Description: Job descriptions are prepared by the Executive Director.

Step 2 – Position Internal Announcement: The position may be first announced to existing staff and/or a notice is displayed on the staff bulletin board. Existing staff interested in the position should notify the appropriate person in a timely manner, and may be considered prior to any external advertising activity. If an existing staff member is hired into the position, no further steps are taken in this recruitment process.

Step 3 – Position External Announcement: If an internal candidate is not hired for the position, the position may be publicly advertised and posted by the Executive Director in a manner appropriate to the position.

Step 4 – Receipt of Applications, Tests, and Interviews: All applications and/or resumes received will be placed in a file by the Executive Director.

If the position is professional in nature: The Commissioners and Executive Director, at their discretion, may require a screening test of all applicants for the position. If this is the case, a test may be sent to all applicants with a deadline date. The most qualified candidates (those most likely to be successful in the position) may then be interviewed. If an applicant is selected, a written conditional offer of employment may be made. A formal written acceptance may be required.

If none of the applicants are acceptable or the selected applicant declines to accept the position or other circumstances exist, the Executive Director may take additional steps within the recruitment process, including interviewing additional candidates or beginning the process over again.

If the position is technical or administrative in nature: Applicants meeting the minimum job requirements may be invited to an interview conducted by the Executive Director and/or designated committee. As part of the interview, a test may be warranted depending on the position applied for. If selected, a written conditional offer of employment may be made. A formal written acceptance may be required.

If none of the applicants are acceptable, or the selected applicant declines to accept the position or other circumstances exist, the Executive Director may take additional steps within the recruitment process, including beginning the process over.

Step 5 – Background Checks: SWWRPC may utilize background checks, including internet searches, at any stage prior to hiring an applicant. Any offer of employment may be conditioned on a background check, as permitted by law.

Orientation

In the first few days of employment, new employees are presented with a job description and will sign for its receipt. New employees must also complete a Federal Form I-9 and show documentation proving their identity and eligibility to work in the United States. New employees will also receive a packet containing this manual, selected publications of SWWRPC and necessary forms, along with a discussion of the fringe benefits (if any), which are to be provided to the employee. The new employee will also sign for receipt of these items.

d. Relocating

At the Executive Director's discretion, payment for moving expenses may be provided for newly-hired, professional staff. If approved, documentation of the actual moving costs, including receipts, must be submitted to the Executive Director, and the move to the Region must be made within seven months of the date of starting employment. Refer to the **Rate Reimbursement Sheet**, attached to this manual, for current rates.

8. Probationary Period

All employees shall serve a probationary period of three (3) months from the effective date of employment. During this time, the Executive Director will work with the employee to help them learn how to do the job successfully and what SWWRPC expects of the employee. This period also provides both the employee and SWWRPC with an opportunity to decide whether the employee is suited for the position for which they were hired.

In the event of dismissal or resignation during this period, the employee shall not be entitled to be paid out any accrued and unused vacation.

Although we hope that all employees will be successful here, SWWRPC may terminate any employee at any time, either during the probationary period or afterwards, with or without cause and with or without notice. All employees are also free to quit at any time and for any reason, either during the probationary period or afterwards, with or without notice. Successful completion of the probationary period does not guarantee any employee a job for any period of time or in any way change the at-will employment relationship. (For an explanation of at-will employment, see Section 2 of this manual.)

9. Termination of Employment

When an employee resigns their position with SWWRPC, it is customary, though not required, to give written notice stating the reason(s) for resigning and the effective date to the Executive Director at least two weeks prior to the effective date. We ask for that courtesy, but understand also that it is not always feasible. Failure to give at least two (2) weeks' notice will be considered if the employee reapplies for employment with SWWRPC in the future.

Employees who resign or are released due to a reduction in force from their positions with SWWRPC (laid off) after more than three (3) months full-time service shall be paid for all earned and accrued vacation. Such payment shall be made in the final regular check to the employee.

10. Payroll

There shall be twenty-six (26) pay periods in a calendar year with pay periods ending every other Saturday (every two weeks) and checks issued following the close of the pay period. If a payday falls on a holiday, the paychecks shall be issued the preceding day.

Timesheets are due at noon on the Friday prior to the week of payment.

11. Personal Conduct

SWWRPC adopts this Employee Conduct and Work Rules Policy to ensure orderly operations and provide the best possible work environment. SWWRPC expects employees and others who may from time to time be engaged to provide services, such consultants and independent contractors, to follow these rules of conduct while on company premises, attending company functions or otherwise performing work-related activity.

In addition to maintaining and enforcing this policy to protect the interests and safety of all employees and the organization, SWWRPC complies with all applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations concerning employer/employee rights and obligations.

SWWRPC is responsible for providing a safe and secure workplace and strives to ensure that all individuals associated with the company are treated in a respectful and fair manner. Though it is not possible to list all forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable in the workplace, the following are examples of behavior that would be considered infractions of SWWRPC rules of conduct:

- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of property.
- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer or use of illegal drugs in the workplace or while on duty.
- Fighting or threatening violence in the workplace.
- Sexual or other unlawful or unwelcome harassment: **reference Section 27 Sexual Harassment policy.**
- Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives or firearms, in the workplace.
- Unauthorized use of telephones, mail system, printer /copier, or other employer-owned equipment. **Reference Section 14 Computers, email, internet, and voicemail.**
- Unauthorized disclosure of business confidential information. **Reference Section 14, d. Confidential information**
- Applying, searching for, or interviewing for non-SWWRPC positions during working hours.
- Unappropriate attire during working hours or while attending commission meetings and functions: **reference Section 12. Dress code and Grooming policies.**

Such behavior may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

12. Dress and Grooming Policies

As an employee of the Commission, you are expected to dress and groom yourself in accordance with accepted social and business standards. A neat, respectful appearance contributes to the positive impression you make on our customers and Commissioners. You are expected to be suitably attired and groomed during working hours and when representing the Commission during evening and weekend events. Professional Attire is required for the employee attending meetings and / or professional events.

In no instances are clothing with offensive or provocative graphics or language acceptable attire for either “Office Casual” or “Professional attire.” Employees’ professional attire when on duty should meet or exceed the formality of those living in, and being served by, SWWRPC.

a. Tattoos and Body Piercings

Visible tattoos with provocative or offensive images or language, and large body piercings such as ear plugs may impact professional relationships with communities and partners. While tattoos and piercings may be examples of self-expression, they generally are not recognized as indications of religious or racial expression and, therefore, are not protected under federal discrimination laws.

b. Enforcing SWWRPC Dress and Grooming Policies

If the Executive Director feels your attire and/or grooming is not in accordance with this policy, you may be asked to leave the workplace until you are properly attired and/or groomed. Employees who continually violate dress code/grooming standards may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

13. Political Activities

Staff members of SWWRPC, like all citizens, have constitutionally protected rights to vote, to support political candidates of their choice and to freely express their political opinions. As a governmental agency which receives a large percentage of its funding from the federal government, however, most or all Commission employees are subject to the provisions of the Federal Hatch Act, 5 U.S.C. §1501 et seq., which restricts the political activity of persons employed in connection with federally-supported projects. If an employee’s principal employment is connected with an activity which is financed in whole or in part by loans or grants from the United States or a Federal agency, that employee is subject to the Hatch Act. Employees who are unsure as to whether they are subject to this Act should consult the Executive Director.

SWWRPC employees who are subject to the Hatch Act **MAY**:

- run for public office in nonpartisan elections
- campaign for and hold office in political clubs and organizations
- actively campaign for candidates for public office in partisan and nonpartisan elections
- contribute money to political organizations and attend political fundraising function

However, due to Hatch Act restrictions, such employees **MAY NOT**:

- be candidates for public office in a partisan election
- use official authority or influence to interfere with or affect the results of an election or nomination
- directly or indirectly coerce contributions from subordinates in support of a political party or candidate

Activities which violate the Hatch Act can result in the Federal Merit Systems Protection Board directing SWWRPC to terminate the subject employee, or forfeit a portion of the federal assistance equal to two years' salary of the employee.

