



# **Community Services of Northeast Texas**

## **Community Services of Northeast Texas Handbook**

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**This version supersedes all previous versions.**



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# Core Policies

## 1.0 Welcome

### 1.1 Welcome to Community Services of Northeast Texas

Welcome! You have just joined a dedicated organization. We hope that your employment with Community Services of Northeast Texas will be rewarding and challenging. We take pride in our employees as well as in the services we provide.

The Agency complies with all federal and state employment laws, and this handbook generally reflects those laws. The Agency also complies with any applicable local laws, although there may not be an express written policy regarding those laws contained in the handbook.

The employment policies and/or benefits summaries in this handbook are written for all employees.

Please take the time now to read this handbook carefully. Sign the acknowledgment at the end to show that you have read, understood, and agree to the contents of this handbook, which sets out the basic rules and guidelines concerning your employment. This handbook supersedes any previously issued handbooks or policy statements dealing with the subjects discussed herein. The Agency reserves the right to interpret, modify, or supplement the provisions of this handbook at any time. Neither this handbook nor any other communication by a management representative or other, whether oral or written, is intended in any way to create a contract of employment. Please understand that no employee handbook can address every situation in the workplace.

If you have questions about your employment or any provisions in this handbook, contact Human Resources.

We wish you success in your employment here at Community Services of Northeast Texas!

All the best,

Michelle Morehead, CEO  
Community Services of Northeast Texas

### 1.2 At-Will Employment

Your employment with Community Services of Northeast Texas is on an "at-will" basis. This means your employment may be terminated at any time, with or without notice and with or without cause. Likewise, we respect your right to leave the Agency at any time, with or without notice and with or without cause.

Nothing in this handbook or any other Agency document should be understood as creating a contract, guaranteed or continued employment, a right to termination only "for cause," or any other guarantee of continued benefits or employment. Only the CEO has the authority to make promises or negotiate with regard to guaranteed or continued employment, and any such promises are only effective if placed in writing and signed by the CEO.

If a written contract between you and the Agency is inconsistent with this handbook, the written contract is controlling.

Nothing in this handbook will be interpreted, applied, or enforced to interfere with, restrain, or coerce employees in the exercise of their rights under Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act.

## **2.0 Introductory Language and Policies**

### **2.1 About the Company**

Community Services of Northeast Texas, Inc. (CSNT) is a private non-profit organization operating as a Federally recognized Community Action Agency (CAA), which seeks to serve low-income families and individuals in the Northeast Texas area. The main Texas counties served by CSNT are Bowie, Camp, Cass, Delta, Franklin, Hopkins, Lamar, Marion, Morris, Rains, Red River, and Titus counties. Other counties are also served with ancillary programs. CSNT's primary goal is to identify and combat the major causes and conditions of poverty and move families toward self-reliance.

The Community Services Division of CSNT administers the Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program (CEAP), the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA), and other programs. This Division is responsible for case management, self-reliance activities, food pantries, fan drives, school supplies, toy drives, and much more. CSNT currently has one outreach office in Mt. Pleasant, which serves all twelve of the main counties listed above.

Head Start is a comprehensive family-focused child development program which prepares children for school success and helps families remain involved in the education process. The program serves income-eligible children ages 1-5 and their families by providing educational, health, dental and social services. Head Start partners with most Independent School Districts in the service area.

### **2.2 Mission Statement**

CSNT applies all available strategies enabling Northeast Texas families to lead improved, empowered, and self-reliant lives.

### **2.3 Ethics Code**

Community Services of Northeast Texas will conduct business honestly and ethically wherever operations are maintained. We strive to improve the quality of our services, products, and operations and will maintain a reputation for honesty, fairness, respect, responsibility, integrity, trust, and sound business judgment. Our supervisors and employees are expected to adhere to high standards of business and personal integrity as a representation of our business practices, at all times consistent with their duty of loyalty to the Agency.

We expect that officers, directors, and employees will not knowingly misrepresent the Agency and will not speak on behalf of the Agency unless specifically authorized. The confidentiality of trade secrets, proprietary information, and similar confidential commercially-sensitive information (e.g., financial or sales records/reports, marketing or business strategies/plans, product development, customer lists, patents, or trademarks) about the Agency or operations, or that of our customers or partners, is to be treated with discretion and only disseminated on a need-to-know basis (see policies relating to privacy).

Violation of the Ethics Code can result in discipline, up to and including termination of employment. The degree of discipline imposed may be influenced by the existence of voluntary disclosure of any ethical violation and whether or not the violator cooperated in any subsequent investigation.

CSNT is an Agency committed to delivering a high-quality service, while promoting Agency accountability and maintaining legal compliance.

If any employee reasonably believes that some policy, practice, or activity of CSNT is in violation of any law or public policy, a complaint may be made to the CEO.

CSNT will not retaliate against any employee who, in good faith, has made a complaint. Accordingly, any report made in good faith under this policy will not result in any adverse action against the person making the report.

Whistleblowers frequently make their reports in confidence. Subject to applicable law and policy and the need to conduct an appropriate investigation, reasonable efforts will be made to maintain confidentiality of the Whistleblowers' identity and the information they report. Whistleblowers should be cautioned that their identity may become known for reasons outside of the control of recognized CSNT administrators.

## **2.4 Revisions to Handbook**

This handbook is our attempt to keep you informed of the terms and conditions of your employment, including Community Services of Northeast Texas policies and procedures. The handbook is not a contract. The Agency reserves the right to revise, add, or delete from this handbook as we determine to be in our best interest, except the policy concerning at-will employment. When changes are made to the policies and guidelines in this handbook, we will communicate them promptly, either in a written supplement to the handbook, email, or via Paychex.

## **3.0 Hiring and Orientation Policies**

### **3.1 EEO Statement and Non-harassment Policy**

#### **Equal Opportunity Statement**

Community Services of Northeast Texas is committed to the principles of equal employment. We are committed to complying with all federal, state, and local laws providing equal employment opportunities, and all other employment laws and regulations. It is our intent to maintain a work environment that is free of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation based on the following protected classes: age (40 and older), race (including discrimination on the basis of a person's hair texture or protective hairstyle commonly or historically associated with race, such as braids, locks, and twists), religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, sexual orientation (including transgender status, gender identity or expression), pregnancy (including childbirth, lactation, and related medical conditions), physical or mental disability, genetic information, military service, veteran status, political affiliation, or any other status protected by federal, state, or local laws. The Agency is dedicated to the fulfillment of this policy in regard to all aspects of employment, including, but not limited to, recruiting, hiring, placement, transfer, training, promotion, rates of pay, and other compensation, termination, and all other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment.

The Agency will conduct a prompt and thorough investigation of all allegations of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, or any violation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Policy in a confidential manner. The Agency will take appropriate corrective action, if and where warranted. The Agency prohibits retaliation against employees who provide information about, complain about, or assist in the investigation of any complaint of discrimination or violation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Policy.

We are all responsible for upholding this policy. You may discuss questions regarding equal employment opportunity with your supervisor or any other designated member of management.

#### **Policy Against Workplace Harassment**

Community Services of Northeast Texas has a strict policy against all types of workplace harassment, including sexual harassment and other forms of workplace harassment, based upon an individual's membership in a protected class. All forms of harassment of, or by, employees, vendors, visitors, customers, and clients are strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

#### **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of an individual's employment; (2) submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or (3)

such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

While it is not possible to identify every act that constitutes or may constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples of sexual harassment:

- Unwelcome requests for sexual favors;
- Lewd or derogatory comments or jokes;
- Comments regarding sexual behavior or another person's body;
- Sexual innuendo and other vocal activity such as catcalls or whistles;
- Obscene letters, notes, emails, invitations, photographs, cartoons, articles, or other written or pictorial materials of a sexual nature;
- Repeated requests for dates after being informed that interest is unwelcome;
- Retaliating against another for refusing a sexual advance or reporting an incident of possible sexual harassment to the Agency or any government agency;
- Offering or providing favors or employment benefits such as promotions, favorable evaluations, favorable assigned duties or shifts, etc., in exchange for sexual favors; and
- Any unwanted physical touching or assaults, or blocking or impeding movements.

#### Other Harassment

Other workplace harassment is verbal or physical conduct that insults or shows hostility or aversion towards an individual because of the individual's membership in a protected class.

Again, while it is not possible to list all the circumstances that may constitute other forms of workplace harassment, the following are some examples of conduct that may constitute workplace harassment:

- The use of disparaging or abusive words or phrases, slurs, negative stereotyping, or threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts that relate to the above protected categories;
- Written or graphic material that insults, stereotypes, or shows aversion or hostility towards an individual or group because of one of the above protected categories and that is placed on walls, bulletin boards, or elsewhere on our premises, in emails or voicemails, or otherwise circulated in the workplace; and
- A display of symbols, slogans, or items that are associated with hate or intolerance towards any select group.

#### Reporting Discrimination and Harassment

If you feel that you have witnessed or have been subjected to any form of discrimination or harassment, immediately notify Human Resources or any member of management.

The Agency prohibits retaliation against employees who, based on a reasonable belief, provide information about, complain, or assist in the investigation of any complaint of harassment or discrimination.

We will promptly and thoroughly investigate any claim and take appropriate action where we find a claim has merit. To the extent possible, we will retain the confidentiality of those who report suspected or alleged violations of the harassment policy.

Discipline for violation of this policy may include, but is not limited to, reprimand, suspension, demotion, transfer, and termination of employment. If the Agency determines that harassment or discrimination occurred, corrective action will be taken to effectively end the harassment. As necessary, the Agency may monitor any incident of harassment or discrimination to assure the inappropriate behavior has stopped. In all cases, the Agency will follow up as necessary to ensure that no individual is retaliated against for making a complaint or cooperating with an investigation.



## 3.2 Accommodations for Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Related Medical Conditions

Community Services of Northeast Texas provides reasonable accommodations to employees experiencing limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, nursing mothers, or related medical conditions. We are committed to complying with the federal Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) and any applicable state or local laws offering additional protections.

Examples of reasonable accommodations include:

- Additional break time for restroom use, meals, hydration, and rest.
- Seating options allowing for sitting or standing as needed.
- Schedule changes, part-time work, and paid and unpaid leave.
- Flexible work hours to accommodate medical appointments and physical needs.
- Telework (remote work).
- Closer parking spots to the workplace entrance.
- Light duty.
- Making existing facilities accessible or modifying the work environment.
- Job restructuring.
- Temporarily suspending one or more essential functions of the job.
- Acquiring or modifying equipment, uniforms, or devices.
- Adjusting or modifying examinations or policies.

If you require an accommodation, notify your supervisor. In instances where the need for a particular accommodation is not obvious, you may be asked to provide:

- The reason an accommodation is needed;
- A description of the proposed accommodation; and
- Information on how the accommodation will effectively address your limitations.

Medical documentation will not be required in the following situations:

- When the limitation and need for an accommodation is obvious.
- If the Agency is already aware of the limitation due to previous disclosure.
- If the requested accommodation is to do any of the following, as needed:
  - Carry or keep water nearby and drink;
  - Take additional restroom breaks;
  - Sit, stand, or alternate between sitting and standing; or
  - Take breaks to eat and drink.
- For any lactation accommodations.
- When a similar accommodation has been provided to other employees without requiring documentation.

### Nursing Mothers

Community Services of Northeast Texas will provide nursing mothers reasonable break time to express milk for their infant child for up to one year following the child's birth.

If you are nursing, you will be provided with a space, other than a restroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public.

Expressed milk can be stored in company refrigerators. Sufficiently mark or label your milk to avoid confusion for other employees who may share the refrigerator. You may also bring a personal cooler for storage.

Break time should, if possible, be taken concurrently with any other break time already provided. If you are nonexempt, clock in and out for any time taken that does not run concurrently with normally scheduled rest periods. Break time may be unpaid where permissible by applicable law.

You must make reasonable efforts to not disrupt Agency operations.

You are encouraged to discuss the length and frequency of these breaks with your supervisor.

The Agency will not discriminate or retaliate against employees who express breast milk in the workplace in accordance with this policy.

The Agency will engage in an interactive process with you to identify suitable accommodations. While we strive to accommodate all requests, certain accommodations may not be provided if they would result in undue hardship to the Agency. Factors considered include the nature and cost of the accommodation, the overall financial resources of the facility, and the impact on operations, including safety and efficiency.

If leave is provided as a reasonable accommodation, it may run concurrently with leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and/or any other applicable leave as permitted by law.

The Agency strictly prohibits retaliation against employees who request or utilize an accommodation under this policy.

### **3.3 Disability Accommodation**

Community Services of Northeast Texas complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, and all applicable state and local fair employment practices laws, and is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals with disabilities, including disabilities related to pregnancy, childbirth, and related conditions. Consistent with this commitment, the Agency will provide reasonable accommodation to otherwise qualified individuals where appropriate to allow the individual to perform the essential functions of the job, unless doing so would create an undue hardship on the business.

If you require an accommodation because of your disability, it is your responsibility to notify your supervisor. You may be asked to include relevant information such as:

- The reason you need an accommodation.
- A description of the proposed accommodation.
- How the accommodation will help you perform the essential functions of your job.

After receiving your request, the Agency will engage in an interactive dialogue with you to determine the precise limitations of your disability and explore potential reasonable accommodations that could overcome those limitations. Where appropriate, we may need your permission to obtain additional information from your medical provider. All medical information received by the Agency in connection with a request for accommodation will be treated as confidential.

