



Strafford Regional Planning Commission Employee Handbook

Your Guide to Employment at Strafford Regional Planning Commission

The SRPC Executive Committee adopted these policies at their regularly scheduled meeting on April 21, 2023.

STRAFFORD
Regional Planning Commission

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I. INTRODUCTION

Whether you have just joined our staff or have been at the Strafford Regional Planning Commission for several years, the Executive Committee is confident you will find our organization a dynamic and rewarding place to work. We look forward to a productive and successful association with you. The Commission's employees are among our most valuable resources. The intent of these Personnel Policies is to ensure the fair and equitable treatment of all employees and to guide the employer/employee relationship.

There are several important things to keep in mind about the employee handbook. First, it is designed to provide employees with guidelines and information about working conditions, and benefits and personnel policies affecting employment. It is not meant to be comprehensive or to address every possible application of—or exception to—the policies and procedures it describes. Nothing in this Handbook should be construed as a promise of specific treatment in any specific situation upon which any employee should rely. If you have any questions about whether you are eligible for a particular benefit, or whether a policy or practice applies to you, you should ask the Executive Director.

Second, the procedures, practices, policies, and benefits described herein are guidelines only and supersede any prior Employee Handbook. We have the right, with or without notice, in an individual case or generally, to change and/or modify its interpretation of any of its guidelines, policies, practices, working conditions, or benefits at any time, unless otherwise restricted by applicable law. If and when provisions change, you will receive replacements for the pages that have become outdated.

Third and last, some of the topics discussed here are covered in detail in regulatory, contractual, or benefit policy documents. You should refer to those documents for specific information since the employee handbook provides only briefly summaries. Please note that the terms of the written employee benefits policies are controlling, and such official documents are always controlling over any statement made in this Handbook or by any supervisor or manager.

Neither the employee handbook nor any other Commission document, policy or practice confers any contractual right, either expressed or implied, to remain in the Commission's employment. Nor does it guarantee any fixed terms and conditions of employment or benefits. Employment with the Commission is "at will." That means you or the Commission may terminate your employment at any time, with or without cause and with or without prior notice. No supervisor or other representative of the Commission except the Executive Director has the authority to enter into any agreement for employment for any specified period of time, or to make any agreement contrary to the above.

The 2022 edition of the employee handbook supersedes all earlier handbooks, manuals, policies, and procedures issued by the Commission. Any violation of the policies or procedures presented here may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

A. Mission Statement

The Commission's mission is to ensure that the region is responsive to the needs of its residents through cooperation with federal and state agencies and its member communities, through the implementation of the Commission's policies and plans, and through local planning assistance. These actions foster sustainable development and improve the quality of life in the region. Sustainable development balances economic prosperity with environmental protection and community well-being.

B. Expectations for Employees

Each employee of the Strafford Regional Planning Commission is expected to perform to their highest level and to contribute toward the common good of the organization, its member communities, and clients. Key areas of emphasis are the following:

Commitment to

- Public service

Personal Characteristics of

- Integrity
- Respect
- Openness
- Creativity
- Resourcefulness

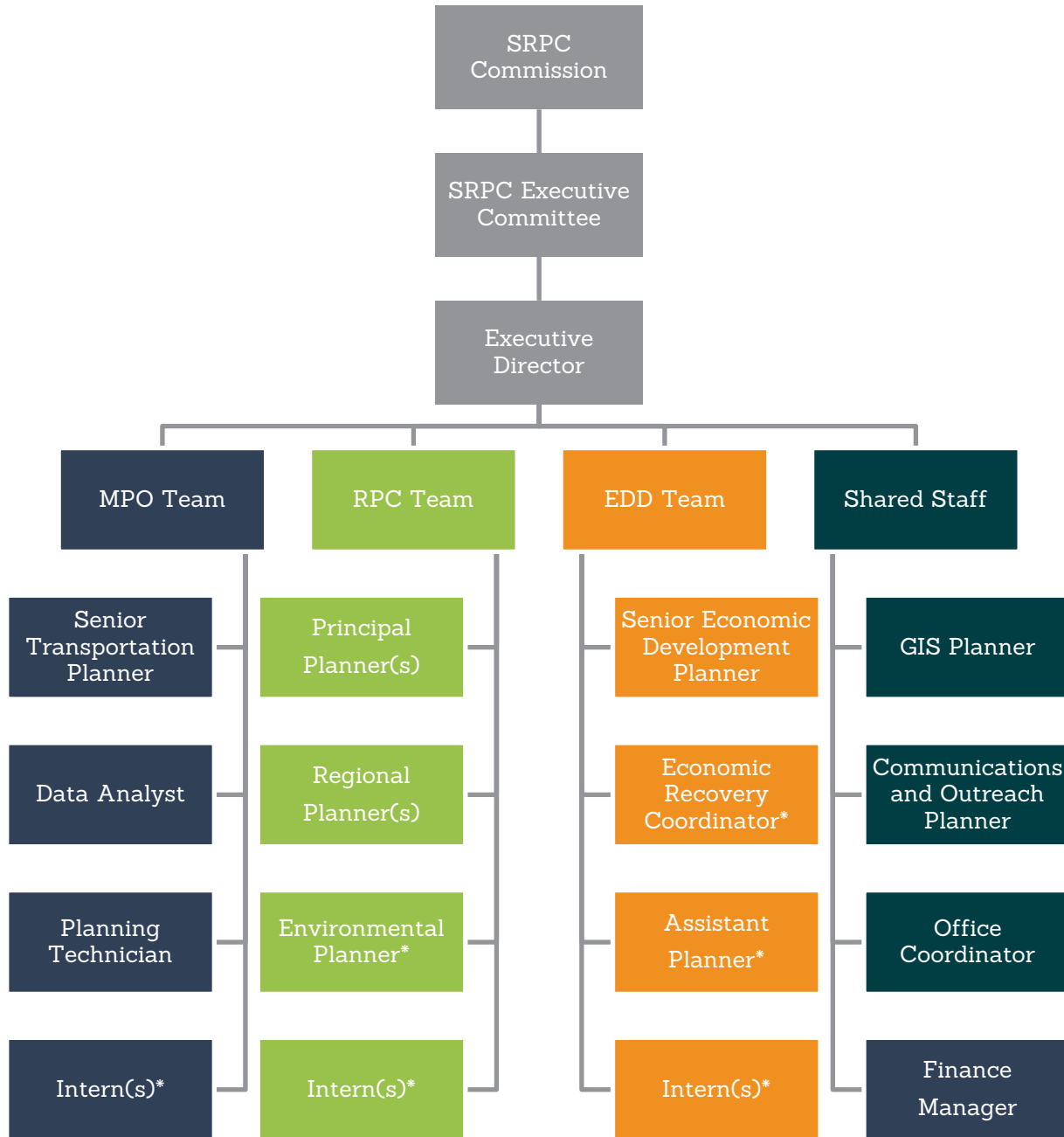
Fiscal Responsibility for

- Budget
- Wise use of commission and community resources

Quality through

- Seeking excellence
- Improving professional skills
- Collaborative and consensus-building efforts

C. Organization Chart



* Temporary or Grant Funded Positions

D. American Planning Association Ethical Principles

The APA statement is a guide to ethical conduct for all who participate in the process of planning as advisors, advocates, or decision makers. It presents a set of principles to be held in common by certified planners, other practicing planners, appointed and elected officials, and other participants in the planning process.

The planning process exists to serve the public interest. While the public interest is a subject of continuous debate, both in its general principles and in its case-by-case applications, it requires a conscientiously held view of the policies and actions that best serve the entire community.

Planning issues commonly involve a conflict of values. Large private interests often are at stake. They accentuate the necessity for the highest standards of fairness and honesty among all participants.

Planners need to adhere to a special set of ethical requirements that must guide all who aspire to professionalism. The ethical principles derive from both the general values of society and the planner's special responsibility to serve the public interest. Like the basic values of society, which are often in competition with each other, these principles also sometimes compete. For example, the need to publicly provide complete information may compete with the need to respect confidences. Plans and programs often result from a balancing of divergent interests. An ethical judgment often also requires conscientious balancing based on the facts and context of a situation and on the entire set of ethical principles.

The APA statement of ethical principles also aims to inform the public generally. Continuing systematic discussion of their application is essential to give these principles daily meaning. The American Planning Association (APA) adopted these principles in May 1992. See <https://planning.org/ethics/ethicalprinciples/> for more information.

The Ethical Principles

The planning process must continuously pursue and faithfully serve the public interest.

Planning process participants should:

1. Recognize the rights of citizens to participate in planning decisions;
2. Strive to give citizens (including those who lack formal organization or influence) full, clear and accurate information on planning issues and the opportunity to have a meaningful role in the development of plans and programs;
3. Strive to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of disadvantaged groups and persons;
4. Assist in the clarification of community goals, objectives and policies in plan-making;
5. Ensure that reports, records and any other non-confidential information which is, or will be, available to decision makers is made available to the public in a convenient format and sufficiently in advance of any decision;
6. Strive to protect the integrity of the natural environment and the heritage of the built environment;
7. Pay special attention to the interrelatedness of decisions and the long range consequences of present actions.

Planning process participants continuously strive to achieve high standards of integrity and proficiency so that public respect for the planning process will be maintained.