While SWWRPC employees are allowed to engage in the above-noted political activities, such activities must be undertaken on the employee's own time and at their own expense. SWWRPC employees are prohibited from using SWWRPC property for any political purpose (partisan or nonpartisan), and from engaging in any political activities while on-duty, including soliciting contributions or campaigning.

Furthermore, SWWRPC asks that its employees recognize the closeness of SWWRPC's relationship to political officials throughout the Region and its dependence on good working relationships with these officials in order to achieve the implementation of its plans and policies. Thus, its effectiveness depends in part on the prudence with which its employees exercise their political rights. Therefore, when a SWWRPC employee engages in political activity or speech allowed under the Hatch Act, it is important that their position be clearly stated as their own as representing in no way a position of SWWRPC unless SWWRPC has instructed the staff member to take a position on its behalf.

14. Computers, email, and internet use

a. Introduction

SWWRPC uses Gmail search-based email application from Google (the "Service"). As users of the service, you are responsible for your own communications and for any consequences thereof. Your use of the Service is subject to your compliance with the Gmail Program Policies ("**Program Policies**"), located at http://www.google.com/mail/help/program_policies.html, or such other URL as Google may provide from time to time. In addition, SWWRPC employees must also comply with the following SWWRPC offered technologies (computers, internet, email, phone, and voicemail) policies listed

The following policies are in addition to the conditions outlined in the Network Security Agreement signed by the employee upon hire. If there should be a conflict between these policies and those identified on the Network Security Agreement, the more restrictive of the two policies shall apply.

b. Usage rules

As with e-mail, SWWRPC permits incidental use of the internet from SWWRPC computers, subject to the following conditions and restrictions. Personal use must be infrequent and must not:

- Involve any prohibited activity (see below);
- Interfere with the productivity of employees or their co-workers;
- Consume system resources or storage capacity on an ongoing basis; or
- Involve large file transfers or otherwise deplete system resources available for business purposes.

Employees may not, at any time, access the Internet using SWWRPC equipment or links for any of the following purposes:

- To visit websites that feature pornography, gambling or violent images, or are otherwise inappropriate in the workplace.
- To operate an outside business, solicit money for personal purposes or to otherwise act for personal financial gain – this includes running online auctions.
- To download software, articles or other printed materials in violation of copyright laws.

- To read, open or download any file from the Internet without first screening that file for viruses using SWWRPC's virus detection software.

We reserve the right to monitor the employee's use of the computer, the Internet, and email at any time, to ensure compliance with this policy. Employees should not expect that their use of the computer, the internet, or email - including but not limited to the sites they visit, the amount of time they spend online and the communications they have - will be private.

c. Prohibited Activities

Employees are strictly prohibited from using the computer, the internet, or sending e-mail, instant messages or otherwise using the e-mail system in connection with any of the following activities:

- engaging in illegal, fraudulent, or malicious activities;
- engaging in activities on behalf of organizations with no professional or business affiliation with SWWRPC;
- sending or storing offensive, obscene, or defamatory material;
- annoying or harassing other individuals;
- sending uninvited e-mails of a personal nature;
- using another individual's account or identity without explicit authorization;
- attempting to test, circumvent, or defeat security or auditing systems, without prior authorization;
- permitting any unauthorized individual to access SWWRPC's e-mail system; or
- Distributing or storing chain letters, jokes, solicitations or offers to buy or sell goods, or other non-business material of a trivial or frivolous nature.

d. Confidential Information

All employees are expected and required to protect SWWRPC's confidential information, including confidential information of clients such as Revolving Loan Applicants. Confidential information should never be transmitted or forwarded to outside individuals or companies not authorized to receive the information. Employees must exercise greater care when transmitting confidential information using e-mail than with other communication means because e-mail makes it easier to redistribute or misdirect such information to unauthorized individuals.

SWWRPC also requires its employees to use e-mail and internet in a way that respects the confidential and proprietary information of others. Employees are prohibited from copying or distributing copyrighted material—for example, software, database files, documentation, or articles—using the e-mail system.

E-mail is an inappropriate method of communicating certain types of confidential information. Employees should consult the Executive Director before e-mailing highly sensitive or confidential information.

e. Storage Policy

Retention of e-mail messages will follow all retention requirements of SWWRPC.

f. Passwords

Each user accesses the e-mail system by means of a login name and password. Passwords are intended to keep unauthorized individuals from accessing messages stored on the system. From a systems perspective and from the perspective of an e-mail recipient, passwords also establish the identity of the person sending an e-mail message. The failure to keep passwords confidential can allow unauthorized individuals to read, modify, or delete e-mail messages; circulate e-mail forgeries; and download or manipulate files on other systems.

The practice of using passwords should not lead employees to expect privacy with respect to messages sent or received. Passwords should never be given out over the phone, included in e-mail messages, posted, or kept within public view.

Employees are prohibited from disclosing their login name or password, or those of any other employee, to any persons except your Executive Director.

Computer, internet, and email use is not private.

15. Social Media

The policy of SWWRPC is set to provide guidance for employee use of social media, which should be broadly understood for purposes of this policy to include blogs, wikis, microblogs, message boards, chat rooms, electronic newsletters, online

forums, social networking sites, and other sites and services that permit users to share information with others in a contemporaneous manner.

SWWRPC recognizes that social media can be highly effective tools for sharing ideas and exchanging information of all kinds. SWWRPC is committed to using these electronic communications to promote SWWRPC'S visibility and maintain communications with current and prospective employees, business partners, vendors and suppliers, and the general public. SWWRPC also is concerned with ensuring that use of such communications serves SWWRPC'S need to maintain its integrity and reputation while minimizing actual or potential legal risks.

The following rules and guidelines apply to social media, whether it's done for SWWRPC on organization time, on a personal Web site during non-work time, or outside the workplace. The rules and guidelines apply to all executive officers, board members, line management, and non-management employees.

a. Rules and Regulations

SWWRPC strongly discourages employees from discussing publicly any work-related matters, whether confidential or not, outside SWWRPC-authorized communications. Nonofficial communications include Internet chat rooms, employees' personal blogs and similar forms of online journals or diaries, personal newsletters on the Internet, and blogs on Web sites are not affiliated with, sponsored, or maintained by SWWRPC.

Employees have a duty to protect employees' home addresses or other personal information and the confidentiality of SWWRPC financial information, business contracts, and other proprietary and nonpublic organizational information that employees can access. Employees cannot use social media to harass, threaten, libel or slander, malign, defame or disparage, or discriminate against coworkers, managers, clients, vendors or suppliers, any organizations associated or doing business with SWWRPC, or any members of the public.

b. Personal social media

Employees should keep SWWRPC related social media accounts separate from personal accounts. Employees must not use SWWRPC-owned computers, company-licensed software, or other electronic equipment or facilities for personal social media during work time.

SWWRPC respects employees' right to express personal opinions in their personal social media activities and does not retaliate or discriminate against employees who use their blogs for political, organizing, or other lawful purposes.

Employees cannot use SWWRPC's logo or trademarks or the name, logo, or trademarks of any business partner, supplier, vendor or affiliate on any personal accounts or other online sites unless their use is sponsored or otherwise sanctioned, approved, or maintained by SWWRPC.

Employees cannot post on personal accounts, SWWRPC-issued documents, especially documents bearing SWWRPC'S name, trademark, or logo.

Employees cannot post on personal accounts photographs of company events, other employees or company representatives engaged in SWWRPC's business, unless employees have received SWWRPC'S explicit permission.

SWWRPC discourages employees from linking to SWWRPC'S external or internal Web site from personal accounts.

16. Whistleblower Policy

A whistleblower is an employee of SWWRPC who reports an activity that they consider to be illegal or a violation of the public trust to one or more of the parties specified in this Policy. The whistleblower is not responsible for investigating the activity or for determining fault or corrective measures; appropriate management officials are charged with these responsibilities.