The Agency encourages you to suggest specific reasonable accommodations that you believe would allow you to perform your job. However, the Agency is not required to make the specific accommodation requested by you and may provide an alternative accommodation, to the extent any reasonable accommodation can be made without imposing an undue hardship on the Agency.

Where state or local law provides greater protections to employees than federal law, the Agency will apply the law that provides the greatest benefit to employees.

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

The Agency will not discriminate or retaliate against employees for requesting an accommodation.

### **3.4 Religious Accommodation**

Community Services of Northeast Texas recognizes the diversity of religious beliefs and is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to all employees, regardless of their religious beliefs and

practices or lack thereof. Consistent with this commitment, the Agency complies with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and all applicable state and local laws that prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of religion. The Agency will reasonably accommodate the sincerely held religious beliefs of employees if the accommodations would resolve a conflict between the individual's religious belief or practice and a work requirement, unless doing so would create an undue hardship.

### **Requesting a Religious Accommodation**

If you need accommodation because of your religious beliefs or practices, make the request with your Human Resources department. You may be asked to include relevant information such as:

- A description of the proposed accommodation.
- The reason you need the accommodation.
- How the accommodation will help resolve the conflict between your religious beliefs or practices (or lack thereof) and your work requirements.

After receiving your request, the Agency will engage in an interactive dialogue with you to explore potential accommodations that could resolve the conflict between your religious beliefs or practices and work requirements. The Agency encourages you to suggest specific reasonable accommodations. However, the Agency is not required to make the specific accommodation requested by you and may provide an alternative accommodation, to the extent any reasonable accommodation can be made without imposing an undue hardship on the Agency.

The Agency will not discriminate or retaliate against employees who, in good faith, request a religious accommodation under this policy.

## **3.5 Conflicts of Interest**

Community Services of Northeast Texas is concerned with conflicts of interest that create actual or potential job-related concerns, especially in the areas of confidentiality, customer relations, safety, security, and morale. If there is any actual or potential conflict of interest between you and a competitor, supplier, distributor, or contractor to the Agency, you must disclose it to your supervisor. If an actual or potential conflict of interest is determined to exist, the Agency will take such steps as it deems necessary to reduce or eliminate this conflict.

## **3.6 Employment Authorization Verification**

New hires will be required to complete Section 1 of federal Form I-9 on the first day of paid employment and must present acceptable documents authorized by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services proving identity and employment authorization no later than the third business day following the start of employment with Community Services of Northeast Texas. If you are currently employed and have not complied with this requirement or if your status has changed, inform your supervisor.

If you are authorized to work in this country for a limited time, you will be required to submit proof of renewed employment eligibility prior to expiration of that time to remain employed by the Agency.

## **3.7 Employment of Relatives and Friends**

The Agency will not employ relatives or friends in circumstances where actual or potential conflicts may arise that could compromise supervision, safety, confidentiality, security, and morale at Community Services of Northeast Texas. It is your obligation to inform the Agency of any such potential conflict so we can determine how best to respond to the specific situation.

### **3.8 Job Descriptions**

Community Services of Northeast Texas attempts to maintain a job description for each position. If you do not have a current copy of your job description, you should request one from your supervisor.

Job descriptions prepared by the Agency serve as an outline only. Due to business needs, you may be required to perform job duties that are not within your written job description. Furthermore, the Agency may have to revise, add to, or delete from your job duties per business needs. On occasion, the Agency may need to revise job descriptions with or without advance notice to employees.

If you have any questions regarding your job description or the scope of your duties, please speak with your supervisor.

### **3.9 New Hires and Introductory Periods**

The first 90 days of your employment is considered an introductory period. During this period, you will become familiar with Community Services of Northeast Texas and your job responsibilities, and we will have the opportunity to monitor the quality and value of your performance and make any necessary adjustments in your job description or responsibilities. Completion of this introductory period does not imply guaranteed or continued employment. Nothing that occurs during or after this period should be construed to change the nature of the at-will employment relationship.

### **3.10 Posting of Openings**

Community Services of Northeast Texas desires to promote qualified employees from within where it believes that is possible, consistent with the need to assure that all positions are staffed by highly competent individuals.

To be eligible to apply for a posted job, employees must have performed competently for at least 180 calendar days in their current position. In the best interest of the Agency, the CEO reserves the right to transfer an employee even if they have not fulfilled the 180-day requirement.

To apply for an open position, employees should submit an application to Human Resources.

Job posting is a way to inform employees of openings and to identify qualified and interested applicants who might not otherwise be known to the hiring supervisor. Other recruiting sources may also be used to fill open positions in the best interest of the organization.

### **3.11 Physical/Medical Examination**

Bi-annual medical evaluations are required by law for Head Start/Early Head Start employees and for all other employees when the examination is job-related and aligns with business needs, unless restricted by state or federal law. Non-compliance may lead to disciplinary actions, including immediate termination, at the discretion of the CEO. Additionally, CSNT requires all employees to undergo a physical examination by a qualified physician or certified nurse practitioner either before or within ninety days of their hire date, as determined by the CEO.

### **3.12 Training Program**

Community Services of Northeast Texas, Inc. has professional development opportunities for staff. These opportunities may include on-site training, as well as out-of-town conferences.

Head Start employees should refer to the Content Area Policies and Procedures Manual for specific details. Community Services division employees should submit inquiries/requests to their immediate supervisor.

All training is subject to funding source regulations, standards and budget limitations. Written notification is given to employees for any additional professional development funding.

## **4.0 Wage and Hour Policies**

### **4.1 Pay Period**

At Community Services of Northeast Texas, the standard pay period is biweekly for all employees. Pay dates are alternate Fridays. Special provisions may be required from time to time if holidays fall on pay dates. In the event that a regularly scheduled payday falls on a non-banking day, employees will receive pay on the last banking day before the regularly scheduled payday.

If you are paid by commission, refer to your commission agreement.

Review your paycheck for accuracy. If you find an issue, report it to your supervisor immediately.

### **4.2 Overtime**

If you are nonexempt, you may qualify for overtime pay. All overtime must be approved in advance, in writing, by your supervisor.

At certain times Community Services of Northeast Texas may require you to work overtime. We will attempt to give as much notice as possible in this instance. However, advance notice may not always be possible. Failure to work overtime when requested or working unauthorized overtime may result in discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

Unless otherwise required or exempted by law, overtime pay of one and one-half times your regular rate of pay is paid for any hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek. Holidays, vacation days, and sick leave days do not count as time worked for computing overtime.

### **4.3 Meal and Rest Periods**

Community Services of Northeast Texas strives to provide a safe and healthy work environment and complies with all federal and state regulations regarding meal and rest periods. Check with your supervisor regarding procedures and schedules for rest and meal breaks. The Agency requests that employees accurately observe and record meal and rest periods. If you know in advance that you may not be able to take your scheduled break or meal period, let your supervisor know; in addition, notify your supervisor as soon as possible if you were unable to or prohibited from taking a meal or rest period.

### **4.4 Attendance**

Community Services of Northeast Texas requires regular and punctual attendance by employees. You are expected to arrive at the workplace on time and ready to perform your job. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

If you are not going to arrive at work or return from a break on time, you must notify your supervisor as soon as possible but at least 1 hour before your scheduled start time.

If you must miss work due to an emergency or other unexpected circumstance, notify your supervisor as soon as possible. Notice should include the expected duration of your absence and your expected time or

date of return. You may be required to provide documentation of the need for the absence, as permitted by applicable law.

If you become ill during your scheduled workday and need to leave before the end of your shift, notify your supervisor immediately. If you are unable to perform your job at an acceptable level due to illness, you may be sent home until you are well enough to work.

Absences will be considered excused if you requested the time off in accordance with Agency policies and received the required approval for the absence. Absences will be considered unexcused if you are absent from work during scheduled work hours without permission and do not receive retroactive approval. This policy applies to all absences, including full- or partial-day absences, late arrivals, and early departures.

In the event an employee is absent three consecutive days (with proper notice) due to an illness or an injury that has prevented them from returning to their job responsibilities, they will be required to provide a physician's statement releasing them for full duty prior to resuming their scheduled workdays.

Planned absences, such as vacations or medical appointments, should be arranged as far in advance as possible. If you need to be absent during the workday, attempt to schedule outside appointments or obligations so that your absence has the smallest impact possible on business operations.

The Agency reserves the right to apply unused vacation, sick time, or other paid time off to unauthorized absences when permitted by applicable law. Absences resulting from approved leave, vacation, or legal requirements are exceptions to this policy.

If you fail to report to work for 3 or more consecutive days and have not provided proper notification, the Agency will assume that you have voluntarily resigned your position and will proceed with the termination process.

## 4.5 Employment Classifications

The Agency designates all employees as either exempt or nonexempt in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local law:

- **Exempt employees.** Exempt employees are generally paid a fixed salary and are not entitled to overtime pay.
- **Nonexempt employees.** Nonexempt employees are entitled to minimum wage and overtime pay.

The Agency also assigns each employee to one of the following categories:

- Regular Full-Time employees are those who have completed the introductory period and who are regularly scheduled to work 30 hours or more per week. Full-time employees are eligible for CSNT's full benefit package.
- Regular Part-Time employees are those who have completed the introductory period and who are regularly scheduled to work less than 30 hours per week. Generally, they are not eligible for certain benefits (i.e. health, dental and vision). Specific requirements must be met to qualify for certain additional benefits.
- Temporary employees are those who are hired as interim replacements, to temporarily supplement the work force, or to assist in the completion of a specific project. Employment assignments in this category are of a limited duration. Employment beyond any initially stated period does not in any way imply a change in employment status. Temporary employees are ineligible for all of CSNT's benefit programs.

You will be informed of your classification, status, and responsibilities at the time of hire and at any time your classification, status, or responsibilities change. If you have a question regarding this information, contact Human Resources. These classifications do not alter your employment at-will status.

## **4.6 Introduction to Wage and Hour Policies**

At Community Services of Northeast Texas, pay depends on a wide range of factors, including pay scale surveys, individual effort, profits, and market forces. If you have any questions about your compensation, including matters such as paid time off, commissions, overtime, benefits, or paycheck deductions, speak with your supervisor.

## **4.7 Paycheck Deductions**

Community Services of Northeast Texas is required by law to make certain deductions from your pay each pay period, including deductions for federal income tax, Social Security and Medicare (FICA) taxes, state income taxes, and any other deductions required under law or by court order for wage garnishments. The amount of your tax deductions will depend on your earnings and the information you list on your federal Form W-4 and applicable state withholding form. Permissible deductions for exempt employees may also include, but are not limited to, deductions for full-day absences for reasons other than sickness or disability and certain disciplinary suspensions. You may also authorize certain voluntary deductions from your paycheck where permissible under state law. Your deductions will be reflected in your wage statement. If you have any questions about deductions from your pay, contact Human Resources.

The Agency will not make deductions to your pay that are prohibited by federal, state, or local law. Review your paycheck for errors each pay period and immediately report any discrepancies to Human Resources.

You will be reimbursed in full for any isolated, inadvertent, or improper deductions, as defined by law. If an error is found, you will receive an immediate adjustment, which will be paid no later than your next regular payday.

The Agency will not retaliate against employees who report erroneous deductions in accordance with this policy.

## **4.8 Posting of Work Schedules**

Work schedules for employees vary throughout the Agency. Supervisors will advise employees of their individual work schedules. Staffing needs and operational demands may necessitate variations in starting and ending times, as well as variations in the total hours that may be scheduled each day and week.

## **4.9 Recording Time**

Community Services of Northeast Texas is required by applicable federal, state, and local laws to keep accurate records of hours worked by certain employees. To ensure that the Agency has complete and accurate time records and that employees are paid for all hours worked, nonexempt employees are required to record all working time. Speak with your supervisor for specific instructions.

You must accurately record all of your time to ensure you are paid for all hours worked and must follow established Agency procedures for recording your hours worked. Time must be recorded as follows:

- Immediately before starting your shift.
- Immediately after finishing work, before your meal period.
- Immediately before resuming work, after your meal period.
- Immediately after finishing work.
- Immediately before and after any other time away from work.
- Other compensable time required by state law (such as time taken waiting to undergo and undergoing mandatory screenings).

Time sheets are to be turned into your supervisor each week.

If you are required to clock in, you should clock in no more than five minutes before the time you actually start working and clock out no later than five minutes after you actually stop working.

Notify your supervisor of any pay discrepancies, unrecorded or mis-recorded work hours, or any involuntarily missed meal or break periods.

Falsifying time entries is strictly prohibited. Falsifying time entries includes working "off the clock." If you falsify your own time records, or the time records of co-workers, or if you work off the clock, you will be subject to discipline up to and including termination. Immediately report to Human Resources any employee, supervisor, or supervisor who falsifies your time entries or encourages or requires you to falsify your time entries or work off the clock.

## **4.10 Travel Expenses**

The purpose of this policy is to define approved business travel expenses and the authority for incurring and approving such expenses at Community Services of Northeast Texas.

It is the policy of CSNT to reimburse only reasonable and necessary expenses actually incurred by Board Members, Officers and/or employees. Employee travel and the expenses associated with said activities shall be authorized only in circumstances, which are clearly consistent with the Agency's mission. Travel should be the most reasonable and cost-effective alternative, consistent with good business practices. Neither luxury, nor sub-standard modes of transportation and accommodations shall be used.

Employees who are uncertain about a particular expense or policy will need to contact their supervisor prior to the expenditure. Those traveling are reminded to exercise good business judgment and discretion with respect to incurred expenses. Reported expenses must be supported by appropriate documentation.