Planning process participants should:

1. Exercise fair, honest and independent judgment in their roles as decision makers and advisors;
2. Make public disclosure of all "personal interests" they may have regarding any decision to be made in the planning process in which they serve, or are requested to serve, as advisor or decision maker.
3. Define "personal interest" broadly to include any actual or potential benefits or advantages that they, a spouse, family member or person living in their household might directly or indirectly obtain from a planning decision;
4. Abstain completely from direct or indirect participation as an advisor or decision maker in any matter in which they have a personal interest, and leave any chamber in which such a matter is under deliberation, unless their personal interest has been made a matter of public record; their employer, if any, has given approval; and the public official, public agency or court with jurisdiction to rule on ethics matters has expressly authorized their participation;
5. Seek no gifts or favors, nor offer any, under circumstances in which it might reasonably be inferred that the gifts or favors were intended or expected to influence a participant's objectivity as an advisor or decision maker in the planning process;
6. Not participate as an advisor or decision maker on any plan or project in which they have previously participated as an advocate;
7. Serve as advocates only when the client's objectives are legal and consistent with the public interest.
8. Not participate as an advocate on any aspect of a plan or program on which they have previously served as advisor or decision maker unless their role as advocate is authorized by applicable law, agency regulation, or ruling of an ethics officer or agency; such participation as an advocate should be allowed only after prior disclosure to, and approval by, their affected client or employer; under no circumstance should such participation commence earlier than one year following termination of the role as advisor or decision maker;
9. Not use confidential information acquired in the course of their duties to further a personal interest;
10. Not disclose confidential information acquired in the course of their duties except when required by law, to prevent a clear violation of law or to prevent substantial injury to third persons; provided that disclosure in the latter two situations may not be made until after verification of the facts and issues involved and consultation with other planning process participants to obtain their separate opinions;
11. Not misrepresent facts or distort information for the purpose of achieving a desired outcome;
12. Not participate in any matter unless adequately prepared and sufficiently capacitated to render thorough and diligent service;
13. Respect the rights of all persons and not improperly discriminate against or harass others based on characteristics which are protected under civil rights laws and regulations.

APA members who are practicing planners continuously pursue improvement in their planning competence as well as in the development of peers and aspiring planners. They recognize that

enhancement of planning as a profession leads to greater public respect for the planning process and thus serves the public interest.

APA members who are practicing planners:

1. Strive to achieve high standards of professionalism, including certification, integrity, knowledge, and professional development consistent with the AICP Code of Ethics;
2. Do not commit a deliberately wrongful act which reflects adversely on planning as a profession or seek business by stating or implying that they are prepared, willing or able to influence decisions by improper means;
3. Participate in continuing professional education;
4. Contribute time and effort to groups lacking adequate planning resources and to voluntary professional activities;
5. Accurately represent their qualifications to practice planning as well as their education and affiliations;
6. Accurately represent the qualifications, views, and findings of colleagues;
7. Treat fairly and comment responsibly on the professional views of colleagues and members of other professions;
8. Share the results of experience and research which contribute to the body of planning knowledge;
9. Examine the applicability of planning theories, methods and standards to the facts and analysis of each particular situation and do not accept the applicability of a customary solution without first establishing its appropriateness to the situation;
10. Contribute time and information to the development of students, interns, beginning practitioners and other colleagues;
11. Strive to increase the opportunities for women and members of recognized minorities to become professional planners;
12. Systematically and critically analyze ethical issues in the practice of planning.

E. American Institute of Certified Planners Code of Ethics

Every certified planner formally subscribes to the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. Although it includes an enforcement procedure, the code provides for more than the minimum threshold of enforceable acceptability. It also sets aspirational standards that require conscious striving to attain.

“As the basic values of society can come into competition with each other, so can the aspirational principles espoused under this Code,” notes the AICP. “An ethical judgment often requires a conscientious balancing based on the facts and context of a particular situation and on the precepts of the entire Code.”

All SRPC staff members who belong to the AICP subscribe to this code. For the complete American Institute of Certified Planners Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, please see <https://planning.org/ethics/ethicscode/>

II. COMMISSION ENVIRONMENT

A. Equal Employment Opportunity Statement

The Commission provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex or gender (including pregnancy, childbirth, lactation and related medical conditions), sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression (including transgender status), national origin, age, physical or mental disability, genetic information, marital status, military service, veteran status, , or any other classification protected by applicable federal, state, and local laws and ordinances. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including, but not limited to, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leaves of absence, and training.

The Commission expressly prohibits any form of unlawful harassment, discrimination or retaliation based on race, color, religion, sex or gender (including pregnancy, childbirth, lactation and related medical conditions), sexual orientation, national origin, age, genetic information, physical or mental disability, gender identity or gender expression (including transgender status), marital status, military service, veteran status, or any other classification protected by applicable federal, state, and local laws and ordinances.

Any violation of this policy will result in appropriate corrective and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. If you as an employee believe someone has violated this policy, or otherwise have questions regarding it, you may bring the matter to the attention of the Office Coordinator or the Executive Director. The Commission will promptly investigate the facts and circumstances of any report of an alleged violation of this policy and will take appropriate corrective measures.

No employee will be subject to, and the Commission prohibits, any form of discipline or retaliation for good faith reporting perceived violations of this policy, pursuing any such claims, or cooperating in any way in the investigation of such claims.

B. Standards of Professionalism

All employees are accountable for conducting themselves in a responsible and ethical manner that upholds and promotes the Commission's values. This includes representing the Commission in a professional manner at all times by applying the highest standards of ethical behavior, appropriate conduct, and professional attire, in everything we do.

The Commission expects everyone at SRPC to promote a culture of sensitivity, understanding, trust and integrity. We believe that everyone, has the right to an environment that is safe.

The Commission welcomes and supports people of all backgrounds and identities. This includes but is not limited to members of any sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, social and economic class, educational level, color, immigration status, sex, age, size, family status, political belief, religion, and mental and physical ability.

Choose your words carefully. Always conduct yourself professionally. Be kind to others. Do not insult or put down others. Harassment and exclusionary behavior are not acceptable. This includes but is not limited to: threats of violence; discriminatory jokes and language; and personal insults, especially those using racist or sexist terms. Everyone at SRPC has a responsibility for

building and maintaining an environment of respect which includes being considerate in how we communicate and interact with each other.

Any violation of this policy will result in appropriate corrective and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. If you as an employee believe someone has violated this policy, or otherwise have questions regarding it, you may bring the matter to the attention of the Executive Director. The Commission, following the procedure outlined in the next section, will promptly investigate the facts and circumstances of any claim that this policy has been violated and will take appropriate corrective and/or disciplinary measures.

C. SRPC's Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Prevention

The Commission is committed to a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. The Commission is committed to providing a work environment that is free of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation. In keeping with this commitment, the Commission maintains a strict policy prohibiting discrimination, harassment, and retaliation of or against our job applicants, contractors, interns, volunteers, or employees by another employee, supervisor, vendor, customer, or any third party, including but not limited to harassment based on race, color, creed, religion, age, sex or, gender (including pregnancy, childbirth, lactation and related medical conditions), gender identity or gender expression (including transgender status), pregnancy, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, physical or mental disability, genetic information, military service or veteran status, or any other category protected by applicable federal, state or local laws and ordinances. Such conduct will not be tolerated by the Commission.

Our management team is dedicated to ensuring the fulfillment of this policy as it applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including recruitment, hiring, placement, promotion, transfer, training, compensation, benefits, employee activities, and general treatment during employment.

Each Commission employee is responsible for helping to keep the work environment free of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, including while on Commission premises, while on Commission business (whether or not on Commission premises) or while representing the Commission.

The Commission encourages the reporting of all perceived incidents of discrimination or harassment so they can be promptly and thoroughly investigated. Retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment or who participates in an investigation of such reports is prohibited and considered a violation of this policy.

Discrimination for purposes of this policy generally is defined as treating differently or denying or granting a benefit to an individual because of any protected characteristic.

Sexual harassment constitutes discrimination and is illegal under federal, state, and local laws. For the purposes of this policy, sexual harassment is defined, as in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission guidelines, as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when, for example:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment.
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting that individual.

- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment includes a range of subtle and not-so-subtle behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different genders. Depending on the circumstance, these behaviors may include the following actions:

- Unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors.
- Sexual jokes and innuendo.
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature.
- Commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess, or sexual deficiencies.
- Leering, whistling, or touching.
- Insulting or obscene comments or gestures.
- Display in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures.
- Other physical, verbal, or visual conduct of a sexual nature.

Harassment, for purposes of this policy generally is defined as unwelcome verbal, visual or physical conduct that demeans or shows hostility or aversion towards an individual because of the above stated protected characteristics, and that (1) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment; or (2) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or (3) otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities. Harassment can be verbal (including slurs, jokes, insults, epithets, gestures or teasing), visual (including offensive posters, symbols, cartoons, drawings, computer displays, or e-mails) or physical conduct (including physically threatening another, blocking someone's way, etc.) that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion towards an individual because of any protected characteristic. Such conduct violates this policy, even if it is not unlawful.

Harassing conduct includes the following:

- Epithets, slurs, and negative stereotyping.
- Threatening, intimidating or hostile acts
- Denigrating jokes.
- Written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group and is placed on the walls or elsewhere on Commission premises or circulated in the workplace, on Commission time, or by email, phone, (including voice messages), text messages, tweets, blogs, social networking sites, or other means

Retaliation, for purposes of this policy generally means adverse conduct taken because an individual reported an actual or perceived violation of this policy, opposed practices prohibited by this policy, or participated in the reporting and investigation process described below. "Adverse conduct" includes but is not limited to shunning and avoiding an individual who reports harassment, discrimination or retaliation; express or implied threats or intimidation intended to prevent an individual from reporting harassment, discrimination, or retaliation; and denying employment benefits because an applicant or employee reported harassment, discrimination or retaliation or participated in the reporting and investigation process described below.