Examples include violations of federal, state or local laws; billing for services not performed or for goods not delivered; and other fraudulent financial reporting.

If an employee has knowledge of or a concern of such activity, the employee is to contact the Executive Director. The employee must exercise sound judgment to avoid baseless allegations. An employee who intentionally files a false report will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Whistleblower protections are provided in two important areas – confidentiality and against retaliation. Insofar as possible, the confidentiality of the whistleblower will be maintained. However, identity may have to be disclosed to conduct a thorough investigation, to comply with the law and to provide accused individuals their legal rights of defense. SWWRPC will not retaliate against a whistleblower. This includes, but is not limited to, protection from retaliation in the form of an

adverse employment action. A whistleblower who believes they are being retaliated against must contact the Executive Director immediately. The right of a whistleblower for protection against retaliation does not include immunity for any personal wrongdoing that is alleged and investigated.

All reports will be promptly submitted to the Executive Director who is responsible for investigating and coordination corrective action.

Employees with any questions regarding this policy should contact the Executive Director.

17. Expenses

A uniform set of guidelines for expenses is a necessary part of any organization's policy guidelines. It informs the employee the limits that are put on one when traveling on official Commission business. When vouchers are properly submitted, employees shall be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses actually incurred in the performance of official duties. Employees are encouraged to plan travel with fiscal austerity and energy conservation in mind.

All expenses incurred in excess of the stated maximums are the responsibility of the staff member unless special arrangements have been previously made with the Executive Director.

All staff members are responsible for the information on their vouchers. Each month, employees shall complete the Expense Report. Employees must verify all computations and supporting documents and certify, by signing the Report that the travel expenses were actually incurred, are reasonable and necessary, and not otherwise reimbursed. The information entered in the "Official Business" column should answer the questions why, who, and/or where. For instance, "to meet with the Muscoda Village Board" or "to planning committee meeting" are not adequate explanations of why a particular trip was made. "Iowa County Development Block Grant meeting" or "Monroe recreation plan meeting" fulfill the requirements to clearly state the purpose of the trip.

Be sure to attach all supporting documents (receipts, etc.). The Expense Report must be signed by the Executive Director for review and verification that:

- Expenses claimed are necessary and reasonable in view of the duration, location, and other pertinent circumstances of the employee's travel assignment;
- Necessary supporting documents are attached to the travel voucher to substantiate the expenses claimed.

The Executive Director must approve or disapprove the expenses claimed for reimbursement and if approved, sign the travel voucher. If disapproved, the Executive Director will return the travel voucher to the employee indicating recommended changes or alterations.

All official business travel by Commission employees must be authorized by the Executive Director in advance. It is the responsibility of the Executive Director, who authorizes the travel, to determine that the travel is appropriate and necessary to the mission, responsibility or duties of the employee's program assignment, and that it is not a duplication of a previous trip by this particular employee or another employee. Authorization for an employee to enroll in a function such as (but not limited to) seminars, conferences, conventions, or training sessions must be secured from the Executive Director. Requests for multiple attendances at such functions must be in writing and demonstrate how attendance by more than one employee serves SWWRPC's interests.

Reasonable transportation expenses incurred on trips away from the headquarter city, Platteville, are reimbursable regardless of the type of transportation used. However, all travel shall be by the most direct and safest route. If, for personal reasons, an employee does not use the most direct route and incurs additional expense, such additional expense shall be considered personal with reimbursement limited accordingly. When a number of Commission employees are traveling to the same destination at the same time, it is their responsibility to arrange for pool transportation where practical. Transportation expenses will be reimbursed as follows:

a. Transportation

i) Use of Privately-Owned Vehicles:

Employees will be reimbursed at the current standard rate as set by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Refer to the **Rate Reimbursement Sheet**, attached to this manual, for current rates. Charges for repairs, lubrication, tow service, etc., on any personal car are not reimbursable. Traffic citations, parking tickets, and other traffic violation expenses, whether in personal or office cars, are the employee's responsibility. The starting point and destination must be stated daily on the travel voucher. An explanation must be provided for mileage in excess of normal mileage necessary for conducting official Commission business. When an employee uses a privately-owned car on official business, the allowable mileage shall not exceed the lesser of two distances--

headquarters to destination and return, or home to destination and return. Reimbursement requests for tolls encountered during travel must be accompanied by a receipt of payment of the tolls.

Employees shall also provide a copy of their current insurance policy declarations confirming vehicle coverage upon hire, and in January of each year thereafter. Minimum insurance coverage required by employees shall be reviewed annually by the Executive Committee.

ii) Bus:

The stub or passenger's copy of the bus ticket must be attached to the travel voucher for reimbursement.

iii) Air Travel:

Reimbursement for air travel shall be limited to the fare for the lowest jet class. If this class is not available, the employee shall obtain a statement from the carrier representative that the lowest class is not available. Flight insurance is not reimbursable. The passenger copy of the airline ticket must be attached to the travel voucher whether or not the cost of the ticket was billed directly to SWWRPC by a travel agency.

iv) Train:

Reimbursement is limited to coach except for overnight trips where reimbursement is limited to the cost of a roomette. Receipts are required and must be attached to the travel voucher.

v) Taxi or ride-hailing (Uber, Lyft):

Reasonable charges are allowable for taxis and ride-hailing transport, including tips (maximum of 17%). Airline charters are generally available at airports and should be utilized when available and practical.

b. Meals

Meal costs will be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses actually incurred for travel both in-state and out-of-state. All meals must be supported by an itemized receipt attached to the travel voucher. Refer to the **Rate Reimbursement Sheet**, attached to this manual, for current rates.

c. Lodging

Refer to the **Rate Reimbursement Sheet**, attached to this manual, for current rates. Reimbursement for lodging will be made according to the individual circumstances but will always be based on the assumption that the employee used the most reasonable room rates available in the area. Excessive charges for rooms must be substantiated by receipts and must be approved by the Executive Director. Charges for late checkouts are not reimbursable. All lodging expenses must be supported by the machine-printed receipts which are furnished by most hotels and motels or original hand-written receipts. Charges for lodging at homes of relatives or friends are not reimbursable. When registering or signing for any official purpose, employees should use their business address and identification, ask for government discounts-and explain that SWWRPC is not state taxable (this only applies to Wisconsin hotels and motels).

Certain miscellaneous expenses will also be considered reimbursable if they conform to the following regulations:

d. Registration

Registration fees may be prepaid by SWWRPC after approval has been obtained from the proper level. However, in those instances when employees are required to pay registration fees out of their own pockets a receipt is required.

e. Cellular Telephones

SWWRPC Staff are reimbursed monthly for the use of their personal cell phone. Employees requesting reimbursement must submit copies of invoices from their cellular telephone service provider. Refer to the **Rate Reimbursement Sheet**, attached to this manual, for current rates.

SWWRPC employees recognize by their signature of acceptance of this manual that they are public employees and as such use of their private phones are subject to all applicable records requests and other laws pertaining open records.

f. Purchasing

Prior approval is required for all SWWRPC purchases over \$100. This includes large, atypical single-purchases and excludes reoccurring purchases such as office supplies. Requests are reviewed to ascertain that the amount is

within the organization's and/or project's budget. The Executive Director must approve all purchase orders. A copy of the approved Request form should be attached to the final invoice. Refer to the Procedures Manual for more information.

18. Exempt and Non-Exempt Employees

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) is a federal labor law of general and nationwide application, including Overtime, Minimum Wages, Child Labor Protections, and the Equal Pay Act.

Employees whose jobs are governed by the FLSA are either "exempt" or "nonexempt." Nonexempt employees are entitled to overtime pay. Exempt employees are not. Most employees covered by the FLSA are nonexempt. Some are not.

Some jobs are classified as exempt by definition. For example, "outside sales" employees are exempt ("inside sales" employees are nonexempt). For most employees, however, whether they are exempt or nonexempt depends on (a) how much they are paid, (b) how they are paid, and (c) what kind of work they do.