### **Necessity of Travel**

Travel must be reasonable and/or necessary to be considered allowable. Employees shall consider the ways in which the Agency will benefit from the travel and weigh those benefits against the anticipated costs of the travel. The same considerations shall be taken into account in deciding whether a particular individual's participation is necessary. In determining whether the benefits to CSNT outweigh the costs, less expensive alternatives, such as participation by telephone or video conferencing, or the availability of local programs or training opportunities, shall be considered.

Instances of travel should be as a result of one of the following situations:

- Attendance is required by a funding source.
- Attendance is part of a planned, approved, and budgeted training schedule.
- Attendance is part of an employee's Agency-approved fulfillment of responsibilities as an Officer or Board Member of a county, regional, state, or national association.
- Attendance is required in order to facilitate an approved task within an employee's job description which cannot be completed by other means.
- Attendance has been deemed necessary by the CEO as a prudent measure in the fulfillment of the Agency's mission.

### **Request/Authorization to Travel**

Travel plans must be pre-approved. The requesting employee is required to complete the approved travel request form(s) and submit the completed form(s) to their supervisor.

Supervisors will assess the request and its conformity with the Agency's Travel Expenses Policy to determine if the travel meets the needs of the program.

Any employee attending a training that adds value to their ability to perform mission-driven tasks for the agency will know the amount of funds being expended on the training.



The CEO shall assess the request, weighing all presented factors, including compliance with state and federal regulations, to ensure the request is in the best interest of the Agency. The request shall be analyzed to avoid unnecessary expenses.

## **Reimbursements**

CSNT will reimburse employees for allowable and reasonable business travel expenses incurred while on assignments away from the normal work location. All business travel must be approved in advance by the CEO.

supervisors (or team members directed by a supervisor to do so) will make all travel arrangements for all Community Services employees. If all arrangements cannot be arranged and paid prior to travel, the types of expenses that may be approved for reimbursement are:

- Airfare or common carrier fare for travel in coach or economy class or the lowest available fare
- Car rental fees, only for compact or mid-sized cars
- Fares for shuttle or airport bus service, where available; costs of public transportation for other ground travel
- Taxi fares, parking fees, including valet parking, only when there is no less expensive alternative or when other methods are impractical or unsafe.
- Mileage costs for the use of personal cars, only when approved in advance.
- Cost of standard accommodation in low to mid-priced hotels, motels, or similar lodgings, or when a specific rate has been negotiated with, and, or through a funding source or the convening entity.
- Charges for telephone calls, fax, and similar services required for business purposes.
- Approved per diem rate for meals and incidental expenses.

Employees who are involved in an accident while traveling on business must promptly report the incident to their immediate supervisor. Vehicles owned, leased, or rented by Community Services may not be used for personal use without prior approval of the CEO, and only in cases where such uses would benefit the Agency.

Travel advances to cover certain reasonable anticipated expenses may be made to employees, after travel has been approved.

When travel is completed, employees are required to submit completed travel expense reports within ten days. Reports must be accompanied by receipts for all expenses not covered by a per diem advance.

Employees should contact their supervisor for guidance and assistance on procedures related to travel arrangements, travel advances, expense reports, reimbursement for specific expenses, or any other business travel issues.

Abuse of this business travel expenses policy, including falsifying expense reports to reflect costs not incurred by the employee can be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. No employee may charge any personal expenditures to any Agency credit card, debit card, or hotel bill at any time. Exceptions are when hotels require all charges to be posted to the room portfolio. In such cases, the traveling employee must settle the personal items prior to the final room receipt being posted.

## **Mileage Reimbursements**

Employees may submit a mileage form for reimbursement with their time sheets listing approved travel for reimbursement based on the current IRS Mileage Rate.

Local travel is defined as any travel from an employee's duty station to any location other than their duty station for the purpose of conducting agency business.

Approved travel is defined as travel in an employee's personal vehicle for stated purposes in which case the employee has sought and received prior approval from a Program Director or the CEO, or in which

case the travel is deemed necessary by the employee's supervisor and no agency vehicle is available. If there is a company vehicle available, mileage will not be paid or reimbursed. If employees still choose to drive their personal vehicle for work activities, a copy of their current personal liability insurance must be on file.

Out-of-town travel is defined as travel to locations with a distance of more than 50 miles from the agency's administrative office to events which require an overnight stay.

Approved long-distance travel is defined as travel in an employee's personal vehicle in lieu of travel via public carrier. Prior approval from the CEO is required.

All travel reimbursement forms must be submitted within ten days of the end of travel.

It is the intent to pay reimbursements within 14 days of submission, based on availability of funds.

If an employee chooses not to submit a form for reimbursement, the amount of the reimbursement cannot be used as in-kind or non-federal share.

Payments for reimbursement are processed through the agency's accounts payable system and not through the payroll department. It is the responsibility of each individual employee receiving reimbursements to maintain their own records for tax purposes. The agency will not be able to research tax documentation at a later date.

## **5.0 Performance, Discipline, Layoff, and Termination**

### **5.1 Criminal Activity/Arrests**

Employees should report all incidents to their supervisor. Employees should report changes in their criminal background to their supervisor immediately.

Community Services of Northeast Texas will report all criminal activity in accordance with applicable law. Involvement in criminal activity while employed by the Agency, whether on or off Agency property, may result in disciplinary action including suspension or termination of employment.

Employees are expected to be on the job, ready to work, when scheduled. Inability to report to work as scheduled may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, for violation of an attendance policy or job abandonment.

### **5.2 Standards of Conduct**

Community Services of Northeast Texas wishes to create a work environment that promotes job satisfaction, respect, responsibility, integrity, and value for all our employees, clients, customers, and other stakeholders. We all share the responsibility of improving the quality of our work environment. By deciding to work here, you agree to follow our rules.

While it is impossible to list everything that could be considered misconduct in the workplace, what is outlined here is a list of common-sense infractions that could result in discipline, up to and including immediate termination of employment. This policy is not intended to limit our right to discipline or terminate employees for any reason permitted by law.

All employees representing or acting on behalf of Community Services will comply with all applicable laws and regulations and all directors, officers, and employees are expected to conduct business in accordance with the letter, spirit, and intent of all relevant laws and to refrain from any illegal, dishonest, or unethical conduct. All Head Start employees are required to abide by the *Human Resources Management, 1302.90 – Personnel Policies of the Head Start Performance standards*.

Examples of inappropriate conduct include:

- Violation of the policies and procedures set forth in this handbook.
- Possessing, using, distributing, selling, or negotiating the sale of illegal drugs or other controlled substances.
- Being under the influence of alcohol during working hours on Agency property (including in Agency vehicles), or on Agency business.
- Inaccurate reporting of the hours worked by you or any other employees.
- Providing knowingly inaccurate, incomplete, or misleading information when speaking on behalf of the Agency or in the preparation of any employment-related documents including, but not limited to, job applications, personnel files, employment review documents, intra-company communications, or expense records.
- Taking or destroying Agency property.
- Possession of potentially hazardous or dangerous property (where not permitted) such as firearms, weapons, chemicals, etc., without prior authorization.
- Fighting with, or harassment of (as defined in our EEO policy), any fellow employee, vendor, or customer.
- Refusal or failure to follow directions or to perform a requested or required job task.
- Refusal or failure to follow safety rules and procedures.
- Excessive tardiness or absences.
- Smoking in non-designated areas.
- Working unauthorized overtime.
- Solicitation of fellow employees on Agency premises during working hours.
- Failure to dress according to Agency policy.
- Use of obscene or harassing (as defined by our EEO policy) language in the workplace.
- Engaging in outside employment that interferes with your ability to perform your job at this Agency.
- Gambling on Agency premises.
- Lending keys or keycards to Agency property to unauthorized persons.
- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of property.
- Falsification of timekeeping records.
- Fraudulent activity.
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace, while on duty, or while operating employer-owned vehicles or equipment.
- Fighting or threatening violence in the workplace.
- Boisterous or disruptive activity in the workplace.
- Negligence or improper conduct in the workplace.
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of employer-owned or customer-owned property.
- Insubordination or other disrespectful conduct.
- Violation of safety or health rules.
- Smoking in prohibited areas.
- Sexual or other unlawful or unwelcome harassment.
- Possession of dangerous materials, such as explosives or firearms, in the workplace.
- Excessive absenteeism or any absence without notice.
- Unauthorized absence from workstation during the workday.
- Unauthorized use of telephones, mail systems, or other employer-owned equipment.
- Unauthorized disclosure of business "secrets" or confidential information.
- Violation of personnel policies.
- Unsatisfactory performance or conduct.
- Failure to follow and adhere to all Federal and State Funding Rules and Regulations.

Nothing in this policy is intended to limit your rights under the National Labor Relations Act, or to modify the at-will employment status where at-will is not prohibited by state law.

## **5.3 Disciplinary Process**

Violation of Community Services of Northeast Texas's policies or procedures may result in disciplinary action, including demotion, transfer, leave without pay, or termination of employment. The Agency encourages a system of progressive discipline depending on the type of prohibited conduct. However, the Agency is not required to engage in progressive discipline and may discipline or terminate employees who violate the rules of conduct, or where the quality or value of their work fails to meet expectations at any time. Again, any attempt at progressive discipline does not imply that your employment is anything other than on an "at-will" basis consistent with applicable law. Note that the specific terms of your employment relationship, including termination procedures, are governed by the laws of the state in which you are employed.

In appropriate circumstances, CSNT will first provide you with a verbal counseling, then with performance correction notices and task plans, and if the conduct is not sufficiently altered, eventual demotion, transfer, or termination of employment.

Community Services recognizes that there are certain types of employee problems that are serious enough to justify either a suspension, or, in extreme situations, termination of employment, without going through the usual progressive discipline steps.

By using progressive discipline, the Agency hopes most employee problems can be corrected at an early stage, benefiting both the employee and Community Services.

## **5.4 Exit Interview**

You may be asked to participate in an exit interview when you leave Community Services of Northeast Texas. The purpose of the exit interview is to provide management with greater insight into your decision to leave employment; identify any trends requiring attention or opportunities for improvement; and to assist the Agency in developing effective recruitment and retention strategies. Your cooperation in the exit interview process is appreciated.

Community Services of Northeast Texas, Inc. (CSNT) will generally schedule exit interviews at the time of employment termination. The exit interview will afford an opportunity to discuss such issues as employee benefits, conversion privileges, repayment of outstanding debts to CSNT, or return of CSNT-owned property. Suggestions, complaints, and questions can also be voiced. Employees will receive their final pay in accordance with applicable state law.

## **5.5 Open Door/Conflict Resolution Process**

Community Services of Northeast Texas strives to provide a comfortable, productive, legal, and ethical work environment. To this end, we want you to bring any problems, concerns, or grievances you have about the work place to the attention of your supervisor and, if necessary, to Human Resources or upper level management. To help manage conflict resolution we have instituted the following problem-solving procedure:

If you believe there is inappropriate conduct or activity on the part of the Agency, management, its employees, vendors, customers, or any other persons or entities related to the Agency, bring your concerns to the attention of your supervisor at a time and place that will allow the person to properly listen to your concern. Most problems can be resolved informally through dialogue between you and your immediate supervisor. If you have already brought this matter to the attention of your supervisor before and do not believe you have received a sufficient response, or if you believe that person is the source of the problem, present your concerns to Human Resources or CEO, who will then work with his/her staff (and employment counsel, as necessary). Describe the problem, those persons involved in the problem, efforts you have made to resolve the problem, and any suggested solution you may have.

## **5.6 Outside Employment**

Outside employment that creates a conflict of interest or affects the quality or value of your work performance or availability at Community Services of Northeast Texas is prohibited. The Agency recognizes that you may seek additional employment during off hours, but in all cases expects that any outside employment will not affect your attendance, job performance, productivity, work hours, or scheduling, or would otherwise adversely affect your ability to effectively perform your duties or in any way create a conflict of interest. Any outside employment that will conflict with your duties and obligations to the Agency should be reported to your supervisor. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in discipline up to and including termination.

## **5.7 Performance Reviews**

Community Services of Northeast Texas will make efforts to periodically review your work performance. The performance review is a tool used to evaluate employee performance over the review period by assessing:

- Your performance of assigned job duties and responsibilities.
- Your achievement or lack of achievement of specific targets and goals.
- Other aspects of your performance (e.g., communication skills, professionalism, ability to collaborate, reliability, willingness to take initiative, etc.).

The performance review process will take place at the end of an employee's initial period in any new position (the introductory period), annually, or as business needs dictate.

The performance review process is intended to increase the quality and value of your work performance. The review process may be used to provide both supervisors and employees the opportunity to discuss job tasks, identify and correct weaknesses, encourage and recognize strengths, and discuss positive, purposeful approaches for meeting goals.

A positive performance review does not guarantee a pay raise or continued employment.

## **5.8 Promotions**

To match you with the job for which you are best suited and to meet the business needs of Community Services of Northeast Texas, you may be transferred from your current job. It is our policy to promote from within only when the most qualified candidate is available. Promotions are made on an equal opportunity basis according to employees possessing the needed skills, education, experience, and other qualifications that are required for the job.

Employees who are promoted or transferred within Community Services must complete a secondary introductory period of the same length with each reassignment to a new position. Any significant absence will automatically extend a introductory period by the length of the absence. If Community Services determines that the designated introductory period does not allow sufficient time to thoroughly evaluate the employee's performance, the introductory period may be extended for a specified period.

Any time during the employee's introductory period, the Agency or the employee may terminate the employment relationship without advance notice.