Conduct prohibited by these policies is unacceptable not only in the workplace but also in any work-related setting outside the workplace, such as business trips, business meetings, and business-related social events.

Anyone who believes they have been the target of conduct prohibited by this policy, or who believes they have witnessed such conduct, should promptly discuss their concerns with the Executive Director.

When possible, the Commission encourages but does not require, anyone who believes they are being harassed to promptly tell the offender that their behavior is unwelcome and ask them to stop. Often this action alone will resolve the problem, but even if it is resolved the matter still must be reported. The Commission recognizes, however, that an individual may prefer to pursue the matter through complaint procedures.

Mandatory Reporting Procedure

The Commission encourages the prompt reporting of complaints or concerns to the Executive Director so that rapid and constructive action can be taken. In the event the Executive Director is unavailable or is the alleged offending party, the employee should report the situation to one or more members of the Executive Committee.

Although reports may be made verbally, employees are strongly encouraged to make any reports of harassment or other discriminatory conduct in writing to the Executive Director or to one or more members of the Executive Committee. Doing so can assist in the investigation process. In any case, the Commission will make a written record of the incident.

Every supervisor who learns of any employee's concern about conduct in violation of this policy, whether in a formal complaint or informally, must immediately report the issues raised to the Executive Director.

Investigation

A prompt and thorough investigation will be conducted as discreetly and confidentially as possible. The investigation may include individual interviews with the parties involved and, when necessary, with anyone who may have seen the alleged conduct or may have other relevant information.

The investigation will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances, but confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. The investigation may be conducted internally, or, in appropriate circumstances, an outside investigator may be retained.

Investigations will typically include private interviews with the person filing the report and with witnesses. The person alleged to have violated the Policies will also typically be interviewed. Any employee asked to participate in an investigation is expected to cooperate fully and truthfully. When the investigation is complete, to the extent appropriate, the Executive Director or Executive Committee member(s) will inform the person filing the report and the person alleged to have violated the Policies of the results of that investigation.

Witnesses will be asked not to share with anyone outside of management information they reveal during the investigative interview only when:

- Witnesses need protection from retaliation or harm.
- Evidence is in danger of being destroyed.
- Testimony is in danger of being fabricated.
- A potential cover-up of the underlying incidents needs to be prevented.

Retaliation

Retaliation for reporting harassment or discrimination or for participating in the investigation of a claim of harassment or discrimination is a serious violation of this policy. Acts of retaliation should be reported immediately and will be promptly investigated and addressed. Retaliation, as well as harassment or discrimination, will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Corrective/Disciplinary Action

The Commission will take corrective measures against any person who it finds to have engaged in conduct in violation of this policy, if the Commission determines such measures are necessary. These measures may include, but are not limited to, counseling, suspension, or immediate termination. Anyone, regardless of position or title, whom the Commission determines has engaged in conduct that violates this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination. In addition to being a violation of this policy, harassment, discrimination, or retaliation based on any protected characteristic pursuant to applicable federal, state, or local laws and ordinances also is unlawful. For example, sexual harassment and retaliation against an employee because the employee filed a complaint of sexual harassment or because an employee aided in an investigation of a complaint of sexual harassment are unlawful. Employees who engage in conduct that rises to the level of a violation of law can be held personally liable for such conduct.

D. Disability Accommodations

The Commission prohibits any form of discrimination in hiring, as well as in all terms and conditions of employment, against qualified individuals with physical or mental disabilities.

The Commission will endeavor to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities (as defined by applicable law) to ensure equal opportunity in the application process, to enable employees to perform essential job functions, and to ensure that disabled employees enjoy the same benefits and privileges of employment as are enjoyed by employees without disabilities.

The Commission is committed to complying with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) as well as state and local laws. It is the Commission’s policy not to discriminate against any qualified employee or applicant with regard to any terms or conditions of employment because of such individual’s disability or perceived disability so long as the employee can perform the essential functions of the job, with or without an accommodation.

The Commission will endeavor to reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with a disability who have made the Commission aware of their disability or for whom the Commission has notice may require such an accommodation so that they can perform the essential functions of a job unless doing so causes a direct threat to these individuals or others in the workplace and the threat cannot be eliminated by reasonable accommodation, or if the accommodation creates an undue hardship for the Commission. A pregnant employee requiring a temporary change to how, when, or where she the employee works due to pregnancy or related conditions may request an accommodation under this policy. Contact the Executive Director or the Office Coordinator with any questions or requests for accommodation. You may be asked to provide medical

documentation about your disability and the types of reasonable accommodations that may be effective for you to the extent permitted and in accordance with applicable law. You are expected to comply with these requests for information so that the Executive Director can determine your eligibility for accommodation and evaluate possible accommodations for you. The Executive Director and the Office Coordinator will work with you and will maintain all medical information in a confidential manner.

Applicable laws generally do not require the Commission to make the best possible accommodation, to reallocate essential job functions, or to provide personal use items (e.g., eyeglasses, hearing aids, wheelchairs, etc.).

An employee or job applicant who has questions regarding this policy should notify the Executive Director. All such inquiries or complaints will be treated as confidential to the extent permissible by law.

We will not allow any form of retaliation against individuals who have requested an accommodation, for who the Commission has notice may require such an accommodation or who otherwise engage in the interactive dialogue process. Concerns regarding discrimination and/or retaliation should be immediately reported in accordance with the Reporting Procedures set forth in the Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Prevention policy as well as any procedures set forth in any applicable state supplement.

E. Alcohol and Drug-Free Workplace

The Commission is required by law to provide a safe and healthy work environment for its employees. Substance abuse is a serious problem that adversely affects the lives of millions and negatively impacting the workplace. SRPC recognizes alcohol and drug abuse as potential health, safety, and security problems.

The Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 imposes certain obligations upon covered employers to respond to substance abuse problems. SRPC expects all employees to assist in maintaining a work environment free from the effects of alcohol, drugs, or other substances that impair an employee's ability to safely perform his/her/their job functions. Compliance with the drug and alcohol policy is a condition of employment. SRPC prohibits employees from the manufacture, possession, use, distribution, or purchase of nonprescribed drugs and controlled substances, including medical marijuana, on NRPC premises, at other locations where work is performed, and in SRPC vehicles. SRPC also prohibits employees from reporting to work or otherwise working or driving SRPC vehicles under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, and or. other substances that impair an employee's ability to safely perform his/her/their job functions. Employees may not consume alcohol, illegal drugs, or other substances that impair an employee's ability to safely perform his/her/their job functions during working hours, including meal and break periods.

However, the SRPC may sponsor social functions or activities where alcohol is served, and the moderate use of alcohol by persons 21 or over at such SRPC-sponsored functions is permitted. Use of medication prescribed by the employee's healthcare provider for the employee and the use of over the-counter medication is permitted as long as the medication will not interfere with the employee's ability to perform his/her/their job functions. If you are taking a medication that might interfere with your ability to perform your job functions, it is your responsibility to inform your supervisor or the Executive Director and not drive or perform other safety sensitive functions until authorized to do so by the Executive Director or his/her/their designee.

While we cannot control your behavior on your own time, we certainly encourage you to behave responsibly and appropriately at all times. All employees are required to report to their jobs in appropriate physical and mental condition, ready to work. If the SRPC has any reasonable basis for suspecting that an employee may be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, other substances that impair an employee's ability to safely perform his/her/their job functions, may have otherwise violated this policy, or may otherwise be unfit for work, the SRPC may require the employee to submit immediately to a drug and/or alcohol test and/or to a fitness for duty exam performed by a third party, as determined appropriate by the SRPC in its discretion. SRPC will provide transportation to and from the testing site and accompany the employee during the testing process.

Any employee who is required to submit to a drug and/or alcohol test or a fitness for duty exam must cooperate fully with the process and must not do anything to tamper with, adulterate, dilute, or otherwise interfere with any specimen, test, or exam. A test or other exam will not be conducted without the employee's consent; however, the employee must consent as a condition of employment and may be terminated for refusing to consent to any test or exam required by the SRPC. All testing will be done using scientifically valid methods that involve private specimen collection and chain of custody procedures to ensure proper identification, labeling, record keeping, handling and testing of specimens and will take place at a qualified laboratory, hospital, or health care center. SRPC commits to maintain the confidentiality of test results to the extent practicable under the circumstance. Test results may also be disclosed to a substance abuse treatment facility for the purpose of evaluation or treating the employee, or as required by law. If an employee has a test result that is other than a non-dilute negative or showing an alcohol concentration of greater than .02 percent, he/she/they will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

The Commission reserves the right to treat a dilute drug test result in the same manner as a positive test result. Employees will be allowed an opportunity to rebut or explain positive lab results and/or to request and pay for a confirmatory re-test. In the event this opportunity is provided to the employee by the lab/testing facility before the results are reported to the Commission then employee does not need to be afforded a second opportunity once the results are received by the Commission.