With few exceptions, to be exempt an employee must (a) be paid at least \$35,568 per year (\$684 per week), and (b) be paid on a salary basis, and also (c) perform exempt job duties. These requirements are outlined in the FLSA Regulations (promulgated by the U.S. Department of Labor). Most employees must meet all three "tests" to be exempt.

19. Fringes and Leave

a. Vacation (Annual Leave)

Vacation shall be accumulated by employees during the first three (3) months of employment (probationary period) but only 24 hours (3 days) of vacation may be used during the probationary period. Vacation (annual leave) shall be pro-rated based on the number of hours worked in a particular year. A new full-time employee would only receive a pro-rated portion of the vacation time during their first year with SWWRPC, but in subsequent years would receive the full amount. Vacation will be prorated when an individual is terminated, resigns or retires.

Part-time employees will accrue prorated vacation hours. Vacation for new part-time employees is pro-rated based on estimated hours to be worked during the year. For every year after the first, vacation shall be pro-rated based on prior year hours worked. Hours will be adjusted at the start of each subsequent year, with hours added or subtracted based on the difference between estimated vacation and actual vacation hours earned, based on actual hours worked.

Student interns are not eligible for vacation, but may take leave without pay if approved by the Executive Director.

Permission to use vacation shall be granted at the discretion of the Executive Director at such times as they deem will least interfere with the efficient operations of SWWRPC. Employees may take vacation in increments as small as 15 minutes, but they must schedule that leave at least 24 hours in advance.

Every employee shall be entitled to vacation with full pay, earned at the following rate for full-time employees:

Rate:

1 to 5 years.....120 hours	16 to 20 years.....200 hours
6 to 10 years.....160 hours	21 to 25 years.....240 hours
11 to 15 years.....200 hours	26 years +.....240 hours

As of January 1, 2024, SWWRPC employees shall be permitted to 'roll over' one week (40 hours) of the previous year's vacation into the following year. Any vacation time accrued in the previous year, but not used by December 31 of the subsequent year, will be lost. If an employee is terminated for any reason and has vacation carried over from a previous year, the vacation carried over to the termination year is not eligible to be paid out upon termination. It is the responsibility of each employee to adequately balance their workload to allow for vacation time.

b. Sick Leave

i) Rate:

Full-time employees shall earn paid sick leave at the rate of 104 hours annually. Sick leave shall accrue at a rate of 4 hours per pay period.

Part-time employees shall be entitled to sick leave on a pro-rated basis. Sick leave for new part-time employees is pro-rated based on estimated hours to be worked during the year. For every year after the first, sick leave shall be pro-rated based on prior year hours worked. Hours will be adjusted at the start of each subsequent year, with hours added or subtracted based on the difference between estimated sick and actual sick hours earned, based on actual hours worked.

Student interns are not eligible for sick leave, but may take leave without pay.

ii) Use:

Utilization of sick leave shall be allowed for the following reasons and under the following conditions: For personal illnesses, bodily injuries, or maternity/paternity which

- require the employee's confinement;
- renders the employee unable to perform assigned duties; or
- where performance of assigned duties would jeopardize the employee's health or recovery.

Sick leave may be used for personal medical or dental appointments which cannot be scheduled at times other than during working hours provided the Executive Director is given advance notice of appointments except when emergency conditions prevail.

Employees may use accrued sick leave to supplement the Worker's Compensation benefits provided pursuant to Chapter 102, Wisconsin Statutes to the extent that the employee shall receive the equivalent of their regular base rate. The procedures necessary for the administration of this section shall be in accordance with the existing Wisconsin Statutes.

iii) Accumulation:

Unused sick leave shall accumulate from year to year in the employee's sick leave account. **All employees hired on or following the adoption date of this Personnel Manual will be subject to a sick leave cap of nine-hundred and sixty (960) hours.** Employees shall be allowed to use earned holidays or vacation in lieu of sick leave when they so request.

iv) Donation of Accrued Sick Leave:

At the discretion of the Executive Director, an employee shall be allowed to donate, in eight-hour increments, up to 40 hours of available sick leave to a fellow employee who has exhausted all paid time-off benefits and, owing to catastrophic illness or as determined by the Executive Director, is unable to return to work during a long-term waiting period.

To be eligible to receive donations of sick leave, an employee must have been employed on a regular fulltime basis for at least six calendar months, must be suffering from a catastrophic illness or injury or a legitimate cause as determined by the Executive Director. Use of donated sick leave shall only be used once the recipient has exhausted all accrued paid time-off benefit balances.

Requests to donate time shall be made to the Executive Director. Upon approval of the Executive Director, the Finance Manager will keep appropriate records of any donated sick leave time, debiting and crediting employee accounts as appropriate. Donated time shall be used on a first-in, first-out basis. Any unused donated time shall be returned to the account of the donor employee if it is unused 12 months from the use of the first donated hour or 12 months from the end of the event enabling donation, whichever is longer. Employees will be eligible to receive a maximum of 480 hours of donated sick leave time per illness or injury. Donated sick time shall be valued at the rate earned by the donor.

v) Abuse:

In the event that the Executive Director has reason to believe that an employee is abusing the sick leave privilege or may not be physically fit to return to work, the Executive Director may request the employee to obtain a medical certificate or other appropriate verification for absences. Use of sick leave for other than

above (or circumstances to be determined eligible by the Executive Director) shall be subject to disciplinary action.

vi) Probationary Period:

Employees on probation may use only that sick leave which they have accrued to the date of being used.

vii) Termination:

Termination of employment shall cancel all unused accumulated sick leave except as noted below under "Sick Leave Conversion Credit". However, when a person who is an employee is laid off, any unused accumulated sick leave shall be restored provided that employee is re-employed by SWWRPC within two (2) years.

- **Doctor's Verification:**

A doctor's certificate and/or verification may be requested by the Executive Director for sick leave requests in excess of three (3) consecutive days.

As a matter of policy, SWWRPC wishes to emphasize that sick leave shall be construed as a form of insurance against the loss of income during short-term illness rather than as true leave. Sick leave does not vest in an employee the right to a certain number of days off each year with pay as does annual and holiday leave.

c.

Maternity and Paternity Leave~~**Paid Family Leave**~~

Maternity Leave:

~~Female employees can use accrued vacation and sick leave to cover their absence for the birth of a child and adoption. For disability due to pregnancy and childbirth, Income Continuation Insurance may also be available. Unpaid maternity leave is provided on the same terms as other short-term disability leaves and is considered time worked for seniority and benefit entitlement purposes. Employees returning from maternity leave childbirth leave are placed in their original or comparable jobs. Refer to Family/Medical Leave in Section 20, g.~~

Paternity Leave:

~~Male staff can use accrued vacation and sick leave for any leave related to the birth or adoption of a child. Unpaid paternity leave is provided on the same terms as other short-term disability leaves and is considered time worked for seniority and benefit entitlement purposes. Refer to Family/Medical Leave in Section 20, g.~~

~~Effective January 1, 2024, a qualified employee, an employee who has worked for SWWRPC for at least a year and has worked 1,250 hours within that year, may take up to 22 days of paid leave for the birth or placement of a child for adoption or foster care, including bonding time; for their own serious health condition; to care for a family member (spouse, parent, child under 18 or older with mental or physical disability) who has a serious health condition; or to care for a family member as a result of a qualifying exigency or serious injury or illness related to military duty. Employees should contact the Executive Director regarding leave. Paid Family Leave must be used within 12-months of a qualifying event. Leave not used during that time will be forfeit. Unused Paid Family Leave is not eligible to be paid out upon termination of an employee.~~