In cases of promotions or transfers within Community Services, an employee who, in the sole judgment of management, is not successful in the new position can be removed from that position at any time during the secondary introductory period. If this occurs, the employee may be allowed to return to his or her former job or to a comparable job for which the employee is qualified, depending on the availability of such positions and CSNT's needs.

## **5.9 Resignation Policy**

Community Services of Northeast Texas hopes that your employment with the Agency will be a mutually rewarding experience; however, the Agency acknowledges that varying circumstances can cause you to resign employment. The Agency intends to handle any resignation in a professional manner with minimal disruption to the workplace. CSNT reserves the right to accept a resignation upon the day it is given instead of waiting for the advance notice period to expire.

### **Notice**

The Agency requests that you provide a minimum notice period as outlined below as your notice of your resignation. Provide a written resignation letter to your supervisor and a copy to Human Resources. If you provide less notice than requested, the Agency may deem you to be ineligible for rehire, depending on the circumstances of the notice given.

- C-level staff (CEO, COO, Chief Financial Officer) are expected to give notice at least 28 calendar days in advance (four weeks).
- Program Directors, Campus Directors, and Assistant Directors are expected to give notice at least 21 calendar days in advance (three weeks).
- All other staff are expected to give notice at least 14 calendar days in advance (two weeks).

The Agency reserves the right to provide you with pay in lieu of notice in situations where job or business needs warrant.

### **Final Pay**

The Agency will pay separated employees in accordance with applicable laws and other sections of this handbook.

Notify the Agency if your address changes during the calendar year in which resignation occurs to ensure tax information is sent to the correct address.

### **Return of Property**

Return all Agency property at the time of separation, including cellphones, keys, tools, and identification cards.

## **5.10 Workforce Reductions (Layoffs)**

If necessary based upon business needs, Community Services of Northeast Texas management may decide to implement a reduction in force (RIF). We acknowledge that RIFs can be a trying experience for all involved, and the Agency will make its best effort to make sound business decisions while acknowledging the needs of its workforce.

## **6.0 General Policies**

### **6.1 Access to Personnel and Medical Records Files**

Community Services of Northeast Texas maintains separate medical records files and personnel files for all employees. Files containing medical records are stored separate and apart from any business-related records in a safe, locked, inaccessible location. The medical file is the repository for sensitive and confidential information related to an individual's health, health benefits, health-related leave and/or accommodations, and benefits selections and coverage. Medical records are kept confidential in compliance with applicable laws and access is on a "need-to-know" basis only.

Supervisors and others in management may have access to your personnel file for possible employment-related decisions. If you wish to review your personnel or medical records file, you must give the Agency reasonable notice. Inspection must occur in the presence of a Agency representative.

All requests by an outside party for information contained in your personnel file will be directed to Human Resources, which is the only department authorized to give out such information.

## 6.2 Vehicle Use Policy

All employees required to operate a motor vehicle as part of their employment duties must maintain a valid driver's license, acceptable driving record, and appropriate insurance coverage. Community Services of Northeast Texas may run a motor vehicle department check to determine your driving record. It is your responsibility to provide a copy of your current driver's license and insurance coverage for your personnel file. Any changes in your driving record, including, but not limited to, driving infractions or changes to your insurance policy, must be reported to the Agency.

State law requires all motorists to carry auto liability insurance. It is against the law to drive without insurance. If you use your own vehicle as a part of your employment duties, you must provide management with a current proof of insurance statement or card. New proof of insurance is required every time your policy expires and renews.

Employees with MVRs that violate the following standards may be subject to having their driving privileges revoked. The criteria for acceptable MVRs are as follows:

- **No more than 2 moving violations in any 12-month period.**
- **No more than 2 at-fault accidents in any 12-month period.**
- **No restricted or suspended license in the past 12 months.**
- **No driving under the influence (DWI) convictions.**

CSNT employees who operate their privately owned vehicles on agency business are responsible for complying with state laws regarding liability insurance for that vehicle. **Employees who transport clients in privately owned vehicles must carry proof of liability insurance in the vehicle and must also have a copy of the current liability insurance certificate on file in the office.** Any accident that occurs while operating a privately owned vehicle on agency business must be promptly reported to the Service supervisor.

If you use your personal vehicle in the course and scope of employment, you may not operate such vehicle while:

1. Under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or any other substance that might impair your judgment or ability to drive; or
2. Texting, emailing, or otherwise using a cell phone or other handheld device without utilizing a hands-free device.

Company vehicles are to be used for Community Services of Northeast Texas business only. Unless the use of the vehicle has been approved for personal use, personal or outside business use is strictly prohibited.

If you drive a Agency vehicle, all infractions or violations while driving the vehicle and all restrictions, suspensions, or revocations against your driver's license must be immediately reported to your supervisor.

When a Agency vehicle cannot be operated, is unsafe for use, or has been damaged, notify your supervisor immediately.

As the driver of a Agency vehicle, you are responsible for the vehicle while in your charge and must not permit unauthorized persons to drive it. You are also responsible for keeping the vehicle clean and uncluttered.

You may not operate a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, a chemical substance, or other substances that can impair judgment. You may not operate a motor vehicle while texting, emailing, or otherwise using a cell phone or other handheld device without utilizing hands-free technology.

Multiple driving moving violations that appear on the annual state department of motor vehicle check may result in suspension of rights to drive a Agency vehicle or drive a personal vehicle on Agency business. If there are persistent and ongoing problems with driving infractions, and driving a vehicle is a part of successful execution of job responsibilities, you may be terminated.

## **6.3 Computer Security and Copying of Software**

Software programs purchased and provided by Community Services of Northeast Texas are to be used only for creating, researching, and processing materials for Agency use. By using Agency hardware, software, and networking systems you assume personal responsibility for their use and agree to comply with this policy and other applicable Agency policies, as well as city, state, and federal laws and regulations.

All software acquired for or on behalf of the Agency, or developed by Agency employees or contract personnel on behalf of the Agency, is and will be deemed Agency property. It is the policy of the Agency to respect all computer software rights and to adhere to the terms of all software licenses to which the Agency is a party.

You may not illegally duplicate any licensed software or related documentation. Unauthorized duplication of software may subject you and/or the Agency to both civil and criminal penalties under the United States Copyright Act. To purchase software, obtain your supervisor's approval. All software acquired by the Agency must be purchased through IT.

You may not duplicate, copy, or give software to any outsiders including clients, contractors, customers, and others. You may use software on local area networks or on multiple machines only in accordance with applicable license agreements entered into by the Agency.

## **6.4 Use of Equipment**

Community Services equipment and vehicles essential in accomplishing job duties are expensive and may be difficult to replace. When using Community Services property, employees are expected to exercise care, perform required maintenance, and follow all operating instructions, safety standards, and guidelines.

Please notify the supervisor if any equipment, machines, tools, or vehicles appear to be damaged, defective, or in need of repair. Prompt reporting of damages, defects, and the need for repairs could prevent deterioration of equipment and possible injury to employees or others. The supervisor can answer any questions about an employee's responsibility for maintenance and care of equipment or vehicles used on the job.

The improper, careless, negligent, destructive, or unsafe use or operation of equipment or vehicles, as well as excessive or avoidable traffic and parking violations, can result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## **6.5 Nonsolicitation/Nondistribution Policy**

Community Services of Northeast Texas prioritizes a harmonious work environment that minimizes disruption to business operations and respects the focus of employees, visitors, and others. Our nonsolicitation/nondistribution policy aims to ensure a balanced approach to interactions within the workplace.

### **Solicitation**



For the purposes of this policy, **solicitation** includes various activities such as selling items or services, seeking contributions, or seeking support for an organization. Solicitation, whether conducted verbally, in writing, or electronically, falls under this policy's scope.

During your assigned working hours, soliciting other employees is prohibited. **Working hours** refers to periods when either you or the employees you intend to solicit are expected to be actively engaged in work-related activities. You are permitted to engage in solicitation during authorized nonworking times, such as breaks, provided that the recipients of the solicitation are also on nonworking time.

## **Distribution**

To ensure cleanliness, organization, and safety, the distribution of nonwork-related literature or items within working areas is prohibited at all times. Working areas do not include break/rest areas, lunchrooms, and parking lots. Electronic distribution of materials during work hours is also not allowed. Any literature that violates the Agency's equal employment opportunity (EEO) and nonharassment policies, or knowingly spreads false information, is strictly prohibited. Non-employees are not permitted to distribute materials on company premises under any circumstances.

## **Statutory Rights and Communication**

This policy is not meant to curtail the statutory rights of employees, including their right to discuss terms and conditions of employment. Open communication remains a vital part of our workplace culture.

## **Reporting Violations**

If you become aware of violations of this policy, report them to your supervisor.

We appreciate your cooperation in maintaining a respectful and focused work environment.

## **6.6 Personal Appearance**

Your personal appearance reflects on the reputation, integrity, and public image of Community Services of Northeast Texas. All employees are required to report to work neatly groomed and dressed. You are expected to maintain personal hygiene habits that are generally accepted in the community, including clean clothing, good grooming and personal hygiene, and appropriate attire for the workplace and the work being performed. This may include wearing uniforms or protective safety clothing and equipment, depending upon the job. Use common sense and good judgment in determining what to wear to work.

The following professional business wear appearance guidelines should be followed in all Community Services locations:

- Shoes must provide safe, secure footing and offer protection against hazards. Open-toed shoes are not permitted in the centers where there is an active operating kitchen. Open-toed shoes and/or open-heeled shoes are not permitted in an active operating kitchen.
- All shirts must cover the employee's midriff at all times; tank tops, tube or halter tops, or shorts may not be worn under any circumstances.
- Tattoos are allowed provided they are not vulgar or political. Body art such as nose rings, tongue rings and ear cuffs are not allowed. Belly rings are permissible as long as they are covered.
- Monday - Thursday, staff may wear jeans as long as an Agency marked shirt or other nice unmarked shirt is also worn. Specific to Center Directors and Family Service Workers on licensed campuses, you may also follow the "jean" guidelines with the exception of home visits and contact with the community outside the Center. In these cases, jeans are not acceptable.
- Friday shirts are not restricted to an Agency shirt.
- Jeans that are clean and in good repair are considered acceptable attire for the maintenance and kitchen staff, regardless of a marked shirt.
- Head Start Center Staff, except for the cooks or custodians may not wear scrubs.
- All personnel entering kitchen areas must wear a hair net.
- All personnel assisting in food preparation must wear gloves.

Any violation of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

The Agency, in accordance with applicable law, will reasonably accommodate employees with disabilities or religious beliefs that make it difficult for them to comply fully with the personal appearance policy unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the Agency. Contact your supervisor to request a reasonable accommodation.

## **6.7 Cell Phone/Mobile Device Use**

While Community Services of Northeast Texas permits employees to bring personal cell phones and other mobile devices into the workplace, you must not allow the use of such devices to interfere with your job duties or impact workplace safety and health.

Use of personal cell phones and mobile devices at work can be distracting and disruptive and cause a loss of productivity. Thus, you should primarily use such personal devices during nonworking time, such as breaks and meal periods. During this time, use devices in a manner that is courteous to those around you. Outside of nonworking time, use of such devices should be minimal and limited to emergency use only. If you have a device that has a camera and/or audio/video recording capability, you are restricted from using those functions on Agency property unless authorized in advance by management or when they are used in a manner consistent with your right to engage in concerted activity under section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA).

You are expected to comply with Agency policies regarding the protection of confidential and proprietary information when using personal devices.

While operating a vehicle on work time, the Agency requires that the driver's personal cell phone/mobile device be turned off.

Community Services of Northeast Texas may issue certain employees a Agency cell phone/mobile device for work-related communications and/or operations. If you drive a vehicle during your employment, you may not use any cell phone/mobile device or other communication device while driving.

- Use Agency-issued phones for business purposes. Personal use should be for communication only, and should be kept to a minimum.

The Agency owns and remains entitled to all cell phone/mobile devices issued to employees, including all passwords controlling access to them.

You may not change those passwords except with permission. At the time of employment termination, all such equipment and passwords must be returned to the Agency in operable condition.

Nothing in this policy is intended to prevent employees from engaging in protected concerted activity under the NLRA.

You will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment for violation of this policy.

## **6.8 Personal Data Changes**

It is your obligation to provide Community Services of Northeast Texas with your current contact information, including current mailing address and telephone number. You should also inform the Agency of any changes to your tax withholding status. Failure to do so may result in loss of benefits or delayed receipt of W-2 and other mailings. To make changes to this information, contact Human Resources.

## **6.9 Security**

All employees are responsible for helping to make Community Services of Northeast Texas a secure work environment. Upon leaving work, lock all desks, lockers, and doors protecting valuable or sensitive material

in your work area and report any lost or stolen keys, passes, or similar devices to your supervisor immediately. Refrain from discussing specifics regarding Agency security systems, alarms, passwords, etc. with those outside of the Agency.

Community Services wishes to maintain a work environment that is free of illegal drugs, alcohol, firearms, explosives, or other improper materials. To this end, Community Services prohibits the possession, transfer, sale, or use of such materials on its premises. Community Services requires the cooperation of all employees in administering this policy.

Desks, lockers, and other storage devices may be provided for the convenience of employees but remain the sole property of Community Services. Accordingly, they, as well as any articles found within them, can be inspected by any agent or representative of Community Services as appointed by the CEO at any time, either with or without prior notice. We assume no responsibility for the loss of, or damage to, your property maintained on Agency premises including that kept in lockers and desks.