Within its sole discretion, the SRPC may decide not to terminate an employee and may decide instead to refer the employee for drug or alcohol treatment in lieu of termination and as a condition of continued employment. Within its discretion, the SRPC may suspend the employee while he/she/they participates in the treatment program. Employees must pay for the cost of any such treatment programs. Employees who refuse to participate in such programs or who fail to successfully complete a treatment program are subject to immediate termination. An employee who is referred by the SRPC for drug or alcohol treatment or who is voluntarily participating in a drug or alcohol treatment program may be requested or required to undergo drug and/or alcohol testing without prior notice during the treatment period and for a period of time, determined by the SRPC, after the completion of the treatment. An employee who has a test result other than a non-dilute negative during this period will be subject to termination. In addition to the fitness for duty/reasonable suspicion testing described above, the SRPC reserves the right to implement further drug testing programs at any time, such as preemployment, post-accident, and random drug and alcohol testing.

Any employee who is convicted of any drug or alcohol-related crime (including violations, misdemeanors, and felonies) shall notify the Executive Director and/or Office Coordinator within

five (5) days of the date of conviction. A conviction includes any finding of guilt (including one agreed to by the employee) or plea of no contest and/or imposition of a fine, jail sentence, or other penalties. Any employee who violates this drug and alcohol policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Employees who have an alcohol or drug abuse problem are encouraged to seek appropriate professional care and counseling and consult the SRPC's medical insurance plans regarding coverage for referral and treatment. Employees with questions about medical insurance benefits for treatment should feel free to speak with the Executive Director and/or Office Coordinator. When this policy is violated or work performance is otherwise impaired, admission to or use of a treatment or other program does not preclude appropriate disciplinary action by the SRPC, including termination of employment. The Commission maintains a policy of non-discrimination and will endeavor to make reasonable accommodations to assist employees with disabilities, and those recovering from substance and alcohol dependencies. However, employees may not request an accommodation to avoid discipline for a policy violation.

The Commission encourages employees in need of assistance with a controlled substance to seek proper medical or psychological help. The Commission also offers help through the Life Resources Employee Assistance Program (EAP). This service is provided in partnership with HealthTrust and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. For more information or to take advantage of EAP, contact LifeResources directly at [800-759-8122](tel:800-759-8122).

F. Medical Marijuana

The Commission prohibits employees from manufacturing, possessing, using, distributing, or purchasing medical marijuana on SRPC premises, at other locations where SRPC work is performed, and while operating vehicles used for Commission field work or other Commission purposes.

G. Smoke-Free Workplace

Tobacco smoking has been clearly established as a preventable cause of illness in smokers. Exposure to second-hand smoke has also been shown to be hazardous to the health of nonsmokers. The Commission complies with New Hampshire's Indoor Smoking Act, which regulates smoking in enclosed workplaces. In keeping with SRPC's intent to provide a safe and healthful work environment, all forms of smoking, inhaled agents and nicotine-based products are prohibited anywhere in the Commission offices, and is allowed only during lunch and break periods. E-cigarettes and vaping are likewise prohibited. This policy applies to all employees, clients, constituents, and visitors

H. Violence in the Workplace

The Commission is dedicated to nonviolent means of solving differences among employees or clients. All employees, clients, vendors, and business associates must be treated with courtesy and respect at all times. Employees are expected to refrain from conduct that may be dangerous to others.

Conduct that threatens, intimidates, or coerces another employee, customer, vendor, or business associate will not be tolerated. Commission resources may not be used to threaten, stalk, or harass anyone at or outside the workplace. Threats, threatening language, or any other acts of aggression or violence made toward or by any Commission employee will not be tolerated. For the purposes of this policy, a threat includes any verbal or physical harassment or abuse, attempts to intimidate or to instill fear in others, menacing gestures, bringing weapons to the workplace, stalking, or any

other hostile, aggressive, injurious, or destructive actions undertaken for the purpose of domination or intimidation. Weapons are prohibited on Commission premises unless such prohibition is restricted by applicable law, including weapons in an employee's personal vehicle parked on Commission premises while on duty/during working hours.

Indirect or direct threats of violence, incidents of actual violence, and suspicious individuals or activities should be reported as soon as possible to the Executive Director. The Executive Director is responsible for apprising the Executive Committee of all such incidents. In the event the Executive Director is unavailable or is the alleged offending party, the employee should report the situation to one or more members of the Executive Committee. When reporting a threat or incident of violence, including a verbal statement or physical action suggesting violence, the employee should be as specific and detailed as possible. Appropriate action in response to a reported incident or suggestion of violence may also include notifying the police or other law enforcement and prosecuting violations of this policy.

Employees should not place themselves in peril, nor should they attempt to intercede during an incident. All threats will be promptly investigated, and appropriate remedial action will be taken by the Commission. No employee will be subject to retaliation, intimidation, or discipline as a result of good faith reporting a threat under this policy.

Anyone, regardless of position or title, whom the Commission determines has engaged in conduct that violates this policy, including retaliation, will be subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment.

If you are threatened by an outside party, please follow the steps detailed in this section. It is important for the Commission to be aware of any potential danger in our workplace. Indeed, we want to take every precaution to protect everyone from the threat of a violent act by an employee or anyone else.

I. Safety

The Commission is responsible for ensuring a safe work environment free of physical and occupational hazards. Employees are responsible for conducting all tasks safely and efficiently. Employees are also responsible for complying with all local, state, and federal safety and health regulations and program standards—and with any special safety concerns in a particular area or with a client.

Maintaining a safe work environment requires the continuous cooperation of all employees. The Commission strongly encourages employees to communicate with the Executive Director, Office Coordinator, and fellow employees regarding safety issues and to take immediate steps to the extent possible to remedy any unsafe condition.

Any injury suffered by an employee while at work must be reported immediately to the Executive Director or Office Coordinator. All injuries must be reported whether they are minor, require minimal first aid, or are more serious and require immediate attention from a health care provider. The Executive Director or Office Coordinator is responsible for reporting all workplace injuries in accordance with the requirements of New Hampshire Workers' Compensation laws.

Failure to report workplace accidents is a serious matter because it may preclude an employee's coverage under Workers' Compensation Insurance.

To ensure federal and state standards for safety and health are met, the Commission complies with requirements to post information and provides employees with training on key aspects of workplace safety including annual updates on emergency evacuation, fire, and safety.

The Commission's Health and Safety Plan includes operating procedures and goals for maintaining workplace safety. Each year the plan is reviewed and distributed to all employees. Employees have the opportunity at staff meetings to discuss safety issues and make recommendations for procedures.

III. WORKPLACE PROTOCOL

A. Commission Management

The Executive Director is responsible for the management and administration of the Commission and has sole authority for implementing employee policies and office operations. The Executive Director is authorized to delegate supervisory responsibility for specific organizational projects to appropriate members of the professional staff.

If the Executive Director is absent for a prolonged period due to illness, leave, or other circumstances, the Executive Director shall designate a senior staff person to act on their behalf and continue routine supervision of Commission business.

If the Executive Director leaves the Commission before a replacement is hired, the Executive Committee shall designate a senior staff person to act as Interim Executive Director in order to continue routine supervision of Commission activities.

In the absence of the Executive Director, all human resources actions and major management decisions (i.e., contracts) must have the concurrence of the Executive Committee.

SRPC maintains and regularly updates an Emergency Succession Plan that provides contingency plans in the unlikely event that the position of Executive Director unexpectedly becomes vacant.

B. Confidentiality

The Commission's information and records relating to Commission business operations, plans, projects, strategies, employees, and customers are confidential. Employees must treat all matters accordingly and not disclose information to anyone who does not have a need to know.

No Commission information, including without limitation, documents, notes, files, records, oral information, and computer files or similar materials (except in the ordinary course of performing duties on behalf of the Commission) may be removed from the Commission's premises without permission from the Executive Director.

The contents of the Commission's records, or other information otherwise obtained in regard to business, may not be disclosed to anyone, except when required for a business purpose.

Employees unsure about the confidential nature of specific information are expected to seek clarification from the Executive Director, or an authorized person in the absence of the Executive Director. Employees will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, for knowingly or unknowingly revealing confidential information.

This policy is intended to alert employees to the need for discretion at all times and is not intended to inhibit normal business communications.

C. Honoraria and Gifts

Employees shall not accept honoraria or gifts of cash, goods, entertainment, or services from individuals or organizations with which the Commission has, or may have had, a business contact. Similarly, employees shall not accept honoraria or gifts of any kind from any individual or entity attempting, or with the potential, to influence the Commission's decisions or the activities of its employees.

D. Solicitation and Distribution

At the Commission, we believe employees should not be disturbed or disrupted while working. For this reason, solicitation of any kind by one employee of another employee is prohibited while either person is on working time. "Solicitation" is defined as requests for contributions, donations, raffles, lotteries, and membership in organizations, attendance at events, and similar conduct. "Working time" is defined as the time when an employee is scheduled to be working, exclusive of established break periods, mealtimes, and time before and after work hours. This rule applies to solicitations for charitable and noncharitable causes. Solicitation by nonemployees on Commission premises is prohibited at all times.

Distribution of advertising materials, handbills, or printed or written literature of any kind in work areas of the Commission is also prohibited at all times. "Work area" is defined as any Commission office or facility, other than designated break areas. Distribution of literature by nonemployees on Commission premises is prohibited at all times.

E. Use of Office Equipment

Commission office equipment including telephones, mobile electronic devices, computers, photocopiers, fax machines, and postage meters are business tools to manage workload and improve efficiency and communication. Occasional and limited use of telephones, photocopiers, printers and fax machines for personal use is permitted during normal working hours.

If personal use of office equipment or personal phone calls becomes excessive or otherwise disruptive, the employee may be asked to limit or cease personal use of the equipment or phone calls.