~~Paid Family Leave differs from paid Vacation or Sick leave by recognizing the value SWWRPC places on the lives of its employees, and the impact this has on productive work time, and by recognizing that there can be significant time commitments leading up to a qualifying event that can reduce an employee's paid leave once the qualifying event occurs. It also recognizes the limitations placed on an employee's ability to work following the birth, adoption, or fostering of an infant due to a typical two-month minimum age restriction of child care facilities. Paid Family Leave also differs from FMLA leave, which is designed to protect an employee and their position during periods of extended leave. Paid Family Leave may be used in conjunction with Vacation, Sick, or FMLA Leave.~~

~~Employees on Paid Family Leave continue to accrue benefits and seniority rights and are entitled to their former or comparable positions on return from leave.~~

d. Bereavement Leave

When death occurs in the "immediate family", an employee may be granted use of sick leave to a maximum of seven (7) work days by the Executive Director. If a death occurs in the "secondary family", an employee may be granted use of sick leave to a maximum of four (4) work days by the Executive Director. If either situation (as described above) warrants an extension, the Executive Director may grant up to three (3) additional working days. Such requests must be made in writing to the Executive Director. This leave shall normally be used during the period immediately following the

death. Where mitigating circumstances require a postponement in funeral arrangements, this leave may be used at an appropriate later date for directly related purposes.

e. Jury Duty

All employees, regardless of tenure, are entitled to jury duty leave. Employees required to serve jury duty are paid the difference between their jury duty pay and the regular rate of pay for their position. Employees must provide court documentation of their jury service and any payments received.

f. Military Leave

SWWRPC supports those who serve in the armed forces to protect our country. In keeping with this commitment, and in accordance with state and federal law, employees who must be absent from work for military service are entitled to take a military leave of absence (up to five years). This leave will be unpaid; however, employees may use applicable paid time off (vacation and personal days) during their leave.

Employees who are called to military service must tell the Executive Director as soon as possible that they will need to take military leave. An employee whose military service has ended must return to work or inform SWWRPC that they want to be reinstated in accordance with these guidelines:

- For a leave of 30 or fewer days, the employee must report back to work on the first regularly scheduled workday after completing military service, allowing for travel time.
- For a leave of 31 to 180 days, the employee must request reinstatement within 14 days after military service ends.
- For a leave of 181 days or more, the employee must request reinstatement within 90 days after military service ends.
- SWWRPC will continue an employee's health insurance benefits during military leave as required by law:
- If the employee is absent for 30 or fewer days, they will be treated as any employee not on leave. SWWRPC will continue to pay its share of the insurance premium, and the employee must continue to pay their usual share.
- If the employee's leave lasts longer than 30 days, they will have to pay the entire premium to continue their benefits.

Employees on military leave (normally, up to five years) continue to accrue benefit and seniority rights and are entitled to their former or comparable positions on return from leave.

g. Family/Medical Leave

Pursuant to the Federal Family Medical Leave Act ("FMLA"), employees with at least one year of service who have worked at least 1,250 hours in the past year can request up to 12 weeks per 12-month period of job-protected leave for:

- the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child;
- the care of a child, spouse, or parent with a serious health condition; or
- their own serious health condition.

For purposes of calculating available federal family and medical leave, the 12-month period in which the 12 weeks of leave entitlement occurs is the 12-month period measured forward from the date the employee's first FMLA leave begins. A parent who takes leave to care for a newborn, newly adopted child or recently placed foster child must begin this leave within a year after the birth, adoption or placement. Employees are required to give notice at least 30 days in advance of their need for FMLA leave, if their need for leave is foreseeable. In emergencies and unexpected situations, employees must give as much notice as is practicable under the circumstances.

Please see the Executive Director for the necessary paperwork and further instructions if you wish to utilize FMLA leave. For leave due to an employee's own serious health condition, employees will be required to provide a physician's verification of the medical need for leave. SWWRPC is also entitled to seek a second opinion and periodic recertification. In some cases, SWWRPC may ask employees who take leave because of their own serious health condition to provide a fitness for duty report from their doctors before they return to work.

SWWRPC requires employees to use accrued paid leave, if any, concurrent with their use of FMLA leave. Otherwise, leave is unpaid. When using paid leave during an FMLA leave period, employees will receive their usual compensation and benefits, as they do whenever they take vacation, paid sick leave, or other paid leave.

i) Medical insurance

During a period of FMLA leave, SWWRPC continues to pay its share of medical insurance premiums. Employees on leave are required to continue paying the employee share of premiums.

ii) Repayment of premiums

If an employee fails to return to work with SWWRPC following FMLA leave, or returns but fails to remain at work for a minimum of 30 calendar days, the employee must repay the premiums that SWWRPC paid during the employee's unpaid FMLA leave. **EXCEPTION:** Employees who do not return from FMLA leave because of health reasons or for other reasons beyond their control, as defined by the FMLA, are not required to repay premiums.

iii) Benefits that do not continue during FMLA leave

Employees on unpaid FMLA leave do not earn any vacation or sick leave and are not paid for holidays during the time they are on leave. Both life and disability insurance coverage stop if FMLA leave exceeds two weeks, unless the employee on leave arranges to assume responsibility for the full premium during the leave. Neither SWWRPC nor employees contribute to the retirement and savings plan or to Social Security during FMLA leave.

iv) Returning from leave

When an employee returns from an approved family and medical leave, the employee has the right to return to their former position or an equivalent position, except that they have no greater right to reinstatement than they would have had they had not been on leave. If the employee's position is eliminated for reasons unrelated to their leave, for example, the employee has no right to reinstatement.

v) Couples Employed by SWWRPC

Couples are permitted only a total of twelve weeks between them.

h. Caring for Serious Injury or Illness of Armed Forces Member (FMLA)

Under the provisions of the FMLA, an eligible employee who is a spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of a covered service member shall be entitled to a total of 26 workweeks of leave in a 12-month period to care for the service member. The leave described in this paragraph is subject to the 12-month period described in Section 20g, and that 12-month period is measured forward from the date the employee's leave begins.

A "covered service member" is defined as a member of the Armed Forces, National Guard or Reserve, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for a serious injury or illness.

A "serious injury or illness" is defined as an injury or illness incurred by the member in line of duty and on active duty or preexisting illnesses and injuries aggravated by such service in the Armed Forces, National Guard, and Reserve that may render the member medically unfit to perform the duties of the member's office, grade, rank, or rating. The veteran must have served in the military within the five preceding years and been other than dishonorably discharged.

i. Special Leaves of Absence

SWWRPC occasionally grants unpaid special leaves of absence, not exceeding two months, to employees who have at least one year of tenure and are in good standing in their position. Continuing education in a job-related field, professional development, community service, and personal needs not covered by SWWRPC's other leave policies are possible justifications for such leaves. However, SWWRPC reserves the right to deny such leave requests as circumstances merit. All employees who are granted such special leave shall not lose any accumulated benefits while on such leave; however, they shall not accumulate or utilize sick leave or vacation while on a special leave of absence. SWWRPC shall not be financially responsible for contributions to health insurance, life insurance, income continuation insurance, or retirement programs while the employee is on a special leave unless required by law, and therefore the employee must arrange to pay such premiums while on special leave.

j. Calendar Holidays

The following paid holidays will be granted all employees:

- New Year's Day – January 1
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth – June 19

- Independence Day – July 4
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Friday After Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve Day – December 24
- Christmas Day – December 25
- New Year's Eve Day

If the designated holiday falls on a Sunday, the Monday immediately following shall become the observed holiday. In instances where Christmas Day or New Year's Day falls on a Sunday or Monday, the preceding Friday shall be construed as Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve respectively and thus be considered as the holiday. If the designated holiday falls on a Saturday, the Friday immediately preceding shall become the observed holiday.

Holiday time for part-time employees shall be pro-rated according to the number of hours the employee works during the calendar year.

20. Insurance Benefits

a. Health Insurance

All full-time eligible employees may be provided with group health insurance, partially paid by SWWRPC. The health insurance program will be available as soon as possible, depending on when the individual starts work and provided the employee qualifies under the plan. Health insurance coverage will be started on the first of any month following one full calendar month of employment (if the employee chooses to participate in the program). Upon the employee's inclusion in the health insurance program, the employee shall be given information and/or booklets describing the benefits of such insurance and the proper procedures for making claims.