Community Services likewise wishes to discourage theft or unauthorized possession of the property of employees, Community Services, visitors, and customers. To facilitate enforcement of this policy, Community Services or its representative as appointed by the CEO may inspect not only desks and lockers but also persons entering and/or leaving the premises and any packages or other belongings. Any employee who wishes to avoid inspection of any articles or materials should not bring such items onto CSNT's premises.

In order to promote the safety of employees and Agency visitors, improve the security of its facilities, and provide a monitoring tool for compliance issues, CSNT may conduct video surveillance of any portion of its premises at any time, the only exception being private areas of restrooms, showers, and dressing rooms, and that video cameras will be positioned in appropriate places within and around CSNT buildings and vehicles. Use of said devices is intended to promote the safety and security of people and property.

Unauthorized disabling and/or tampering of any CSNT controlled electronic monitoring equipment shall result in immediate employment termination.

Immediately advise your supervisor of any known or potential security risks and/or suspicious conduct of employees, customers, or guests of the Agency. Safety and security is the responsibility of all employees and we rely on you to help us keep our premises secure.

## 6.10 Social Media

Community Services of Northeast Texas acknowledges that social media has become an integral part of modern life that provides us with unique opportunities to communicate and share information with others. However, we also want to educate employees that their social media use can:

- Pose risks to the Agency's confidential and proprietary information, reputation, and brand;
- Expose the Agency to discrimination, harassment, and other claims; and
- Jeopardize the Agency's compliance with business rules and laws.

To minimize legal risks, avoid loss of productivity and distraction, and ensure that the Agency's IT resources and communications systems are used appropriately, all employees must abide by the following policy regarding social media use.

### Social Media

For purposes of this policy, **social media** refers to any means of posting content on the internet, including personal websites, social networking sites, blogs, chat rooms, and other online platforms, whether affiliated with the Agency or not.

### Use Good Judgment

While the Agency respects your right to personal expression, you should assume that anything you do on social media—whether on a business or personal account—could be viewed by a colleague, supervisor, partner, supplier, competitor, investor, customer, or potential customer. As such, any social media activity, even from your personal account, reflects on the Agency as well as on yourself. It is important to remember that anyone can see what you post (or what you posted five years ago).

## **Guidelines for Posting on Social Media**

When posting:

- Protect trade secrets, intellectual property, and confidential information related to the Agency.
- Do not make statements that are maliciously false or defamatory or would constitute unlawful harassment or discrimination.
- Do not make express or implied threats of violence.
- Avoid linking personal accounts to the Agency as an official source.
- Respect copyright, trademark, and third-party rights.
- Do not use the Agency's email addresses to register on social media platforms for personal use.
- If you identify yourself as an employee of Community Services of Northeast Texas on your personal account and are posting about the Agency, make it clear that your views are your own and that you are not speaking on behalf of the Agency.

## **Using Social Media at Work**

Do not use social media while on your work time, unless it is work related as authorized by your supervisor or consistent with policies that cover equipment owned by the Agency.

## **Media Contacts**

If you are not authorized to speak on behalf of the Agency, do not speak to the media on behalf of the Agency. Direct all media inquiries for official Agency responses to the CEO.

## **Retaliation**

Retaliation against those reporting policy violations or cooperating in investigations is prohibited. Retaliatory actions may lead to disciplinary measures.

## **Violations**

Violations of this policy may result in discipline, up to and including termination.

This policy does not limit employees rights to discuss wages, hours, or other terms and conditions of employment. All employees have the right to engage in or refrain from such activities.

## **6.11 Visitors in the Workplace**

To provide for the safety and security of employees and the facilities at Community Services, only authorized visitors are allowed in the workplace. Restricting unauthorized visitors helps maintain safety standards, protects against theft, ensures security of equipment, protects confidential information, safeguards employee welfare, and avoids potential distractions and disturbances.

Because of safety and security reasons, family and friends of employees are discouraged from visiting. In cases of emergency, employees will be called to meet any visitor outside their work area.

All visitors should enter Community Services at the main entrance. Authorized visitors must sign in and will receive directions or be escorted to their destination. Employees are responsible for the conduct and safety of their visitors.

If an unauthorized individual is observed on CSNT's premises, employees should immediately notify their supervisor or, if necessary, direct the individual to the reception area.

## **6.12 Remote Work**

Remote working is the practice of accessing the Agency's computer system from an approved alternate location instead of physically traveling to a central workplace. This work alternative must be approved by the CEO.

The Agency maintains various approved accounts for the purpose of working remotely. In order for an employee to access their computer remotely, it must remain in logged in status and must be secured to the extent possible to prevent unauthorized use.

Remote working is an alternative method of meeting the needs of the organization and is not a universal employee benefit. As such, Community Services has the right to refuse to make telecommuting available to an employee and to terminate a telecommuting arrangement at any time.

### **Eligibility**

An employee may be eligible to work remotely if their duties can be met through basic hardware and software; they have proven to be trustworthy, disciplined, and self-motivated; are accountable for productivity; and have been given permission by Community Services.

### **Rules and other company policies**

While working remotely, employees must adhere to all the conditions in the Employee Handbook. All company policies around conduct, confidentiality, personal leave, etc., continue to apply, regardless of one's location.

Failure to adhere to these policies could result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### **Work expectations**

Employees must follow the work schedules provided to them, be sure to meet deadlines and uphold high-quality standards. And while some flexibility is allowed, the employee must agree to work set hours as much as possible, five days a week, or on your regular schedule as established in consultation with your supervisor.

- Choose a quiet and distraction-free working space
- Have adequate internet connection
- Dedicate your full attention to job duties during working hours
- Adhere to break and attendance schedules agreed upon with your supervisor
- Use time keeping policies while working remotely
- When clocked in, be available for communication

Tools may be made available to employees for managing time and tasks, communicating with co-workers, logging and tracking projects, and accessing resources. Discuss the tools necessary to complete your job with your supervisor.

Performance will be measured focusing on the same metrics that apply to work done in the office.

### **Communicate clearly and consistently**

Employees are to be online and accessible during working hours according to their regular schedule. All employees are expected to check-in with their supervisors at least once a day. If they leave their work location for any reason, their supervisor must be notified.

Any correspondence from a co-worker must be answered with all information requested expeditiously.

Tools have been provided for communicating with team members and collaborating on projects. On-time attendance is expected at scheduled remote meetings. Expectations will be set and agreed upon between the employee and supervisor.

## **Security**

Employees are advised to choose a safe and secure location to work from, and to maintain high levels of safety, applying all privacy safeguards.

Employees are expected to safeguard any equipment assigned to them when working remotely.

Securing data and company information is of utmost concern.

## **Compensation**

Employees working remotely are eligible for company benefits, including health insurance and worker's compensation, according to the same terms as employees working onsite at CSNT.

In accordance with our current guidance, no changes will be made to an employee's salary if said employee works from home and fulfills their regular work schedule.

## **6.13 Third Party Disclosures**

From time to time, Community Services of Northeast Texas may become involved in news stories or potential or actual legal proceedings of various kinds. When that happens, lawyers, former employees, newspapers, law enforcement agencies, and other outside persons may contact our employees to obtain information about the incident or the actual or potential lawsuit.

If you receive such a contact, you should not speak on behalf of the Agency and should refer any call requesting the position of the Agency to the CEO. If you have any questions about this policy or are not certain what to do when such a contact is made, contact Human Resources.

## **6.14 Use of Company Technology**

This policy is intended to provide Community Services of Northeast Texas employees with the guidelines associated with the use of the Agency information technology (IT) resources and communications systems.

This policy governs the use of all IT resources and communications systems owned by or available at the Agency, and all use of such resources and systems when accessed using your own devices, including but not limited to:

- Email systems and accounts.
- Internet and intranet access.
- Telephones and voicemail systems, including wired and mobile phones, smartphones, and pagers.
- Printers, photocopiers, and scanners.
- Fax machines, e-fax systems, and modems.
- All other associated computer, network, and communications systems, hardware, peripherals, and software, including network key fobs and other devices.
- Closed-circuit television (CCTV) and all other physical security systems and devices, including access key cards and fobs.]]

## **General Provisions**

Agency IT resources and communications systems are to be used for business purposes only unless otherwise permitted under applicable law.

All content maintained in Agency IT resources and communications systems are the property of the Agency. Therefore, employees should have no expectation of privacy in any message, file, data, document, facsimile, telephone conversation, social media post, conversation, or any other kind or form of information

or communication transmitted to, received, or printed from, or stored or recorded on Agency electronic information and communications systems.

The Agency reserves the right to monitor, intercept, and/or review all data transmitted, received, or downloaded over Agency IT resources and communications systems in accordance with applicable law. Any individual who is given access to the system is hereby given notice that the Agency will exercise this right periodically, without prior notice and without prior consent.

The interests of the Agency in monitoring and intercepting data include, but are not limited to: protection of Agency trade secrets, proprietary information, and similar confidential commercially-sensitive information (i.e. financial or sales records/reports, marketing or business strategies/plans, product development, customer lists, patents, trademarks, etc.); managing the use of the computer system; and/or assisting employees in the management of electronic data during periods of absence.

You should not interpret the use of password protection as creating a right or expectation of privacy, nor should you have a right or expectation of privacy regarding the receipt, transmission, or storage of data on Agency IT resources and communications systems.

Do not use Agency IT resources and communications systems for any matter that you would like to be kept private or confidential.

## **Violations**

If you violate this policy, you will be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination of employment. If necessary, the Agency will also advise law enforcement officials of any illegal conduct.

## **7.0 Benefits**

### **7.1 Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)**

In accordance with the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA), Community Services of Northeast Texas provides up to 12 or 26 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a 12-month period to covered employees in certain circumstances.

#### **Eligibility**

To qualify for FMLA leave, you must:

- Have worked for the Agency for at least 12 months, although that time need not be consecutive;
- Have worked at least 1,250 hours in the last 12 months; and
- Be employed at a worksite that has 50 or more employees within 75 miles.

#### **Reasons for Leave**

You may take up to 12 weeks of unpaid FMLA leave in a 12-month calendar period, which is for any of the following reasons:

- The birth of a child and to care for that child (leave must be completed within one year of the child's birth);
- The adoption or foster care placement of a child with you and in order to care for the newly placed child (leave must be completed within one year of the child's placement);
- To care for a spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition;
- To care for your own serious health condition that makes you unable to perform the essential functions of your position; or
- A qualifying exigency of a spouse, child, or parent who is a military member on covered active duty or called to covered active duty status (or has been notified of an impending call or order to covered active duty).

You may take up to 26 weeks of unpaid FMLA leave in a single 12-month period, beginning on the first day that you take FMLA leave, to care for a spouse, child, parent, or next of kin who is a covered service member and who has a serious injury or illness related to active duty service.

As used in this policy:

- **Spouse** means a husband or wife as recognized under state law for the purposes of marriage in the state or other territory or country where the marriage took place.
- **Child** means a biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child of a person standing in loco parentis, who is either under age 18 or age 18 or older and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability at the time FMLA leave is to commence. A child for the purposes of military exigency or military care leave can be of any age.
- **Parent** means a biological, adoptive, step, or foster parent, or any other individual who stood in loco parentis to you when you were a child.
- **Next of kin** for the purposes of military care leave is a blood relative other than a spouse, parent, or child in the following order: brothers and sisters, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and first cousins. If a military service member designates in writing another blood relative as their caregiver, that individual will be the only next of kin. In appropriate circumstances, you may be required to provide documentation of next of kin status.

## Notice

If the need for leave is foreseeable because of an expected birth, adoption, or a planned medical treatment, you must give at least 30 days' notice. If 30 days' notice is not possible, give notice as soon as practical (within one or two business days of learning of your need for leave). Failure to provide appropriate notice may result in the delay or denial of leave.

In addition, if you are seeking intermittent or reduced schedule leave that is foreseeable due to a planned medical treatment or a series of treatments for yourself, a family member, or covered service member, you must first consult with the Agency regarding the dates of this treatment to work out a schedule that best suits your needs or the needs of the covered military member, if applicable, and the Agency.

If the need for leave is unforeseeable, provide notice as soon as possible. Normal call-in procedures apply to all absences from work, including requests for absences under this policy. Failure to provide appropriate notice may result in the delay or denial of leave.

Employees may request leave within Paychex Flex.

## Certification

If you are requesting leave because of your own or a covered relative's serious health condition, you and the relevant healthcare provider must supply appropriate medical certification. You may obtain medical certification forms from Human Resources. When you request leave, the Agency will notify you of the requirement for medical certification and when it is due (at least 15 days after you request leave). If you provide at least 30 days' notice of medical leave, you should also provide the medical certification before leave begins. Failure to provide requested medical certification in a timely manner may result in denial of FMLA-covered leave until it is provided.

At our expense, the Agency may require an examination by a second healthcare provider designated by us. If the second healthcare provider's opinion conflicts with the original medical certification, we, at our expense, may require a third, mutually agreeable, healthcare provider to conduct an examination and provide a final and binding opinion. Subsequent medical recertification may also be required. Failure to provide requested certification within 15 days, when practical, may delay further leave until it is provided.

The Agency also reserves the right to require certification from a covered military member's healthcare provider if you are requesting military caregiver leave and certification in connection with military exigency leave.

## Paid Leave Utilization During FMLA Leave



FMLA leave is unpaid; however, you may use available paid leave FMLA leave as permitted by law.

FMLA leave runs concurrently with other leaves, such as accrued paid leave that is substituted for unpaid FMLA leave and any state family leave laws, to the extent allowed by applicable law. The substitution of paid leave for unpaid FMLA leave does not extend the 12 or 26 weeks (whichever is applicable) of FMLA leave. In addition, the substitution of paid leave for unpaid leave may not result in you receiving more than 100% of your salary.