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

F. Vehicle Operation

Employees must maintain a valid current driver's license to operate any vehicle while employed by SRPC. Employees who use their personal vehicles for business purposes must show evidence that they are properly insured. A copy of the documentation will be kept in their personnel file and is to be updated annually. Employees who drive on Commission business are required to notify the Commission of any suspension, revocation, or other change in drivers license status.

If available, employees must use the SRPC van for SRPC business. Field work has priority for use of the van, followed by a trip with the longest mileage.

Employees operating any vehicle for Commission business must comply with all laws of the road and to drive in a safe, courteous, and responsible manner. While operating a commission vehicle, the employee must maintain the security of the vehicle and its contents.

All employees are required to wear seatbelts while operating or riding in any vehicle while on Commission business. In addition, passengers in vehicles operated by staff in the conduct of Commission business are also required to wear seatbelts.

Smoking is NOT permitted in the SRPC vehicle.

Employees are not permitted, under any circumstances, to operate a commission vehicle or a personal vehicle while on Commission business when any physical or mental impairment causes

the employee to be unable to drive safely. Additionally, employees shall not operate any Commission vehicle at any time or operate any personal vehicle while on Commission business while using or consuming alcohol, illegal drugs or prescription medications that may affect their ability to drive. These prohibitions include circumstances in which the employee is temporarily unable to operate a vehicle safely or legally because of impairment, illness, medication, or intoxication.

Regardless of severity, employees must report any accident, theft, or malicious damage to a commission vehicle or to a personal vehicle while driving on Commission business to the Executive Director and to the police immediately. Employees are expected to cooperate fully with authorities in the event of an accident.

Vehicle operators must clear the Commission vehicle of all snow and ice before driving.

The use of Commission vehicles is restricted to employees of the Commission only. Non-employees such as spouses, children, other relatives, or friends are not authorized to drive Commission vehicles at any time. The Commission will consider any unauthorized use of vehicles as the equivalent of theft and the driver may be held responsible (liable) for consequences of any accidents.

The use of any hand-held mobile electronic device capable of providing voice or data communication, (e.g., GPS devices, tablets, phones, and other devices that require data entry) is prohibited while operating an organization vehicle, while driving a personal vehicle during work time or for work purposes, or while temporarily stopped for a traffic control device or other momentary delay. Emergency calls to 911 or other public safety entities and the use of a hands-free device, such as one that uses Bluetooth wireless technology, are permitted. Employees who need to use the phone should pull over to the side of the road and come to a complete stop.

Any traffic violations that occur because of cell phone use, irresponsible or unlawful driving shall result in serious disciplinary action up to and including possible termination.

G. IT Equipment, Electronic and Telephonic Communications

All computers, electronic and telephonic communication systems and all communications and information transmitted by, received from, or stored in the Commission's equipment and systems are the property of the Commission. Use of electronic communications must comply with the Commission's anti-harassment and discrimination policies. Abuse of electronic communications by an employee may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Employees are not authorized to share passwords with other staff members or with anyone outside the office. Staff designated as the IT personnel and other staff members are not authorized to view the contents of the Executive Director's email without prior authorization. Failure to comply with this policy would be grounds for immediate dismissal and termination of employment with the Commission.

The following guidelines have been established for using the internet, computers, telephones, and email in an appropriate, ethical, and professional manner:

- Internet, Commission-provided equipment (e.g., laptops or desktop computers), and services may not be used for transmitting, retrieving, or storing any communications of a defamatory, discriminatory, harassing, or pornographic nature.

- Commission provided equipment is for exclusive use of employees for SRPC business purposes, and personal use should be incidental. Employees are prohibited from installing personal files, software, email or using other personal log-ins and accounts on SRPC equipment. Computers and other equipment assigned to individual staff members may not be used by family members or others not employed by SRPC.
- The following actions are forbidden: using disparaging, abusive, profane, or offensive language and engaging in any illegal activities, including piracy, extortion, blackmail, copyright infringement, and unauthorized access of any computers and Commission-provided equipment such as laptops.
- Employees may not copy, retrieve, modify, or forward copyrighted materials, except with permission or as a single copy for reference only.
- Employees may not connect USB or other drives or devices to SRPC computers or equipment unless the drive/device was purchased by SRPC for office use.
- Employees should not open suspicious emails, pop-ups, or downloads. Contact the Executive Director and IT staff with any questions or concerns to minimize the release of viruses or to contain viruses immediately.
- Internal and external emails are considered business records and may be subject to discovery in the event of litigation or right-to-know requests. Be aware of this possibility when sending email inside and outside the Commission.

To ensure the use of electronic and telephonic communication and business equipment is consistent with the Commission's legitimate business interests and to ensure quality service to our clients, the Commission reserves the right to have authorized representatives monitor the use of such equipment from time to time. This monitoring may include listening to voicemail messages, reviewing email messages, reviewing websites visited by an employee, or otherwise monitoring computer use. For this reason, employees should not have an expectation of privacy in their use of the Commission's computers, telephones, and other business equipment.

H. Social Media Policy

The Commission understands that social media can be a positive and rewarding way to share your life and opinions with family, friends, and co-workers.

In the rapidly expanding world of electronic communication, social media can mean many things. Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the internet, including on your own or someone else's blog, journal or diary, personal web site, social networking or affinity website, or web bulletin board or chat room.

Unless you have been specifically authorized to do so by the Commission, you are not permitted to make any statements on social media that purport to be on behalf of the Commission, authorized by the Commission, or in an official capacity for the Commission.

Unless you have been specifically authorized to do so by the Commission, you are not permitted to use any of the Commission's equipment, accounts (such as email), and/or devices to access social media.

When you are on-duty, you are expected to devote your full attention and efforts to the completion of your work. As such, while you are on-duty, you are not permitted to access social media on your own device without the prior consent of your immediate supervisor.

Understand that even when you are off-duty, your use of social media may still be subject to scrutiny by the Commission. As such, whether on-duty or off-duty, you are not permitted to disclose on social media any legitimate confidential records, communications and/or proceedings of the Commission nor violate the Commission's Anti-Harassment or Violence in the Workplace policies. The Commission reserves the right to take disciplinary action against you, up to and including possible termination, in the event that your use of social media, whether on-duty or off-duty, unduly interferes with the Commission's legitimate interests, as an employer, in managing the workplace.

In general, and consistent with the previously stated Standards of Professionalism, employees should be fair and courteous to fellow employees, customers, members, suppliers, and people who work on behalf of the Commission. Also, keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers than by posting complaints on social media.

I. Cell Phone Use and Texting

Cellphones should be turned off or set to silent or vibrate mode during meetings, conferences and in any circumstance where incoming calls may be disruptive.

Personal cellphones

While at work, employees are expected to exercise discretion in using personal cellphones. The use of personal mobile electronic devices and cell phones should be restricted to the employee's break or meal periods, unless an emergency arises. Excessive personal calls during the workday can interfere with employee productivity and be distracting to others. Employees are encouraged to make any personal calls during nonwork time when possible and to ensure that friends and family members are aware of SRPC's policy.

Commission-provided cellphones

When job duties or business needs demand, the Commission may issue a business cellphone to an employee for work-related communications. Personal use of Commission-owned cellphones should be kept to a minimum. Employees using Commission-issued cellphones must be aware that such cellphones are property of the Commission, and employees should have no expectation of privacy in their use of such devices.

Employees in possession of Commission-owned cellphones are expected to protect the equipment from loss, damage or theft. Upon resignation or termination of employment, or at any time on request, the employee must return the phone.

Safety issues for cellphone use

All employees are expected to follow applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations regarding the use of cellphones at all times.

J. Conflicts of Interest/Volunteer Activities

The Commission expects employees to conduct themselves according to the highest ethical standards as defined in Ethical Principles in Planning of the American Planning Association and the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct of the American Institute of Certified Planners. Business dealings that appear to create a conflict between the Commission's interests and an employee are unacceptable.

Employees must avoid any relationship or activity that might impair, or even appear to impair, their ability to make objective and fair decisions when performing their jobs. At times, an employee may be faced with a situation in which actions taken on behalf of the Commission may conflict with the employee's own personal interests. Commission property, information, or business opportunities may not be used for personal gain.

Conflicts of interest could arise in the following circumstances:

- Being employed by, or acting as a consultant to, a municipality, competitor or potential competitor, supplier, or contractor, regardless of the nature of the employment, while employed with the Commission.
- Hiring or supervising family members or close relatives.
- Owning or having a substantial interest in a competitor, supplier, or contractor.
- Accepting gifts, discounts, favors, or services from a customer or potential customer, a competitor, or a supplier, unless equally available to all Commission employees.

The Commission recognizes the right of employees to engage in activities outside of their employment which are of a private nature and unrelated to our business. However, the employee must disclose any possible conflicts so that the Commission may review the situation and prevent potential conflicts of interest.

Any employee who has any question about whether an action or proposed course of conduct would create a conflict of interest should immediately contact the Executive Director.

Volunteerism and community involvement by employees are welcomed and encouraged. At the same time, it is imperative that employees exercise good judgment in determining the level of participation and the circumstances in which such participation could blur boundaries and expose an employee to a possible conflict of interest with the operations of the Commission. An employee contemplating participation in an organization where there may not be a clear boundary between the volunteer activities and the interests of the Commission should address their concerns with the Executive Director.

A violation of this policy will result in immediate and appropriate discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

K. Outside Employment

No employee shall engage in any outside employment that directly or indirectly competes or conflicts with the business interests of the Commission. Any employee contemplating outside employment—whether self-employment or employment with another political subdivision of the state or with a for-profit or nonprofit organization—shall discuss it with the Executive Director prior to the start of the employment. Any breach of this policy will result in discipline, up to and including dismissal.