The employer and employee contributions for such health insurance coverage will be periodically reviewed by SWWRPC so that any adjustments can be made to reflect increased or decreased premium costs. SWWRPC may change the benefits, carrier, or coverage at its discretion at any time.

Part-time eligible employees may also be provided with group health insurance. In such cases, SWWRPC will pay a portion of the premium paid by the employer for full-time employees in accordance with the following hours worked (averaged out over a three-month period):

- 25 – 35 hours / pay period = 25% of the premium
- 36 – 55 hours / pay period = 50% of the premium
- 56 – 71 hours / pay period = 80% of the premium
- 72 – 80 hours / pay period = 95% of the premium

Part-time employees are responsible for the balance of the premium plus the employee's contribution.

b. Income Continuation Insurance

The Income Continuation Insurance (ICI) is a self-insured plan which is financed by employer and employee premium contributions. Collected premiums are deposited in an employee trust fund rather than paid to an insurance company. Employees may seek further information about benefits from the Executive Director. Benefits or coverage may change at the discretion of SWWRPC.

c. Life Insurance

All eligible employees are eligible for life insurance protection. Life insurance is available to eligible employees after they have completed the first 30 days of work with SWWRPC.

More information is provided by your Supervisor, the Executive Director.

d. Retirement

All eligible employees are provided with retirement benefits at the time of employment. Rates are set by Employee Trust Funds (ETF).

This policy is reviewed periodically by the Executive Director so that any adjustments can be made to reflect changes in the Wisconsin Retirement Fund laws, rules, and/or regulations.

More information is provided by the Executive Director or by contacting Employee Trust Funds (ETF) at (877) 533-5020.

e. Section 125 Plan

Details on enrollment are explained further in the Plan Summary Document. Please meet with the Executive Director to determine if you are eligible.

f. Dental Insurance

All full-time employees are eligible for supplemental Dental Insurance. Employees will pay 100% of dental insurance premiums. Details on enrollment are explained further in the Plan Summary Document. Please meet with the Executive Director to determine if you are eligible.

21. Remote Work for Weather and Building Maintenance

a. Inclement Weather

Inclement weather may cause an employee to be unable to come to work or require an employee to leave work before the end of the work day. The decision to close the office entirely or early is the discretion of the Executive Director. Should the Executive Director close the office due to inclement weather, they will provide sufficient notice to allow staff to work remotely from their homes. If an employee personally decides to leave early or not come to work due to inclement weather and without the expressed consent of the Executive Director, it is up to the employee to use paid leave and/or make up their hours at a later date (within the quarter).

b. Building Maintenance

General and immediate maintenance to the office building, such as elevator repair, broken central air/heating system, floor waxing, fumigating, may prevent an employee from accessing their office and/or may create an unsuitable working environment. In cases where the employee is unable to perform their job, the Executive Director may close the office (either the entire office or sections of the office) and advise the employee to work remotely from their home. Sufficient notice will be given to allow the employee to prepare for remote work. In the event that an employee personally decides to miss work under the pretense of building maintenance and without the expressed consent of the Executive Director, it is the employee's responsibility to use paid leave and/or make up their hours at a later date.

22. Work Week

The normal office hours are 8:00 am - 5:00 pm, weekdays, with a one-hour lunch break and two fifteen-minute breaks. Staff working hours can vary based on outside involvement (meetings, conferences, etc.), deadlines, and their full-time or part-time status, and staff should keep the Executive Director apprised as to their whereabouts during normal office hours. Full-time exempt staff are expected to work a minimum of 80 hours per pay period. If the Executive Director feels that a full-time exempt employee is not working full time, they may monitor the employee and require specific reporting. Non-exempt employees are expected to work only their regularly scheduled hours, and any additional hours for non-exempt employees must be approved in writing by the Executive Director.

- **Scheduling sick leave:** Persons taking sick leave or other time off should notify SWWRPC Office by 9:00 a.m. on that day. Requests for use of sick leave may be made either prior to the use of the sick leave or immediately following the return to work.
- **Scheduling vacation:** All requests for vacation should be submitted in writing prior to the leave.
- **Balancing leave time:** Any questions or concerns regarding the balance of vacation time or sick leave time accumulated should be directed to the Executive Director.

a. Flexible Scheduling:

A flexible work schedule is an alternative to the traditional 9 to 5, 40-hour work week. It allows employees to vary their arrival and/or departure times with the Executive Directors approval.

If you would like to change your regular work schedule - for example, to regularly come in and leave a couple of hours earlier or to regularly work more hours on some days and fewer on others - please begin by talking to the Executive Director. SWWRPC will try to accommodate your request, to the extent practical. Because not all jobs are suitable to flexible scheduling, and because we must ensure that our staffing needs are met, we cannot guarantee that SWWRPC will grant your request.

In considering whether to grant a request to “flex” an employee’s schedule, the following factors will be weighed, and expectations met:

i. Workload:

Employees must be able to meet all workload requirements, and attend all scheduled conferences and meetings within the proposed schedule.

ii. Notification:

Employees must notify other employees, who will be affected by their presence or absence, of their schedules and whereabouts while in work status, by posting schedules, notifying the Executive Director, or other appropriate means.

iii. Scheduling:

Employees must coordinate schedules with those of other employees to maintain minimum staffing levels and required employee interaction.

iv. Tracking:

The Executive Director may direct their employees on flextime to track their actual hours worked. This record should be legible and available for review.

vi) Denial of Flextime:

The Executive Director has the right to deny, cancel or suspend any employee’s flextime privileges.

b. Telecommuting or “Hybrid” Work

Telecommuting is a work arrangement that allows employees to work at home or at some other off-site location for all or some of their regularly scheduled work hours. Although not all jobs can be performed satisfactorily from other locations, SWWRPC recognizes that, in some cases, telecommuting arrangements can provide a mutually beneficial option for both SWWRPC and employees. It is understandable that some employees may utilize telecommuting often, however SWWRPC established the below policies to prevent employees from losing essential face-to-face contact with co-workers and the Executive Director. Telecommuting or hybrid work will only be permitted once the employee demonstrates the eligibility criteria below, and only following the Probationary Period of employment. The Executive Director has the right to cancel or suspend employee telecommuting privileges at any time, for any reason or for no reason.

i. Employee Eligibility:

Candidates for telecommuting arrangements must:

- possess good time-management and organizational skills;
- engage in work that lends itself to working remotely;
- has job performance evaluations that meet or exceed expectations;
- be self-motivated, self-reliant, and disciplined.

ii) Types of Arrangements:

While employees and the Executive Director have the freedom to develop arrangements tailored to employee and departmental needs, the following basic requirements must be met:

- Employees must be able to carry out the same duties, assignments, and other work obligations at their home office as they do when working on SWWRPC’s premises; and
- Employees must be available to attend scheduled meetings and participate in other required office activities at the home office or at meetings with clients as needed. SWWRPC will endeavor to provide at least 24 hours’ notice for such events.

iii) Equipment/Furnishings/Office Supplies:

At the discretion of the Executive Director, SWWRPC may provide telecommuting employees with equipment for their home offices, but will not incur additional expenses to facilitate teleworking such as operational costs, home maintenance, etc. If the Executive Director approves of telecommuting work, SWWRPC can make reasonable accommodation for equipment used for telecommuting, such as headphones, speakers, etc. The employee is responsible for providing adequate access to internet and phone at the employee’s cost, minus the standard technology reimbursement eligible to employees as outlined in this manual.