If you are receiving short- or long-term disability or workers' compensation benefits during a personal medical leave, you will not be required to use accrued paid leave. However, where state law permits, you may elect to use accrued paid leave to supplement these benefits.

## **Leave Increments**

### **Intermittent Leave**

If medically necessary, FMLA leave for a serious health condition may be taken intermittently (in separate blocks of time) or on a reduced leave schedule (reducing the usual number of hours you work per workweek or workday). FMLA leave may also be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule for a qualifying exigency relating to covered military service.

As FMLA leave is unpaid, the Agency will reduce your salary based on the amount of time actually worked. In addition, while you are on an intermittent or reduced schedule leave that is foreseeable due to planned medical treatments, the Agency may temporarily transfer you to an available alternative position that better accommodates your leave schedule and has equivalent pay and benefits.

### **Parental Leave**

Leave for the birth or placement of a child must be taken in a single block and cannot be taken on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis. Parental leave must be completed within 12 months of the birth or placement of the child; however, you may use parental leave before the placement of an adopted or foster child to consult with attorneys, appear in court, attend counseling sessions, etc.

### **Family Care, Personal Medical, Military Exigency, and Military Care Leave**

Leave taken for these reasons may be taken in a block or blocks of time. In addition, if a healthcare provider deems it necessary or if the nature of a qualifying exigency requires, leave for these reasons can be taken on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis.

## **Fitness for Duty Requirements**

If you take leave because of your own serious health condition (except if you are taking intermittent leave), you are required, as are all employees returning from other types of medical leave, to provide medical certification that you are fit to resume work. You will not be permitted to resume work until certification is provided.

## **Health Insurance**

### **Maintaining Coverage During Leave**

Your health insurance coverage will be maintained by the Agency during leave on the same basis as if you were still working. You must continue to make timely payments of your share of the premiums for such coverage. Failure to pay premiums within 30 days of when they are due may result in a lapse of coverage. If this occurs, you will be notified 15 days before the date coverage lapses that coverage will terminate unless payments are promptly made.

### **Payment of Premiums**

Alternatively, at our option, the Agency may pay your share of the premiums during the leave and recover the costs of this insurance upon your return to work. Coverage that lapses due to nonpayment of premiums will be reinstated immediately upon return to work without a waiting period. Under most circumstances, if you do not return to work at the end of leave, the Agency may require reimbursement for the health insurance premiums paid during the leave.

### **Reinstatement**

Upon returning to work at the end of leave, you will generally be placed in your original job or an equivalent job with equivalent pay and benefits. You will not lose any benefits that accrued before leave was taken.

### **Spouse Aggregation**

If both you and your spouse work at the Agency, you are collectively eligible for 12 weeks of leave for the birth or placement of a child or to care for a parent with a serious health condition. Similarly, spouses employed by the Agency will be limited to a combined total of 26 weeks of leave to care for a military service member. This 26-week leave period will be reduced, however, by the amount of leave taken for other qualifying FMLA events. This type of leave aggregation does not apply to leave needed for your own serious health condition, to care for a spouse or child with a serious health condition, or because of a qualifying exigency.

### **Failure to Return**

If you fail to return to work or fail to make a request for an extension of leave prior to the expiration of the leave, you will be deemed to have voluntarily terminated your employment. The Agency is not required to grant requests for open-ended leaves with no reasonable return date under these policies or as disability accommodations.

### **Interaction with State and Local Laws**

Where state or local laws intersect with the FMLA, the Agency will comply with the law that is the most favorable to you.

### **Abuse of Leave**

If you are found to have provided a false reason for a leave, you will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### **Designation of Leave**

If the Agency becomes aware of any qualifying reason for FMLA leave, the Agency will designate it as such. You may not refuse FMLA designation under this policy.

### **Retaliation**

The Agency will not retaliate against employees who request or take leave in accordance with this policy.

### **Required Notice**

The Agency is required to provide you with a copy of the *Your Employee Rights Under the Family and Medical Leave Act* notice, which is attached as an addendum at the end of this handbook.

## **7.2 Medical Leave of Absence**

For full-time employees, in case of illness, medical leaves of absence without pay for up to four (4) weeks may be requested for those employees with less than one year of continuous employment.

If you expect to be absent for more than three consecutive work days as a result of an illness, injury or disability, you must submit a written request for medical leave to the Human Resource Director as far in advance of your anticipated leave date as practicable. If your absence is due to an emergency, you or a member of your immediate family must inform your supervisor or the Human Resource Director as soon as practicable; this should be followed up with a written leave request, normally submitted within three days of the beginning of your leave. All medical leave requests must be accompanied by appropriate medical certification from your physician, indicating the condition necessitating your leave request and your projected date of return to work.

If your leave request is granted, you are required to provide the Human Resources Office with additional physician's statements at least once every fourteen (14) days, or more frequently if requested, attesting to your continued disability and inability to work. You may also be required to provide CSNT access to your medical records or to submit to an examination at any time by a physician designated by CSNT at its discretion.

Before being permitted to return from medical leave, you are required to present to the Human Resources Office a note from your physician indicating that you are capable of returning to work.

All company benefits that operate on an accrual basis (vacation and paid sick days) continue during the leave of absence. All other company benefits paid by CSNT listed in the Employee Handbook continue during your leave at the expense of CSNT. No holiday pay will be given. If you have not returned to work at the end of your leave of absence, all benefits provided by CSNT will cease unless as determined by Management. At that time, you may assume the medical insurance premiums based on COBRA and take over the premium payments for additional benefits.

Reinstatement cannot be guaranteed to any employee returning from medical leave. Employees are notified by CSNT regarding any such right to reinstatement prior to the commencement of their leaves. CSNT endeavors, however, to place employees returning from leave in their former positions or positions for which they qualify comparable in status and pay, subject to budgetary restrictions, CSNT's need to fill vacancies, and the ability of CSNT to find qualified temporary replacements.

### **Extended Medical Leave of Absence**

In individual circumstances, an employee may qualify for an unpaid extended medical leave of absence following a completion of the Medical Leave of Absence or FMLA. Granting of this unpaid leave will be at the sole discretion of Management on a case-by-case basis after an interactive process with the employee. As accommodations depend on individual circumstances, the extended leave period can be extended or adjusted as a reasonable accommodation to the extent it would not result in an undue hardship to CSNT.

During this leave, CSNT will continue to provide its portion of the health insurance benefits. All other university benefits, including those that operate on an accrual basis (vacation, sick leave, holiday leave, etc.), will not continue to accrue during the leave of absence. Any benefits that are currently paid by the employee through payroll deduction will continue to be the responsibility of the employee. The employee will remit the required amounts to CSNT if they wish to continue the benefits; if the employee wishes to suspend those benefits a written notice should be given. If the employee has not returned to work at the end of this leave, all benefits will cease and the employee's employment with CSNT will terminate.

## **7.3 Federal Jury Duty Leave**

Community Services of Northeast Texas encourages employees to fulfill their civic duties related to jury duty service.

Jury duty pay will be calculated on the employee's base pay rate times the number of hours the employee would otherwise have worked on the day of absence. Employees will be paid up to 5 days paid leave for each jury summons. Regular Full-Time and Regular Part-Time employees qualify for paid jury duty.

Employees must show the jury duty summons to their supervisor as soon as possible so that the supervisor may make arrangements to accommodate their absence. Of course, employees are expected to report for work whenever the court schedule permits.

Either Community Services or the employee may request an excuse from jury duty if in CSNT's judgment, the employee's absence would create serious operational difficulties.

Paid Time Off and holiday benefits will continue to accrue during jury duty leave.

The Agency will not discriminate or retaliate against employees for missing work due to federal jury service. Upon return to work, you will be reinstated to your prior position without loss of seniority and will be treated as if you have been on a leave of absence or furlough.

## **7.4 Military Leave (USERRA)**

Community Services of Northeast Texas complies with applicable federal and state law regarding military leave and re-employment rights. A military leave of absence will be granted to members of the uniformed services in accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA, with amendments) and all applicable state law. You must submit documentation of the need for leave to Human Resources. When returning from military leave of absence, you will be reinstated to your previous position or a similar position, in accordance with state and federal law. You must notify your supervisor of your intent to return to employment based on requirements of the law. For more information regarding status, compensation, benefits, and reinstatement upon return from military leave, contact Human Resources.

## **7.5 Witness Leave**

Community Services of Northeast Texas realizes that, on occasion, employees may be subpoenaed to appear in a civil, criminal, legislative, or administrative proceeding. In such cases, you will be provided unpaid leave to attend. Notify your supervisor as soon as possible to make scheduling arrangements. You may opt to use personal leave in place of unpaid leave.

The Agency reserves the right to require employees to provide proof of the need for leave to the extent authorized by law.

The Agency will not retaliate against employees who request or take leave in accordance with this policy.

## **7.6 Voting Leave**

If your work schedule prevents you from voting on Election Day, Community Services of Northeast Texas will allow you a reasonable time off to vote. The time when you can go to vote will be at the discretion of your supervisor, consistent with applicable legal requirements.

## **7.7 Political Convention Leave**

Community Services of Northeast Texas will provide employees with unpaid leave to attend:

- A precinct convention for which they are eligible to participate; or

- A county, district, or state convention for which they are a delegate.

Provide as much notice as possible of your need for leave.

The Agency will not discriminate or retaliate against employees who request or take leave in accordance with this policy.

## **7.8 Bereavement Leave**

Community Services of Northeast Texas recognizes the importance of taking leave when there is a death in the family. Where bereavement leave is not required by law, the Agency will provide bereavement leave as follows:

An employee must notify and obtain the approval of his or her supervisor before a bereavement leave may commence and it must be in writing.

Up to 3 days of paid bereavement leave will be provided to Regular Full-Time and Regular Part-Time employees.

Bereavement pay is calculated based on the base pay rate at the time of absence. Bereavement leave will normally be granted unless there are unusual business needs or staffing requirements. Employees may, with their supervisors' approval, use any available paid leave for additional time off as necessary.

Community Services defines "immediate family" as the employee's spouse, parent, child, sibling; the employee's spouse's parent, child, or sibling; the employee's child's spouse; grandparents or grandchildren. Special consideration will also be given to any other person whose association with the employee was similar to any of the above relationships.

CEO may grant Administrative Leave to attend extended family, friends, etc. The CEO may also grant Administrative Leave in addition to Bereavement Leave in special circumstances with prior approval.

## **7.9 Parental Leave for School Visits**

Community Services recognizes the value of parental involvement in children's education. For this reason, Community Services provides employees who are parents, guardians, or custodians of children in licensed day care facilities or pre-kindergarten through grade 12 unpaid time off for the purpose of school visits. Parental leave for school visits allows employees to participate in activities sponsored, approved, or supervised by the school or daycare such as parent/teacher conferences or field trips.

Employees may request up to 12 hours of parental leave for school visits within any calendar year. Any available paid leave may be substituted for unpaid leave for school visits. Employees must provide their immediate supervisors reasonable advance notice of the need for parental leave for school visits. Upon return from the leave, employees must provide documentation to their supervisor from the school verifying the date and time of the visit.

## **7.10 Personal Leave of Absence**

Community Services provides leaves of absence without pay to eligible employees who wish to take time off from work duties to fulfill personal obligations or reasons not covered by FMLA. Regular Full-Time and Regular Part-Time employees are eligible to request personal leave as described in this policy.

As soon as eligible employees become aware of the need for a personal leave of absence, they should obtain approval from their supervisor. Final approval is required by the CEO.

Personal leave may be granted for a period of up to 30 calendar days every one year. With the supervisor's approval, an employee may take any available paid leave as part of the approved period of leave.

Requests for personal leave will be evaluated based on a number of factors, including anticipated workload requirements and staffing considerations during the proposed period of absence.

Subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of the applicable plans, health insurance benefits will be provided by Community Services until the end of the month in which the approved personal leave begins. At that time, employees will become responsible for the full costs of these benefits if they wish coverage to continue. When the employee returns from personal leave, benefits will again be provided by Community Services according to the applicable plans.

Benefit accruals, such as Personal Leave and holiday benefits, will be suspended during the leave and will resume upon return to active employment.

When a personal leave ends, every reasonable effort will be made to return the employee to the same position, if it is available, or to a similar available position for which the employee is qualified. However, Community Services cannot guarantee reinstatement in all cases.

An employee is responsible for ensuring their portion of their benefits premiums (Medical, Dental, Life, AD&D, Cancer and Accident) are paid while on leave. Earned Personal leave used while the employee is on leave and may cover some of the cost of the benefits. Any remaining cost must be paid to the agency by the employee by the date provided to the employee by the HR Department.

If an employee fails to report to work promptly at the expiration of the approved leave period, Community Services will assume the employee has resigned.

## **7.11 Administrative Leave**

The CEO has the authority to grant paid or unpaid administrative leave to an employee. Examples of this type of leave may include bereavement leave, inclement weather, portions of leave attached to holiday pay, and other leave described herein, at the sole discretion of the CEO.

Full day paid or unpaid administrative leave will be granted equal to the number of hours commensurate with the employee's employment classification.

With the existence of extraordinary circumstances, such as instances of community emergencies, agency crisis or times of fiscal constraint or urgency which threaten the health, stability, or soundness of the agency, the CEO may, after analyzing data obtained from the Finance Director and Division Directors, grant unpaid administrative leave. The use of PTO is prohibited during the designated unpaid administrative leave period.