L. Attendance and Punctuality

Attendance and punctuality are essential functions of an employee's position. From time to time, an employee may need to be absent from work. The Commission is aware that emergencies, illnesses, or pressing personal business that cannot be scheduled outside work hours may arise.

If an employee is unable to report to work, or if an employee will arrive late, the employee must contact the office to inform staff and the Executive Director of their situation. If the employee is

unable to call in because of an illness, emergency, or some other reason, they should arrange to have someone call for them.

When out of the office due to illness, vacation, or personal appointments or if the employee knows in advance that they will need to be late or absent, time-off request must be submitted by the employee and approved by the Executive Director.

All employees should be aware that excessive absenteeism, lateness, or early departures may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from employment.

A no call or no show lasting three days may be considered job abandonment and may be deemed an employee's voluntary resignation of employment.

M. Attire and Grooming

Commission employees should project a professional image at work by being appropriately attired and neat, clean, and well-groomed while on the job. Clothing must be consistent with the standards for a business environment and must be appropriate to the type of work being performed in the office, in the field, or off site. The Commission is confident that employees will use their best judgment regarding attire and appearance.

N. Lactation Accommodation

The Commission will provide a reasonable amount of break time to accommodate an employee who wants to express breast milk for her infant child, to the extent required and in accordance with applicable law. The break time, if possible, must run concurrently with rest and meal periods already provided to the employee. If the break time cannot run concurrently with these periods, the break time will be unpaid to the extent permitted by applicable law. If an employee needs time beyond the usual break/meal period, the employee may use their personal leave time to make up the time.

The Commission will designate the small conference room as the location where they can express milk in private. The employee may use their private office, if any. The Commission may not be able to provide additional break time if doing so would seriously disrupt its operations. Please speak to the Executive Director if you have questions regarding this policy.

O. Plagiarism

As professional planners or certified planners, the staff of the Commission adheres to the American Institute of Certified Planners Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. The Rules of Conduct state, "We shall not use the product of others' efforts to seek professional recognition or acclaim intended for producers of original work."¹

The definition of plagiarism is "when a writer uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common knowledge) material without acknowledging the source."² This is a clear violation of ethical principles. Plagiarism can also violate copyright and may be punishable by law.

The following are examples of plagiarism:

¹ ACIP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, October 2009, <http://www.planning.org/ethics>

² Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA Statement on Best Practices

January 2003 Council of Writing Program Administrators <http://www.wpacouncil.org/positions/WPAplagiarism.pdf>

- Copying work verbatim or nearly verbatim.
- Purposely paraphrasing portions of another author's work.
- Verbatim copying portions of another author's paper with citing but not clearly differentiating what text has been copied (i.e., not applying quotation marks correctly) or not citing the source correctly. Copying elements of another author's paper, such as equations or illustrations that are not common knowledge or copying or purposely paraphrasing sentences without citing the source."³ Employees are responsible for the content of their work and for ensuring the documents they create meet the highest ethical standards with respect to plagiarism.

Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated at the Commission. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

³ Plagiarism Policy ACM Policy and Procedures on Plagiarism October 2006 (revised June 2010)
www.acm.org/publicationw/policies/plagiarism_policy

IV. TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

A. Employment Classification Categories

All employees are designated either nonexempt or exempt under state and federal wage and hour laws. The following descriptions are intended to help employees understand the employment classifications as well as their employment status and eligibility for benefits. These classifications do not guarantee employment for any specified period of time. Both the employee and the Strafford Regional Planning Commission retain the right to terminate the employment-at-will relationship at any time.

SRPC has established the following categories for nonexempt and exempt employees.

Regular Full-Time Employees

Regular full-time employees are hired for an unspecified period of time and are eligible for all benefits offered by the Commission. A full-time employee is expected to work at least 40 hours during the organization's designated workweek.

Regular Part-Time Employees

Regular part-time employees are those who are not classified as temporary and who are regularly scheduled to work between 20 and 40 hours per week. They receive all legally mandated benefits such as Social Security and Workers' Compensation Insurance, as well as paid time off on a prorated basis. They are also eligible for the other benefits offered by SRPC at the discretion of the Executive Director subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefit program.

Part-Time Employees

Part-time employees are those who are not classified as temporary and who are regularly scheduled to work less than 20 hours per work week. They receive all legally mandated benefits such as Social Security and Worker's Compensation Insurance. They are also eligible for other benefits offered by SRPC, such as paid time off on a prorated basis. They may also eligible for the other benefits offered by SRPC at the discretion of the Executive Director subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefit program.

Temporary Employees

Temporary employees, including interns, are hired as interim staff members to temporarily supplement the workforce or to assist in the completion of a specific project. They work the Commission's full-time schedule for a limited duration, usually no more than 12 months. Employment beyond any initially stated period does not in any way imply a change in employment status. While they shall receive all legally mandated benefits such as Social Security and Workers' Compensation Insurance and paid time off, temporary employees are typically ineligible for other Commission benefits, unless otherwise require by law.

Exempt/Nonexempt

- **EXEMPT** employees are not covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act and applicable state wage and hour law overtime pay provisions and are not paid overtime premium for overtime worked in accordance with federal and applicable state laws. Exempt employees are expected to work as many hours as are required to perform their assigned work and generally receive a salary which is intended to cover all hours worked including any hours worked in excess of 40 in a workweek or overtime as otherwise mandated by applicable state law.

- **NONEXEMPT** employees are covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act and/or applicable state wage and hour laws and must be eligible for overtime to be paid time and a half (i.e., 1.5 times their hourly rate) for all hours over 40 worked in a week.

When employees are hired, they are told whether they are considered exempt or nonexempt from the overtime provisions of the FLSA. If you have questions about whether you are classified as exempt or nonexempt under the FLSA, please contact the Executive Director.

Volunteers

The Commission encourages volunteers willing to donate their time and effort to help with the Commission's work. The Commission may, at the discretion of the Executive Director, provide training and reimbursement for approved expenses directly related to their volunteer tasks at the Commission. Volunteers are not Commission employees and are not eligible for benefits.

B. References

To ensure that individuals who apply for employment with the Commission are well qualified, we conduct reference checks. Three professional references are required. They may include current or former employers or professors at college. Job applicants need to sign a reference release form so their references can be checked. All offers of employment are conditional on the receipt of these references. The reference checks are kept confidential and are viewed only by individuals involved in the hiring process.

All requests for references for current or former employees of SRPC must be referred to the Executive Director for response. No one other than the Executive Director is authorized to provide references, including, but not limited to, "personal" references. Any citation of work conducted at/for SRPC by a prior employee or consultant must list the Executive Director as the reference contact. When the Executive Director receives a request for a reference, he or she will confirm the dates of employment and positions held.

C. Background Checks

SRPC reserves the right to conduct background criminal record and motor vehicle checks prior to employment and during employment. Compliance with this process is an ongoing condition of employment. Employees are expected to assist with completing any required authorization forms.

D. Employee Personnel Files

Employee files are maintained by the Office Coordinator and considered confidential and the property of the Commission. The Executive Director, Office Coordinator and Financial Manager may have access to personnel file information for the purposes of their work. Personnel files may be also subject to disclosure as required by law. This may include but is not limited to: by court or agency, statutes requiring disclosure of such records, discovery conducted pursuant to a lawsuit, workers' compensation claim, or other claim.

Requests from current or former employees for access to their personnel files will be granted within three days, unless otherwise required under state law. Current and former employees may obtain a copy of part or all of their personnel file. If they disagree with any information in their file, they may submit a written statement explaining the disagreement and provide evidence to support their position. Such statements shall become part of the employee's personnel file. They shall be included in any transmittal of the file to a third party and in any disclosure of the

contested information to a third party. Personnel files are to be reviewed in the office and may not be removed from the office. Employees who want to review their personnel files should contact the Office Coordinator to schedule an appointment.

E. Annual Performance Assessment

Employees shall participate in an annual performance assessment each year. The Commission performance assessment includes a self-evaluation of job performance for the past year and goals for the next review period.

The Executive Director and supervisors will review the employee's self-evaluation and record how well the employee performed, their progress toward goals, and other information. Once the employee, supervisor and Executive Director have completed the assessment, they will meet to discuss it.

Employees will also take part in a mid-year check-in with their supervisor and/or the Executive director to assess progress towards meeting their annual goals and identify any necessary adjustments for the second half of the year.

The Executive Director shall also participate in an annual assessment of their performance. This assessment will follow the same procedure as the assessments for other employees, with one exception: the Executive Committee shall review the Executive Director's self-assessment and meet with the Executive Director to discuss it.

The annual performance assessment will be the basis for determining merit-based compensation modifications for the next fiscal year. Changes in an employee's compensation are at the sole discretion of the Executive Director and are not guaranteed. Changes in the Executive Director's compensation is at the sole discretion of the Executive Committee.

A copy of an employee's performance assessment will be provided to the employee and the original will be retained in the employee's personnel file. Each employee will be asked to sign their final performance assessment. An employee who disagrees with their review may refuse to sign the final assessment. In such cases, a note that the employee refused to sign will be added to their file.

F. Separation of Employment

Separation of employment can occur for different reasons. An employee who voluntarily separates from employment with the Commission will notify the Executive Director in writing of their planned resignation. To allow for a smooth transition, employees are asked to provide at least two weeks' notice prior to their last day of work, absent extenuating circumstances.