SWWRPC provides common office supplies, such as paper, pencils, pens, and paper clips, for employees' use in their home offices, however employees must work through the standard procurement process for this and excess supplies shall be kept in the SWWRPC office when not needed. Printing expenses desired by employees working from home shall be at the expense of the employee, however the employee may coordinate printing needs with the equipment and staff in the office as needed.

iv) Request Process:

Telecommuting arrangements are approved by the Executive Director on a case-by-case basis. Employees interested in telecommuting arrangements need written permission from the Executive Director.

v) Onsite Requirement:

Employees who frequently utilize telecommuting need to maintain inter-office communication. It is required that staff maintains on-site working hours each week so that co-workers can schedule necessary meetings, conferences, etc. All project or administrative documents related to SWWRPC work shall be backed up to the SWWRPC server no less than once a week, and employees shall make any accommodation necessary in order to maintain this standard.

23. Code of Ethics

The code of ethics is designed to promote high and ethical standards of conduct for employees. The ethics code sets standards of job performance that are intended to eliminate conflicts of interest by employees.

a. Policy

The observance of high moral and ethical standards by employees is essential to the conduct of SWWRPC. The employee holds their position as a trust, and any effort to realize personal gain through official conduct is a violation of that trust. The ethical standards set forth in this statement for employees in the performance of their official duties are intended to eliminate conflicts of interest, improve standards of service, and promote and strengthen the faith and confidence of the people of this Region in their Commission. Nothing in this statement abrogates the rights of an employee under the Constitution of the United States of America and of this state, the Wisconsin Statutes or any other laws of this state.

Further it is recognized that employees should not be without all personal and economic interest in the decisions and policies of SWWRPC. Employees retain their rights as citizens to maintain interests of a personal and economic nature. The standards of ethical conduct for employees distinguish between those minor and inconsequential conflicts which are unavoidable and those conflicts which are substantial and material. The following statements cover various cases in which conflicts of interest may arise.

b. Outside Employment

No employee is prevented from accepting outside employment or following a pursuit which does not interfere or conflict with the full and faithful discharge of their duties to SWWRPC. However, outside employment is discouraged by SWWRPC.

Employees shall notify the Executive Director prior to accepting outside employment to ensure no conflict of interest exists. SWWRPC must specifically prohibit those activities that will cause a conflict of interest to the employee or to SWWRPC.

Therefore, no employee will:

- Use SWWRPC's time, facilities, equipment or supplies, or use the prestige or influence of their Commission position for private gain or advantage.
- Except for private gain or advantage money or anything of value from a business for the performance of an act required as part of official duties.
- Accept employment with a business which is subject to direct or indirect control review audit or enforcement by SWWRPC where the employee works unless approved by the Executive Director.
- Approval of all outside employment must be obtained in advance through the Executive Director, who may refer such requests to the Executive Committee or Commission.

Employees may collect fees and honoraria for papers, talks, demonstrations or appearances made on their own time and not directly related to their official duties. Employees must notify the Executive Director prior to accepting fees and honoraria to ensure no conflict exists.

c. Acceptance of Gifts of Favors

No employee who is assigned or acts as an official representative of SWWRPC in the presentation of papers, talks, or demonstrations may solicit or accept fees, honoraria, or reimbursement of expenses for personal gain. Any fees, honoraria, or reimbursement of expenses which may be offered in connection with official representation of SWWRPC must be paid to SWWRPC.

d. Use of Confidential Information

No employee may use confidential information gained during the course of or by reason of their position and official activities other than in the discharge of their official duties.

e. Use of Commission Property

No Commission employee may use, or allow the use of Commission property, including property leased by SWWRPC, for private activities or for any use other than that which serves SWWRPC's interest.

f. Conflict of Interest

No employee may use their position to obtain financial gain for themselves or their immediate family, or for any business with which they have a significant fiduciary relationship. Any salary or other compensation received by an employee from SWWRPC for services rendered does not constitute financial gain as the term is used in this policy.

No employee may use their position or influence to gain unlawful benefits, advantages, or privileges for themselves, for the members of their immediate family, or for any other person.

No employee and no business with which they have a significant fiduciary relationship may enter into any contract with a business or organization which is to be paid in full or in part out of Commission funds. Exempt from this provision are contracts awarded through public notice, competitive bidding, or any other process as provided for by law.

No employee and no business in which an employee owns or controls, directly or indirectly, at least ten percent interest may enter into a lease or real property with SWWRPC, except that the Executive Committee upon request may waive this rule where it is in the best interest of SWWRPC.

24. Grievance Procedure

It is the desire of SWWRPC to adjust the causes of grievances as they arise and to arrive at a fair and equitable conclusion for all parties involved. An employee must present a grievance, either orally or in writing, to the Executive Director within fifteen (15) days after the occurrence, explaining the nature and circumstances of the problem. The Executive Director must issue a decision on the grievance within thirty (30) days of receipt of the grievance.

If the grieving parties feel the grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved, the employee may request a hearing before an impartial hearing officer. The impartial hearing officer shall not be an officer, agent, or employee of the SWWRPC at the time. The impartial hearing officer shall confine their review to the precise issue submitted and shall have no authority to determine any other issue not so submitted. The review of the prior decision shall require deference to that decision and shall be upheld if it is made on any basis other than a basis which is arbitrary or capricious.

If the grieving parties feel the grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved, the employee may appeal to the Executive Committee (XCOM) of the SWWRPC within fifteen (15) days of the decision announced by the Executive Director with review of the appeal to be at the next scheduled meeting. The decision of the XCOM shall be final.

If the grievance is with the Executive Director, the employee shall submit their grievance directly to the Chair of the XCOM and request a meeting with the Chair of the Executive Committee (XCOM) of SWWRPC within fifteen (15) days after the occurrence, explaining the nature and circumstances of the problem. The Chair of the XCOM shall provide the Executive Director with a copy of the written grievance upon receipt. The Chair of the XCOM or designee shall make a decision on the grievance within thirty (30) days of receipt of the grievance.

Copies of the employee's written grievance statement and the written answers will be placed and retained in the personnel files of all employees impacted by the incident. Likewise, a copy shall be retained by the Chair of the Commission.

No employee shall be disciplined or discriminated against in any way because of one's proper use of the grievance procedure.

25. Drug-Free Workplace Requirements

SWWRPC is committed to providing a safe, comfortable and productive work environment for its employees. We recognize that employees who abuse drugs or alcohol at work—or who appear at work under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol—harm both themselves and the work environment. Furthermore, SWWRPC is subject to the Federal Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 (41 U.S.C. §701, et seq.). For both of these reasons, the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in SWWRPC workplace, as is alcohol or drug intoxication while on duty. Any employee in violation of this requirement will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

As a condition of employment on a Federal contract or grant, and as a matter of SWWRPC policy, all SWWRPC employees must abide by the terms of this policy and notify the Executive Director if they are convicted of a criminal drug violation in the workplace no later than five days after such conviction. SWWRPC shall within 30 days of receiving such conviction notice, with respect to any employee who is convicted, take appropriate disciplinary action against such an employee, up to and including termination.

26. Sexual Harassment Policy

Sexual harassment includes any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where tolerance of such actions is made a condition of employment, interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

It is illegal and against company policy for any worker—male or female—to harass another worker or create a hostile working environment by committing or encouraging:

- physical assaults on another employee, including rape, sexual battery, molestation, or attempts to commit these assaults;
- intentional physical conduct that is sexual in nature, including touching, pinching, patting, or brushing up against another employee's body;
- unwanted sexual advances, propositions, or sexual comments, including sexual gestures, jokes, or comments made in the presence of any employee who has indicated that such conduct is unwelcome; and
- posting or displaying pictures, posters, calendars, graffiti, objects, or other materials that are sexual in nature or pornographic.

The creation of an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment includes such actions as persistent sexual comments or the display of obscene or sexually oriented photographs or drawings.

Employees subjected to sexual harassment should immediately report the harassment to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is the source of the alleged harassment, the employee should report the problem to the Chair of the XCOM.

When the Executive Director receives a sexual harassment complaint, they shall carefully investigate the matter, questioning all employees who might have knowledge of either the incident in question or similar problems. Both the complaint and the investigative steps and findings should be thoroughly documented. To the extent possible, confidentiality of all parties involved in a sexual harassment complaint will be maintained and information will be released only to those who need to know.