Staff required to take unpaid administrative leave due to fiscal constraint or urgency may be eligible to receive a portion of the unpaid administrative leave, at a later date, provided the fiscal constraint or urgency is deemed nonexistent and the employee is still actively employed and shall be strictly at the discretion of the CEO.

Pay-related questions or concerns should be directed to the attention of the employee's immediate supervisor.

## **7.12 Holidays**

Community Services of Northeast Texas will grant holiday time off in accordance with the schedule and limitations contained herein to all eligible regular employees. Holiday pay will be calculated based on the employee's regularly scheduled hours worked per day at the straight-time pay rate as of the date of the holiday. Due to funding source regulations and program needs, Agency designated Holidays may vary throughout our programs.

- New Years' Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- Spring Holiday – Friday before Easter
- Spring Holiday – Monday after Easter
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth – June 19
- Independence Day Week
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving Week
- Christmas Week (2 weeks)

**Head Start staff will follow the same Holiday Schedule with the following modifications:**

- Thanksgiving will coincide with the center ISD schedule.
- Thanksgiving Day Holiday and up to 4 days administrative leave.
- Christmas will coincide with the center ISD schedule.
- Christmas Day Holiday with remaining days considered administrative leave.

Winter Break applies only to those centers with ISD's offering that as a holiday.  
(Winter break administrative leave may be granted to Campus Staff Only.)

The Friday before Easter, the Monday after Easter, Spring Break, Columbus Day, and New Years' Day will all follow your center school district schedule. will follow your center school district schedule.

To be eligible for holiday pay, an employee must be at work or on an approved leave the last scheduled day immediately preceding and the first scheduled day immediately following the holiday.

A recognized holiday that falls on a Saturday will be observed on the preceding Friday. A recognized holiday that falls on a Sunday will be observed on the following Monday.

If a recognized holiday falls during an eligible employee's paid absence, holiday pay will be provided instead of the paid time off benefit that would otherwise have applied.

Staff is prohibited from working on a holiday, without written authorization from the CEO.

## **7.13 PTO**

The Company provides paid time off (PTO) that can be used for any purpose, including, but not limited to, vacation, personal matters, recovery from injury or illness, or caring for loved ones.

### **Accrual**

Regular full time and Regular part time employees are eligible to accrue PTO immediately upon hire.

PTO accrues according to the following schedule for eligible employees based on their hours worked:

<b>Years of Service</b>	<b>Hours Accrued Per Hour Worked</b>
0-3	.0375
4-10	.0625
11-19	.0875

20+	.10
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*Sample calculation: Employee has 2 years of service and is scheduled 40 hours per week (80 hours per pay period): 80 hours x .0375 hours accrued per hour worked = 3 hours PTO accrued per pay period.*

For purposes of this policy, the benefit year begins on the employee's date of hire.  
Head Start Employees follow the above PTO Schedule with the following modifications:

HS Position	Percentage of PTO
Teachers & Teaching Assistants	85% PTO plus Summer Administrative Leave
Cooks	
Bus Drivers	
Campus Directors	
Maintenance (Campus Staff)	
Specialists/Coordinators/Supervisors	
Family Service Workers	
Facilities Maintenance Staff	100% PTO
HS Director, HS Office Coordinator, HS Support Staff	

### **Caps and Carryover**

PTO no longer accrues once an employee's PTO bank reaches the accrual cap. Once their bank drops below that limit, they will begin to accrue again. Accumulated PTO may not exceed 208 hours.

### **Use**

PTO can be used after completion of an employee's introductory period. PTO can only be used once it is accrued and will not be advanced. PTO can be used in a minimum of 15 minute increments and if more than 10 consecutive working days must have the prior written approval of the CEO.

Employees are required to have written supervisor approval to use PTO and requests may be obtained from your supervisor. Requests are subject to Agency approval based on staffing needs and team workload.

PTO is paid at an employee's base rate of pay and does not include overtime.

### **Payout at Separation**

Upon termination of employment, regular employees will be paid for unused PTO that has been earned through the last actual day worked up to a maximum of 80 hours.

Employees terminating during their initial introductory period will not be paid for any leave accrued during their initial 90 days of employment.



## 7.14 Health Insurance

Community Services of Northeast Texas offers group health, dental, and vision insurance benefits to all eligible employees and their eligible dependents after the plan's defined waiting period. Health insurance benefits are described in detail in the Summary Plan Description (SPD), which may be obtained from Human Resources.

Your group health benefits are paid in part by the Agency. The remainder of the costs are paid by you through deductions from your paycheck.

Benefits may be canceled or changed at the discretion of the Agency, unless otherwise prohibited by law.

If you or a dependent become ineligible for benefits due to a change in work hours or through a life event, or you leave employment with the Agency, you may have the right to continue your health benefits under federal or state law. In such event, the Agency will provide you with information about your rights to continue your benefits coverage.

## 7.15 COBRA

The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) provides the opportunity for eligible Community Services of Northeast Texas employees and their beneficiaries to continue health insurance coverage under the Agency health plan when a "qualifying event" could result in the loss of eligibility. Qualifying events include resignation, termination of employment, death of an employee, reduction in hours, a leave of absence, divorce or legal separation, entitlement to Medicare, or where a dependent child no longer meets eligibility requirements.

Contact Human Resources to learn more about your COBRA rights.

## 7.16 Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Community Services of Northeast Texas cares about the health and well-being of its employees and recognizes that a variety of personal problems can disrupt their personal and work lives. While many employees solve their problems either on their own or with the help of family and friends, sometimes employees need professional assistance and advice.

Through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), CSNT provides confidential access to professional counseling services for help in confronting such personal problems as alcohol and other substance abuse, marital and family difficulties, financial or legal troubles, and emotional distress. The EAP offers to all eligible employees and an immediate family member assistance with problem assessment, short-term counseling, and referral to appropriate community and private services.

Minor concerns can become major problems if employees ignore them. No issue is too small or too large, and a professional counselor is available to help when needed.

**Assistance Phone Number: 1-800-316-2796**

## 7.17 Disability Benefits

Community Services of Northeast Texas offers the following employer-sponsored and buy-up disability insurance benefits to eligible employees, after the plan's defined waiting period, when they miss work due to non-work-related disabilities.

Regular Full-Time employees are eligible to participate in the short and long-term disability benefits plans.

### Short-Term Disability

Community Services offers an employer paid short-term disability (STD) benefits plan. A buy-up option to the STD plan is also available for employees to purchase, if desired.

Eligible employees may participate in the short-term disability benefits plan subject to all terms and conditions of the agreement between Community Services and the insurance carrier. At all times, the agreement between Community Services and its insurance carrier supersedes the Community Services Personnel Policies & Procedures.

### **Long-Term Disability**

Community Services offers a voluntary employee paid long-term disability (LTD) benefits plan.

Eligible employees may participate in the long-term disability benefits plan subject to all terms and conditions of the agreement between Community Services and the insurance carrier. At all times, the agreement between Community Services and its insurance carrier supersedes the Community Services Personnel Policies & Procedures.

Information on the cost of coverage of these plans will be provided during open enrollment to eligible employees. Any inquiries should be in writing and directed to your immediate supervisor, who will forward your request to the Human Resources Director.

## **7.18 Life Insurance**

Community Services provides employees and their dependents access to life insurance benefits. Employees who successfully complete the required waiting period prior to October 1 in the year hired will be offered coverage beginning October 1. Employees who complete the waiting period subsequent to October 1 in the year hired will be offered coverage beginning October 1 of the following year. Regular Full-Time employees are eligible to participate in the life insurance plan.

Information on cost of coverage will be provided in advance of enrollment to eligible employees. All inquiries should be in writing and directed to your immediate supervisor, who will forward your request to the Human Resources Director.

## **7.19 401(k) Plan**

Eligible employees may participate in the Community Services of Northeast Texas 401(k) plan after completing any applicable waiting period as defined in the plan. Refer to your Summary Plan Description (SPD) for specific information.

The Agency will notify you if you are eligible to participate in the 401(k) plan. Contact Human Resources to understand your eligibility requirements. This benefit may be canceled or changed at the discretion of the Agency, unless otherwise required by law.

## **7.20 Workers' Compensation Insurance**

Community Services provides a comprehensive workers' compensation insurance program at no cost to employees. This program covers any injury or illness sustained in the course of employment that requires medical, surgical, or hospital treatment. Subject to applicable legal requirements, workers' compensation insurance provides benefits after a short waiting period or, if the employee is hospitalized, immediately.

**Employees who sustain work-related injuries or illnesses must inform their supervisor immediately. No matter how minor an on-the-job injury may appear, it is important that it be reported immediately. This will enable an eligible employee to qualify for coverage as quickly as possible.**

Consistent with applicable state law, failure to report an injury within a reasonable period of time could jeopardize your claim for benefits.

Neither Community Services nor the insurance carrier will be liable for the payment of workers' compensation benefits for injuries that occur during an employee's voluntary participation in any off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activity sponsored by Community Services.

## **8.0 Safety and Loss Prevention**

### **8.1 Business Closure and Emergencies**

At times, emergencies such as severe weather, fires, or power failures, can disrupt company operations. In extreme cases, these circumstances may require the closing of a work facility.

When operations are officially closed due to emergency conditions, the time off from scheduled work will be paid.

In cases where an emergency closing is not authorized, employees who fail to report for work will not be paid for the time off.

### **8.2 Drug and Alcohol Policy**

It is CSNT's desire to provide a drug-free, healthful, and safe workplace. To promote this goal, employees are required to report to work in appropriate mental and physical condition to perform their jobs in a satisfactory manner in addition the employee is expected to follow all of the policies outlined in the drug testing policy.

While on Community Services premises and while conducting business-related activities off Community Services premises, no employee may use, possess, distribute, sell, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. The legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted on the job only if it does not impair an employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the job effectively and in a safe manner that does not endanger other individuals in the workplace.

Any criminal arrest must be reported to the employee's immediate supervisor and Program Director within 24 hours. At that time the Program Director, along with the CEO, will determine any disciplinary action to be taken, i.e., suspension without pay pending indictment or acquittal.

Under the Drug-Free Workplace Act, an employee who performs work for a government contract or grant must notify Community Services of any criminal conviction. The report must be made within five days of the conviction.

Community Services is committed to providing a safe, efficient, and productive work environment for all employees. Using or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol on the job may pose serious safety and health risks. To help ensure a safe and healthful working environment, job applicants and employees are asked to provide body substance samples (such as urine and/or blood) to determine the illicit or illegal use of drugs and alcohol. Random drug testing will occur throughout the program year. Refusal to submit to drug testing will result in termination of employment. Any employee who fails a drug/alcohol test will be terminated immediately.

Violations of this policy will lead to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment. Such violations may also have legal consequences.

## 8.3 General Safety

Community Services of Northeast Texas, Inc. (CSNT) has a long-standing philosophy of taking pride in its practices to ensure the safety, health and well-being of all its employees. This program serves to outline the company's commitment to this philosophy and to provide guidance to all employees on the standards the company expects its employees to adhere to.

### Fires and Other Emergencies

The facility where employees are assigned has an emergency procedures and evacuation plan to follow in the event of fire or other disaster. This plan is prominently posted in common areas and bulletin boards on each floor of the facility. Exits, fire extinguishers and first aid kits are located on each floor. All employees are expected to familiarize themselves with the location of such equipment.

### On-the-Job Injuries and Illnesses

Any job-related injury or illness, regardless of severity, must be reported immediately to an employee's supervisor or the Community Services safety coordinator for prompt and trained evaluation and medical attention as necessary. The employee's supervisor will complete an initial safety incident report and forward it to HR.

### General Safety Rules

CSNT employees perform a wide range of functions in various locations. Although some safety rules apply only to specific positions, all employees are expected to comply with the rules in this procedure:

1. Use common sense in performing duties.
2. Report any work injury or illness to a supervisor immediately and obtain first aid to prevent further injury.
3. Report unsafe conditions to a supervisor or safety committee member.
4. Keep all fire exits clear and assessable at all times.
5. Never obstruct a breaker panel (3 feet clearance is required all around).
6. Do not use any equipment, vehicles or materials when overly tired, nauseated, feverish or under the influence of any substance that may affect judgment.
7. Keep the work area neat and tidy.
8. Use mechanical devices or request assistance in lifting heavy loads.
9. Wear seat belts when operating any company or rented vehicle or driving a personal vehicle while on company business.
10. Do not work on any electrical equipment without proper authorization and training, and use all safeguards.
11. Do not use tops of cabinets or bookcases for extra storage or displays.
12. Be sure that aisles or exits are kept clear; do not let cords interfere with walkways.
13. Keep paper clips, tacks, pins and other objects off the floors.
14. Properly store all sharp objects when not in use.
15. Open and close doors cautiously, and use extra caution at blind hallway intersections.
16. Open only one file cabinet drawer at a time to avoid tipping over the cabinet. Cabinets should also be loaded from bottom to top and emptied in the reverse order.
17. Report or clean up all spills immediately.
18. Use stepstools, platforms or ladders for climbing. Never use chairs.
19. Report or replace frayed electrical cords.
20. No horse play is allowed.
21. Obey ALL warning signs.
22. Use cautions when lifting heavy loads. Lift with the legs instead of the back.
23. Caution should be exercised when walking on wet or slick surfaces.
24. Never move furniture or heavy equipment unless authorized to do so and with proper personal protection and other staff assistance.
25. Always be on the alert for and report any situations, which may cause an accident, personal injury or damage to equipment.