The Executive Director is responsible to and reports directly to the Executive Committee of the Commission. The Executive Director will provide a minimum of four weeks' notice of their intention to separate from the organization, absent extenuating circumstances.

Employees who fail to report to work or to contact the office for three consecutive workdays shall be considered to have abandoned their job without notice, effective at the end of normal work hours on the third day.

Members of the Commission staff are employed on an at-will basis, and the Commission retains the right to terminate any staff member's employment at any time with or without cause or notice.

The separating employee must return all Commission property at the time of separation, including keys, passwords, computers and any other Commission property in their possession.

The separating employee shall contact the Office Coordinator or the Executive Director as soon as notice is given to schedule an exit interview. The interview will be conducted on the employee's last day of work, or on another day, as mutually agreed.

In the event the employer terminates the employment relationship, final payment must be made within 72 hours. If the employee resigns, final payment will be on the regular pay day. Eligible accrued paid time off leave will be paid in the final paycheck. Health and dental insurance will terminate on the last day of the month of employment. Information about continuing health insurance under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) will be provided by Health Trust under contract with SRPC.

V. WORK SCHEDULES

A. Hours of Operation

The Commission operates on a 40-hour work week. Regular work hours for all employees are Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m., and include an unpaid half-hour off for lunch.

Our core hours for employees authorized to use flex time are 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. The core hours of operation may be changed at the discretion of the Executive Director. It is imperative that all employees keep the office staff notified of their work sites and hours of work. Employees not authorized to use flex time are expected to be at work during normal business hours, except as otherwise permitted by this handbook.

The Commission provides professional and technical planning assistance to its 18 member communities. The Commission works with many volunteers and elected and appointed officials whose work in their communities takes place outside of normal business hours. Employees shall be available to work during off-business hours as requested by member communities and other clients of the Commission.

Employees will be available for early morning, evening, and weekend meetings with clients and member communities as requested. Exempt employees will have the opportunity to set a flexible schedule within the two-week pay period to accommodate these requests.

All employees will use weekly schedule, voice mail, or email to notify the Executive Director as to their hours of work, location and time of return, phone numbers, and any other pertinent information.

B. Meals and Rest Periods

In order for our employees to perform their duties to the best of their ability, the Commission provides meal and rest periods. After four hours of work, employees will receive an unpaid half-hour meal or rest period.

Two 10-minute paid breaks may be taken each workday; please coordinate these breaks with other employees and the Executive Director.

Employees may voluntarily elect to waive the meal break. Any employee who wishes to do so should speak with the Executive Director and execute the appropriate waiver form, which will be kept in the employee's personnel file.

C. Telecommuting

Telecommuting is an agreement between the employer and employee in which the employee works outside of the SRPC office for a specified and regular number of days a week, using telephones, computers, and related voice, video, and text technology. The intent is to improve the efficiency of the organization and maintain a healthy work-life balance.

All regular full-time and regular part-time employees are eligible to work from home or other satellite office, the specific scheduling of which being subject to the approval of the Executive Director. Employees wishing to request a telecommuting work option should review the specific terms and conditions of the SRPC Telecommuting Policy and Agreement found in Appendix A and submit a written request to their manager and Executive Director. Approved requests will require completion of the Telecommuting Agreement.

D. Flex Time

SRPC expects exempt full-time and part-time employees to work their regular schedules each week. Sometimes, exempt employees may need to work more than their regular schedule or adjust their schedule to keep within their total scheduled hours for the pay period.

Whenever an exempt employee anticipates the need to work in excess of 40 hours (for a full-time employee or less for a regular part time employee) to attend night meetings or other events outside of regular business hours, they should adjust their daily schedule, so they do not work more than their weekly allotment of hours in one week. For example, they could come in late or leave early on the day of their meeting. If such changes are not possible, they may, without prior approval of the Executive Director or additional documentation, flex their hours to not exceed 80 hours for the pay period (prorated for regular part time employees).

In the exceptional situations when it is not possible to flex within the week or pay period, with written prior approval of the Executive Director, employees may accrue “flex time” for each extra hour up to eight worked outside—and in excess of their normal weekly schedule. Please note that flex time cannot be earned for additional hours spent to meet the requirements of your job or to complete routine assignments. Rather, flex time is compensation for work that cannot be reasonably done or managed within an employee’s typical work week. Failure to request and be granted pre-approval will result in a forfeiture of any time worked over the exempt employee’s regular schedule.

Once approved, employees must track on a “Flex Time Form” the hours they work in any week in which they accrue flex time.

Flex time must be used during the same project billing period (usually a month) unless the Executive Director approves a different deadline in writing. Flex time leave may be taken in half-hour increments and must be documented on the “Flex Time Form.” Failure to use the flex time within the specified time period will result in the employee’s forfeit of the time.

Flex time is a nonmonetary benefit, and employees will not be paid for unused flex time when they leave SRPC.

E. Inclement Weather/Disaster

During storms or other emergency, the Executive Director may decide to close the office entirely, or before the end of normal business hours. If the Commission office closes after employees have reported to work—but before they have worked two hours—hourly employees will be paid for two full hours.

In emergencies when you believe travel conditions may put your safety at risk, please notify the Executive Director as far in advance as reasonably possible that you are unable to come to work. The office may be closed by the Executive Director in extreme storm conditions or by the City of Rochester’s closure of the building. When employees elect not to come to work or in the instance that the office is closed, employees have the following options:

- Telecommute in accordance with the Telecommuting Policy.
- Take a day off without pay (nonexempt staff).
- Use available paid time off.

If an exempt employee has not accrued sufficient earned time to cover any such absence, they will be paid a full day's pay for that day, as long as the employee has performed any other work during the same pay period.

If an employee had previously scheduled time off when an office closure is announced the employee will be required to use available paid time off.

Employees who do not report for work and do not report to their supervisor or Executive Director will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of their employment.

VI. COMPENSATION

A. Payment of Wages

Wages are paid biweekly, on the Friday following the end of the two-week pay period. Each work week runs from Monday to Sunday. The statement of earnings given to each employee every pay period indicates their:

- Gross Pay
- Statutory Deductions
- Voluntary Deductions
- Use of Paid Leave

The amount of federal withholding depends on the number of exemptions claimed on Form W-4, Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate. If an employee's marital status or number of claimed exemptions changes, a new Form W-4 must be submitted to the Financial Manager. Employees are responsible for determining their exemptions according to federal guidelines.

B. Payroll Deductions

Payroll Deductions for All Employees

The Commission is required by law to make certain deductions from employee paychecks, including federal income taxes and employee contributions to social security. The Commission may also be required to make deductions pursuant to a federal or state agency or court order, such as for child support. These deductions are itemized on the employee's check stub. The Commission may also make additional deductions for insurance and other purposes to benefit the employee. Arrangements for these voluntary deductions can be made with the Financial Manager.

The New Hampshire Department of Labor permits these deductions and requires employers to provide employees with notice of the other circumstances in which payroll deductions are permitted by law. Although not all of the following are relevant to our workplace, we are providing the entire list of permitted deductions as required by the Department of Labor:

- Installment payments of legitimate loans made by the employer to the employee.
- Repayment of accidental overpayments made to the employee.
- Repayment of advances on vacation or other paid time off.
- Required clothing not considered to be uniforms.
- Voluntary rental fees for nonrequired clothing.
- Voluntary cleaning of uniforms and nonrequired clothing.
- Medical, surgical, hospital, and other group insurance benefits having no financial advantage for the employer.
- The use of a demonstrator vehicle as defined in RSA 261:111.
- Payments into savings funds held by someone other than the employer.
- Housing and utilities.
- Strictly voluntary contributions to charity.
- Union dues.
- Health, welfare, pension, and apprenticeship fund contributions.
- Voluntary contributions into cafeteria plans, flexible benefit plans, or both, as authorized by section 125 or section 132 of the Internal Revenue Code.

- Voluntary payments by the employee for the following: childcare fees by a licensed child care provider, parking fees, and/or pharmaceutical items, gift shop, and cafeteria items purchased on the site of a hospital by hospital employees.
- Recovery of tuition for nonrequired educational costs.
- Payments for the employee's use of a qualifying health or fitness facility.
- Contributions to a political action committee.
- And for any purpose on which the employer and employee mutually agree that does not grant financial advantage to the employer, other than to purchase items required in the performance of an employee's job in the ordinary course of the operation of the business.

Payroll Deductions for Salaried Exempt Employees

The Commission complies with all federal and state laws covering deductions from paychecks, including the paychecks of salaried exempt employees. These employees receive a predetermined salary, which is not subject to reduction due to variations in the quality or quantity of work performed, due to absences requested by the Commission, or due to the operating requirements of the Commission. Federal and state law limit when a salaried employee's salary can be subject to deductions.

The Commission prohibits salary deductions that are inconsistent with the status of an exempt employee. Employees should note that salaries are subject to modification, for example at evaluation time, when an employee's position or responsibilities change, and at other appropriate times. Employees should also note that the Commission can apply earned leaves and other forms of paid time off to full-day absences for personal reasons, sickness, or disability; applying paid time is not considered a deduction from salary.

Questions Regarding Paychecks and Deductions

If you have any questions or concerns about your paycheck or any deductions from your pay, please contact the Office Coordinator as soon as possible. If you do not receive a prompt response or are dissatisfied in any way with the response you receive, you should contact the Executive Director.

Questions and concerns regarding pay and deductions will be investigated and addressed promptly. If there has been an error, such as an incorrect deduction, the employee will receive a corrected check or a check reimbursing the employee for the error, whichever is more practicable under the circumstances.