Employees dissatisfied with the resolution of a sexual harassment complaint filed with the Executive Director may request review by the Commission. No employee will be subject to any form of retaliation or discipline for pursuing a sexual harassment complaint.

27. Discipline and Discharge

Any employee conduct that, in the opinion of SWWRPC, interferes with or adversely affects our business is sufficient grounds for disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action can range from oral warnings to immediate discharge. Our general policy is to take disciplinary steps in the following order:

- oral warning(s)
- written reprimand(s)
- suspension; and
- termination.

However, we reserve the right to alter the order described above, to skip disciplinary steps, to eliminate disciplinary steps or to create new and/or additional disciplinary steps.

In choosing the appropriate disciplinary action, we may consider any number of the following things:

- the seriousness of your conduct
- your history of misconduct
- your employment records
- your length of employment with us
- the strength of the evidence against you
- your ability to correct the conduct
- your attitude about the conduct
- actions we have taken for similar conduct by other employees
- how your conduct affects SWWRPC, members of the public and your coworkers, and
- any other circumstances related to the nature of the misconduct, to your employment with SWWRPC and to the effect of the misconduct on the business of SWWRPC.

We will give those considerations whatever weight we deem appropriate. Depending on the circumstances, we may give some considerations more weight than other considerations—or no weight at all.

Some conduct may result in immediate termination. Here are some examples:

- theft of SWWRPC property
- excessive tardiness or absenteeism
- arguing or fighting with customers, coworkers, or the Executive Director
- brandishing a weapon at work
- threatening the physical safety of customers, coworkers, or the Executive Director
- physically or verbally assaulting someone at work
- any illegal conduct at work
- using or possessing alcohol or illegal drugs at work
- working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- failing to carry out reasonable job assignments
- insubordination
- making false statements on a job application
- violating SWWRPC rules and regulations; and
- unlawful discrimination and harassment.

Of course, it is impossible to compile an exhaustive list of the types of conduct that will result in immediate termination. The ones listed above are merely illustrations.

You should remember that your employment is at the mutual consent of you and SWWRPC. This policy does not change this fact. This means that you or SWWRPC can terminate our employment relationship at will, at any time, with or without cause, and with or without advance notice.

As a result, SWWRPC reserves its right to terminate your employment at any time, for any lawful reason, including reasons not listed above. You also have the right to end your employment at any time.

28. Unemployment Compensation

SWWRPC is a participant in the Unemployment Compensation Insurance Program of the State of Wisconsin. All Commission employees working at least fifteen weeks on SWWRPC staff are covered under this program. Interns ~~and work-study students~~ are not covered by unemployment compensation insurance since their services on the staff are short-term and of a part-time nature. ~~Furthermore, work-study students are not official employees of SWWRPC since they receive their salaries directly from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. SWWRPC reimburses the University for a portion of the work-study student salaries at the end of each contract period.~~

Employees desiring more information about the unemployment compensation program should contact a representative of the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Unemployment Compensation Division.

29. Worker's Compensation Insurance

SWWRPC is covered by Worker's Compensation Insurance. Should any employee become injured while on duty or contract a disease traceable to employment on SWWRPC staff, the individual can receive benefits under the State of Wisconsin Workers Compensation Law. This law provides for the payment of medical and hospital bills for temporary or permanent disability. Also covered are death benefits. The amount of benefits is determined by the State. Employees desiring more information about the Worker's Compensation Program should contact the Worker's Compensation Division of the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development.

30. Salary Adjustments

Performance increases are made annually at the discretion of the Director, and will be informed by annual performance reviews and semi-annual performance discussions. Annual cost of living increases will be approved by the Commission prior to approval of the annual budget.

31. Sick Leave Conversion Credit

At the time of an employee's retirement, accumulated unused sick leave will be converted to a dollar amount. Sick leave shall be valued at the rate of the employee's pay at the time of conversion. The total amount available for conversion upon retirement is then limited to fifty-percent and should not exceed 480 hours (or 60 eight-hour workdays).

The computed dollar amount can then be used in one of the two following manners:

a. To Pay Health Insurance Premium under SWWRPC Health Plan

Only health insurance plans offered to SWWRPC by Employee Trust Funds (ETF) are available. SWWRPC will not reimburse premiums for plans outside of ETF. ETF will administer the health plan and SWWRPC will communicate any changes to the health plan as ETF makes them available. SWWRPC will track the expenditures of these monies monthly and notify the employee annually of their balance and the anticipated date the funds will be exhausted.

b. Defer Monies to a 457 Plan

This additional contribution must be made within 2.5 months of retirement or by the end of the calendar year in which the retirement occurs, whichever is later. The employee must first determine the payroll date of which the monies will be deferred. Both Wisconsin Deferred Compensation (WDC) and the Executive Director should be notified of the employee's intent to defer these monies at least thirty days in advance of the event date. It is the employee's responsibility to confirm the transaction with Wisconsin Deferred Compensation (WDC) as SWWRPC will only act as an intermediary.

For the purposes of this policy, "retirement" is defined by of the Wisconsin Department of Employee Trust Funds (ETF) and the employee must meet one of the following conditions:

- The employee takes an immediate WRS retirement annuity, or a lump sum retirement benefit which would have been immediate if paid as an annuity. An immediate annuity is one which begins within 30 days after employment terminates.
- The employee is at least age 55 (age 50 for protective employees) and has at least 20 years of WRS creditable service.
- The employee receives a WRS disability annuity or long-term disability insurance benefit.

In the event of the death of an employee, the Executive Committee may authorize payment of the value to the employee's spouse or dependent beneficiaries.

SWWRPC Reimbursement Rate Sheet

The following items are reimbursed at their corresponding rate.

All expenses should be entered into an Expense Sheet and require supporting documents (i.e. receipts, bills, logs, etc.).

This sheet will be updated regularly to meet IRS guidelines and/or market increases.

Section 7.e Relocation Expense (New Hires from Outside the Area)

- IRS Mileage Rate
- No more than \$1,500.00 for total expenses with valid receipts (taxable one-time reimbursement).

Section 17.a Transportation

- IRS Mileage Rate

Section 17.b Meals

The general process for reimbursement for lodging, meals, and incidentals for travel shall be based on the General Service Administration's Per Diem rates for the locality to which the employee is traveling, which will be used as a guideline for reimbursement. However, reimbursement rates may vary with prior approval by the Director and if permitted by a particular contract. SWWRPC shall not reimburse gratuity in excess of approximately 18% of the total bill. There shall be no reimbursement for purchase of alcohol.

Section 17.f Technology reimbursement (phones and home internet)

- \$55.00 / month for all employees

Adopted: October 23, 2007

Amended: April 29, 2008; June 24, 2008; November 25, 2008; May 26, 2009; January 26, 2010; January 25, 2011; May 22, 2012; February 25, 2014; August 26, 2014; Feb 24, 2015; Nov 27, 2018; Nov 26, 2019; Nov 24, 2020; May 28, 2024.

SWWRPC

**Personnel Policy Manual
Acknowledgment Form**

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Personnel Policy Manual of SWWRPC. I understand that it contains important information about SWWRPC's policies, that I am expected to read the manual and familiarize myself with its contents and that the policies in the manual apply to me. I understand that nothing in the manual constitutes a contract or promise of continued employment and that SWWRPC may change the policies described in the manual at any time.

By signing this form, I acknowledge that my employment is at will. I understand that I have the right to end the employment relationship at any time and for any reason, with or without notice, with or without cause, and that SWWRPC has the same right. I acknowledge that neither SWWRPC nor I have entered into an employment agreement for a specified period of time, that only the Executive Director, with the formal approval of SWWRPC, may make any agreement contrary to the at-will policy, and that any such agreement must be in writing, signed by myself and the Executive Director.

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE

DATE

EMPLOYEE'S NAME (PRINT)