### Emergency Evacuation Plans and Re-Entry

In any emergency, employees should follow alarms or other alerts to evacuate the building or area near the premises. Employees should always follow the basic evacuation procedures and remember that personal safety is paramount and takes precedence. Employees should do the following:

- Check the work area for anything needing to be secured, and store it quickly.
- Secure locks on all secured containers and cabinets.
- Leave the work area, and report to the designated assembly area.

The supervisor at the location will coordinate with fire, police or other emergency preparedness personnel to determine when the building may be re-entered. This information will then be passed to the employees.

### **Safety Data Sheets**

Required by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), a safety data sheet (SDS) is a detailed description of each hazardous chemical located in the workplace and includes information regarding potential health risks, symptoms and treatment measures to be taken if exposure occurs.

The company will keep SDSs on all hazardous substances and materials on its premises in areas adjacent to the equipment for which the SDS pertains. Employees should help ensure that MSDSs are kept in their respective areas or report missing ones to their supervisor or safety committee representative.

### **Improper Health and Safety Practices**

All employees are expected to abide by safe work practices and adhere to general safety rules to ensure their safety as well as the safety of co-workers.

Infractions of company health and safety practices will be dealt with in accordance with the company's policies on discipline and will be based on the following factors:

- Severity of the infraction.
- Whether the infraction endangered only the employee or also co-workers.
- Whether the infraction was a first or repeat violation.

To further enhance our commitment to our Health and Safety program, the following procedures will be followed after any accident or injury that results in medical treatment being required.

1. Once the injured party has returned to work, they must contact the HR department to schedule safety training related to the incident. This must be done within 5 business days of the return to work.
2. Once this training is completed, all members of the department or team that the employee is part of will be scheduled for training with the HR department on safety topics related to the incident.

These procedures are implemented to bring awareness of potential hazards and to prevent future occurrences.

## **8.4 Workplace Tobacco Usage**

In keeping with CSNT's intent to provide a safe and healthful work environment, tobacco usage is prohibited at all Agency locations. This includes facilities, properties and vehicles.

This policy applies equally to all employees, customers, and visitors.

## **8.5 Workplace Violence**

As the safety and security of our employees, vendors, contractors, and the general public is in the best interests of Community Services of Northeast Texas, we are committed to working with our employees to provide a work environment free from violence, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior.

### **Zero Tolerance Policy**

The Agency has a zero-tolerance policy regarding workplace violence and will not tolerate acts or threats of violence, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior, either physical or verbal, that occurs in the workplace or other areas. This applies to management, co-workers, employees, and non-employees such as contractors, customers, and visitors.

Workplace violence can include oral or written statements, gestures, or expressions that communicate a direct or indirect threat of physical harm, damage to property, or any intentional behavior that may cause a person to feel threatened.

### **Prohibited Conduct**

Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Physically injuring another person.
- Threatening to injure a person or damage property by any means, including verbal, written, direct, indirect, or electronic means.
- Taking any action to place a person in reasonable fear of imminent harm or offensive contact.
- Possessing, brandishing, or using a firearm on Agency property or while performing Agency business except as permitted by state law.
- Violating a restraining order, order of protection, injunction against harassment, or other court order.

### **Reporting Incidents of Violence**

Report to your supervisor, in accordance with this policy, any behavior that compromises our ability to maintain a safe work environment. All reports will be investigated immediately and kept confidential, except where there is a legitimate need to know. You are expected to cooperate in any investigation of workplace violence.

### **Violations**

Violating this policy may subject you to criminal charges as well as discipline up to and including immediate termination of employment.

### **Retaliation**

Victims and witnesses of workplace violence will not be retaliated against in any manner. In addition, you will not be subject to discipline for, based on a reasonable belief, reporting a threat or for cooperating in an investigation.

If you initiate, participate, are involved in retaliation, or obstruct an investigation into conduct prohibited by this policy, you will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

If you believe you have been wrongfully retaliated against, immediately report the matter to Human Resources.

## **9.0 Trade Secrets**

### **9.1 Confidentiality and Nondisclosure**

The protection of confidential business information is vital to the interests and the success of Community Services. Such confidential information includes, but is not limited to, the following examples:

- client/student lists
- client/family/children data
- financial information
- pending projects and proposals
- co-workers and any Agency employees

Employees who improperly use or disclose confidential business information will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, even if they do not actually benefit from the disclosed information.

## **10.0 Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect**

### **Abuse and Neglect**

No child shall be subjected to corporal or verbal punishment under any circumstances. Corporal punishment inflicted upon any child will not be tolerated at CSNT under any circumstances. Employees suspected of abuse will be suspended immediately pending further investigation. Employees will be immediately terminated if it is determined that it is more likely than not that they engaged in child abuse.

### **How to Report Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect**

The Agency will implement all guidelines listed in the Licensing Standards for Head Start and Day Care Centers, and those guidelines will be applicable to all CSNT employees, Head Start and Family Center employees. Moreover, CSNT will provide training annually for all employees regarding their Mandated Reporter status and to review the State Licensing Standards. Said training will also be made available to CSNT Community Partners.

Any employee who knows or suspects that a child has been abused, neglected or mistreated shall immediately report their suspicion or knowledge to their supervisor. The supervisor shall immediately notify Human Resources who in turn shall immediately notify the CEO. The CEO should consult with the Agency's legal counsel. In the event that the employee's supervisor is not available the employee shall notify Human Resources or CEO.

Human Resources is the designated Senior Employee person to coordinate all activities related to abuse allegations. They will maintain reporting documentation regarding incidents and follow-up action. He will consult with the CEO and if directed by the CEO to do so, Agency legal counsel in an ongoing manner during the course of the investigation of the alleged abuse. However, all such investigations will be conducted under the supervision of legal counsel to ensure confidentiality to all involved and compliance with all applicable laws. In the CEO's discretion legal counsel may participate in and/or assist in the investigation or legal counsel may conduct the investigation.

Whenever there is reasonable cause to believe that a child may have been abused or neglected the CEO shall notify the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Said report should be filed as soon as possible but in all cases within 48 hours of learning of the suspected abuse. The CEO shall also notify DFSS (and CPS if the allegation of abuse is applicable to that program).

### **Acknowledgment of Mandated Reporter Status**

All Community Services of Northeast Texas child care employees are mandated reporters regarding child abuse and neglect. This means that you are required to report **or to cause a report to be made** to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services via the Texas Abuse Hotline or through an online reporting website whenever there is reasonable cause to believe that a child known to you in your professional capacity may have been abused or neglected.

### **Employee Discipline**

Failure to comply with this policy will result in employee discipline up to and including termination. Moreover, no child shall be subjected under any circumstances to corporal punishment or verbal abuse. Accordingly, corporal punishment inflicted upon children will not be tolerated. Any employee who abuses a child, including using any corporal punishment against a child or who uses isolation against a child inappropriately will be immediately terminated. Any employee that assists another employee in covering up suspected abuse will be subject to employee discipline up to and including termination. CSNT is obligated to protect the children entrusted to its care. Therefore, the cooperation and truthfulness of all employees interviewed during the course of a child abuse/neglect investigation is mandatory. Whenever an allegation

of abuse is made involving an employee, that employee will be immediately suspended pending an investigation into the allegation. While CSNT will always use its best efforts to be fair to the accused employee, the Agency is obligated by law to protect the children it cares for and therefore the Agency will always err in the best interest of the safety of the children.



# Closing Statement

Thank you for reading our handbook. We hope it has provided you with an understanding of our mission, history, and structure as well as our current policies and guidelines. We look forward to working with you to create a successful Agency and a safe, productive, and pleasant workplace.

Michelle Morehead, CEO

Community Services of Northeast Texas

# Acknowledgment of Receipt and Review

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Community Services of Northeast Texas Employee Handbook (handbook) and that I have read it, understand it, and agree to comply with it. I understand that the Agency has the maximum discretion permitted by law to interpret, administer, change, modify, or delete the rules, regulations, procedures, and benefits contained in the handbook at any time with or without notice. No statement or representation by a manager, supervisor, or any other employee, whether oral or written, can supplement or modify this handbook. Changes can only be made if approved in writing by the Human Resources department of the Agency. I also understand that any delay or failure by the Agency to enforce any rule, regulation, or procedure contained in the handbook does not constitute a waiver on behalf of the Agency or affect the right of the Agency to enforce such rule, regulation, or procedure in the future.

I understand that neither this handbook nor any other communication by a management representative or other, whether oral or written, is intended in any way to create a contract of employment. **I further understand that, unless I have a written employment agreement signed by an authorized Agency representative, I am employed "at-will" (to the extent permitted by law) and this handbook does not modify my "at-will" employment status, including if I am an employee working for CSNT on an ISD campus.**

If I am covered by a written employment agreement (signed by an authorized Agency representative) that conflicts with the terms of this handbook, I understand that the terms of the employment agreement will control.

**If I am working on an ISD campus, I understand that my employment may end at any time, for any or no reason.**

This handbook is not intended to preclude or dissuade employees from engaging in legally protected activities under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). This handbook is not intended to violate any local, state, or federal law. No provision or policy applies or will be enforced if it conflicts with or is superseded by any requirement or prohibition contained in federal, state, or local law, or regulation. Furthermore, nothing in this handbook prohibits an employee from reporting concerns to, filing a charge or complaint with, making lawful disclosures to, providing documents or other information to, or participating in an investigation or hearing conducted by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), or any other federal, state, or local agency charged with the enforcement of any laws.

This handbook supersedes any previous handbook or policy statements, whether written or oral, issued by Community Services of Northeast Texas.

If I have any questions about the content or interpretation of this handbook, I will contact Human Resources.

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Signature

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Date

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Print Name

# **APPENDIX**

# Your Employee Rights Under the Family and Medical Leave Act

## What is FMLA leave?

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a federal law that provides eligible employees with **job-protected leave** for qualifying family and medical reasons. The U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division (WHD) enforces the FMLA for most employees.

Eligible employees can take **up to 12 workweeks** of FMLA leave in a 12-month period for:

- The birth, adoption or foster placement of a child with you,
- Your serious mental or physical health condition that makes you unable to work,
- To care for your spouse, child or parent with a serious mental or physical health condition, and
- Certain qualifying reasons related to the foreign deployment of your spouse, child or parent who is a military servicemember.

An eligible employee who is the spouse, child, parent or next of kin of a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness **may take up to 26 workweeks** of FMLA leave in a single 12-month period to care for the servicemember.

You have the right to use FMLA leave in **one block of time**. When it is medically necessary or otherwise permitted, you may take FMLA leave **intermittently in separate blocks of time, or on a reduced schedule** by working less hours each day or week. Read Fact Sheet #28M(c) for more information.

FMLA leave is **not paid leave**, but you may choose, or be required by your employer, to use any employer-provided paid leave if your employer's paid leave policy covers the reason for which you need FMLA leave.

## Am I eligible to take FMLA leave?

You are an **eligible employee** if **all** of the following apply:

- You work for a covered employer,
- You have worked for your employer at least 12 months,
- You have at least 1,250 hours of service for your employer during the 12 months before your leave, and
- Your employer has at least 50 employees within 75 miles of your work location.

Airline flight crew employees have different "hours of service" requirements.

You work for a **covered employer** if **one** of the following applies:

- You work for a private employer that had at least 50 employees during at least 20 workweeks in the current or previous calendar year,
- You work for an elementary or public or private secondary school, or
- You work for a public agency, such as a local, state or federal government agency. Most federal employees are covered by Title II of the FMLA, administered by the Office of Personnel Management.

## How do I request FMLA leave?

Generally, to request FMLA leave you **must**:

- Follow your employer's normal policies for requesting leave,
- Give notice at least 30 days before your need for FMLA leave, or
- If advance notice is not possible, give notice as soon as possible.

You **do not have to share a medical diagnosis** but must provide enough information to your employer so they can determine whether the leave qualifies for FMLA protection. You **must also inform your employer if FMLA leave was previously taken** or approved for the same reason when requesting additional leave.

Your **employer may request certification** from a health care provider to verify medical leave and may request certification of a qualifying exigency.

The FMLA does not affect any federal or state law prohibiting discrimination or supersede any state or local law or collective bargaining agreement that provides greater family or medical leave rights.

State employees may be subject to certain limitations in pursuit of direct lawsuits regarding leave for their own serious health conditions. Most federal and certain congressional employees are also covered by the law but are subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management or Congress.

## What does my employer need to do?

If you are eligible for FMLA leave, your **employer must**:

- Allow you to take job-protected time off work for a qualifying reason,
- Continue your group health plan coverage while you are on leave on the same basis as if you had not taken leave, and
- Allow you to return to the same job, or a virtually identical job with the same pay, benefits and other working conditions, including shift and location, at the end of your leave.

Your **employer cannot interfere with your FMLA rights** or threaten or punish you for exercising your rights under the law. For example, your employer cannot retaliate against you for requesting FMLA leave or cooperating with a WHD investigation.

After becoming aware that your need for leave is for a reason that may qualify under the FMLA, your **employer must confirm whether you are eligible** or not eligible for FMLA leave. If your employer determines that you are eligible, your **employer must notify you in writing**:

- About your FMLA rights and responsibilities, and
- How much of your requested leave, if any, will be FMLA-protected leave.

## Where can I find more information?

Call **1-866-487-9243** or visit **dol.gov/fmla** to learn more.

If you believe your rights under the FMLA have been violated, you may file a complaint with WHD or file a private lawsuit against your employer in court. **Scan the QR code to learn about our WHD complaint process.**



**WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION**  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

SCAN ME