Employees should feel free to communicate any questions or concerns regarding pay or deductions. The Commission will not tolerate retaliation against employees who do so.

C. Overtime

Occasionally it may be necessary for an employee to work beyond his/her/their normal workday hours. Under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), nonexempt employees are entitled to be paid one-and-one-half times their regular hourly wage for all hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours in a workweek. All overtime must be approved in advance by the Executive Director except in an emergency. The Commission will attempt to provide advance notice of the need for overtime work.

Time away from work due to a job-related injury, jury duty, bereavement leave, vacation time, and sick time are not counted as hours worked for the purpose of computing eligibility for overtime pay. Employees are advised when hired whether they are entitled to overtime pay.

D. Compensatory time

In lieu of overtime pay, and subject to approval by the Executive Director, a non-exempt employee may request compensatory time, (to be indicated on the weekly time sheet) at a rate of one point five (1.5) hours earned for every hour worked over forty (40) in a seven-day workweek to be used as follows:

- Compensatory time is accrued at 1½ times the overtime hours. (Ex. Overtime Hours = 5 x 1.5 = 7.5 Hours Comp Time)
- The Executive Director shall grant the employee's request for use of authorized, accrued compensatory time within a reasonable period of time, unless to do so would disrupt the operations.
- The amount of accrued compensatory time is limited to a maximum of 40 total compensatory hours.
- At the end of employment for any reason, the employee will be paid for unused compensatory time at the overtime rate of one- and one-half times the hourly rate received by said employee or one- and one-half times the average regular rate received by such employee during the last 3 years of the employee's employment, whichever is higher and in accordance with federal and state law.

E. Mileage reimbursement

Employees are reimbursed for mileage when using their personal vehicles at a rate set annually by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Mileage reimbursement forms must be completed and submitted by the last day of the month.

F. Show-Up Pay

The Commission makes every effort to contact employees in advance of any office closing. In the unfortunate circumstance that a nonexempt employee does not receive prior notification of a closing and arrives for a scheduled workday, the employee will be compensated for two hours of "show-up pay" for any inconvenience.

Occasionally, employees may be asked to come into work for a mandatory meeting lasting less than two hours. When notified in advance that the time spent will be less than two hours, employees will be compensated only for the actual time, not the two hours of "show-up pay."

G. Timesheets and Project Reports

Exempt employees need to report billable hours by project, holiday, and paid time off. Nonexempt employees need to report all hours worked or charged to projects, holiday, and paid time off. All billable hours must be carefully recorded and linked to a project with a task annotation. All employees, exempt and non-exempt, will use the fiscal billing system to record their hours.

Employees will prepare an expense report for travel and other work-related expenses monthly or as needed. Employees will submit completed Travel and Expense Forms with receipts to the Executive Director for review and approval.

As required by individual project contracts, employees may be required to prepare monthly, quarterly, bi-annual, or annual reports providing enough information for the Financial Manager to prepare accurate invoices and/or support a request for reimbursement.

Compliance with record keeping requirements and timely submittal of documents is the responsibility of the employee. Noncompliance may result in disciplinary action.

All timesheets are due Monday morning for the prior week.

All timesheets will include sufficient detail for the Financial Manager to prepare payroll, invoices, and fiscal reports.

The Executive Director will review and approve all timesheets prior to preparation of payroll.

If any changes are made to an employee's timesheet, the employee will be asked to approve and initial any changes to ensure that they are accurate.

An employee should not complete timesheets for any other employee. Any questions regarding how to properly complete a timesheet should be addressed to the Executive Director.

H. Employee Records

To keep accurate and necessary employee records up to date, it is extremely important that employees notify the Office Coordinator of any changes in:

- Name and or marital status
- Current mailing address and telephone number
- Number of eligible dependents
- W-4 deductions
- Person to contact in case of an emergency
- Insurance beneficiaries
- Proof of automobile insurance

VII. BENEFITS

This section provides a very general description of the benefits to which employees may be entitled. Please understand that this explanation does not, nor is it intended to, provide all the details of these benefits. Therefore, the handbook does not change or otherwise interpret the terms of the official plan documents. Your rights as an employee can be determined only by referring to the full text of the official plan documents, which are available for examination from the Office Coordinator. To the extent that any of the information in this handbook is inconsistent with the official plan documents, the provisions of the official documents will govern in all cases.

Please note that nothing in this handbook or the benefit plans described here shall be held or construed to create a promise of employment or of continued or future benefits, or a binding contract between the Commission and its employees, retirees, or their dependents for benefits or for any other purpose. All employees shall remain subject to discharge or discipline to the same extent as if these plans had not been put into effect.

The Commission reserves the right, at its sole and absolute discretion, to amend, modify, or terminate, in whole or in part, any or all of the provisions of the benefit plans described here, including any health benefits that may be extended to retirees and their dependents. Further, the Commission reserves the exclusive right, power, and authority, at its sole and absolute discretion, to administer, apply, and interpret the benefit plans described here and to decide all matters arising in connection with the operation or administration of such plans.

A. Health Insurance

The Commission offers permanent regular full-time and part-time employees a group health insurance plan. Insurance plans are reviewed annually by the Executive Director.

Employees may change enrollment in health insurance only during open enrollment periods, or upon a qualifying life event.

SRPC contributes to offset the cost of the premium at a rate determined by the Executive Director. The percentage contributed by SRPC may vary annually depending on the cost of the selected health plan(s) and the constraints of the resources allocated in the annual operating budget. For regular part-time employees, the Commission contribution shall be reduced proportionately for regular part-time employees. The Commission's contribution toward coverage will be specified in the employee's offer letter.

Health insurance payments, required or optional, are deducted from employee paychecks.

Information on the current health insurance plan is available from the insurance carrier, HealthTrust, and from the Executive Director or Office Coordinator. It is the responsibility of the employee to inform the Office Coordinator or health insurance carrier of all changes in personal data and coverage needs. Health insurance coverage begins on the first day of the first full month of employment with the Commission.

B. Health Insurance Incentive Option

The Commission offers a cash payment to eligible staff members who elect not to participate in the health and dental insurance plans.

After showing proof of enrollment in another health insurance plan, an employee who chooses the incentive option will receive a check at the end of each fiscal year in an amount equal to 20 percent of the maximum total annual premium the Commission would have paid for single-person coverage for both health and dental plans for that employee. This incentive payment will be prorated for months of employment during the immediate past fiscal year and the status of the employee, i.e., approved regular part-time employees' incentive payment will be prorated based on their regularly scheduled weekly hours. The incentive option payment is a nonwage benefit from which all applicable taxes will be withheld by the Commission.

C. Dental Insurance

All regular full- and part-time employees enrolled in the Commission health insurance plan, regardless of coverage program selected, are eligible to participate in the group dental insurance plan. SRPC contributes to offset the cost of the dental insurance premium at a rate determined by the Executive Director. The Commission contribution is reduced proportionately for employees whose regular schedule is less than 40 hours per week.

Dental insurance coverage will begin on the first day of the first full month of employment with the Commission.

D. Life Insurance

The Commission provides group life insurance to all regular full-time employees. Life insurance coverage for regular part-time employees is at the discretion of the Executive Director. There is no shared cost with employees.

The amount of each employee's life insurance policy is equal to their annual wages or salary. For specific information on the life insurance plan, contact the Executive Director or the Office Coordinator.

E. Short-Term Disability

All regular employees are covered for short-term disabling illness or injury at no cost to them. Employees are insured for 66.67 percent of their basic weekly wages with a maximum of \$600 dollars per week for 13 weeks. There is a waiting period for collection of payments.

For specific information on the short-term disability insurance plan, contact the Executive Director or the Office Coordinator.

F. Long-Term Disability

All regular employees are covered for long-term disabling illness or injury at no cost to the employee. Employees are insured for 60 percent of their basic monthly wages with a maximum monthly benefit of \$2,000. There is a waiting period for collection of payments.

For specific information on the long-term disability insurance plan, contact the Executive Director or the Office Coordinator.

G. Paid Family Medical Leave

All regular full- and part-time employees that live and work in the State of New Hampshire are covered for Paid Family Medical Leave at no cost to the employee. NH PFML will pay 60% wage replacement for up to 12 weeks per year for a covered paid family or medical reason.

For specific information on the Paid Family Medical Leave insurance plan, contact the Executive Director or the Office Coordinator.

H. COBRA

The Commission complies with the provisions of the federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) by providing eligible employees who have left the organization the option to continue group health and dental benefits for up to 18 months at their own expense.

If an employee dies, dependents of the employee already on the insurance plan can continue coverage for up to 36 months under the guidelines established for an employee who leaves the organization.

HealthTrust will notify individuals eligible for COBRA of the premium costs and the payment process.

Premium payments are the sole responsibility of the individual. Late payments are subject to interest charges and may result in a discontinuation of the benefit. A lapse in payment of the premium will result in loss of coverage.

I. SIMPLE IRA

All employees earning more than \$5,000 in a calendar year are eligible to participate in the 5304-Savings Incentive Match for Employees of Small Employers (SIMPLE IRA). The Commission will match, dollar for dollar, employee contributions of up to 3 percent of their gross pay. Employees are encouraged to participate in the SIMPLE IRA and save for their future retirement. To obtain specific information about the SIMPLE IRA, please see the Executive Director or the Financial Manager.

J. Educational Reimbursement Plan and Professional Development

The Commission may reimburse the cost of post-secondary-level accredited studies that are deemed to be directly related to employees' performance of their work. This benefit is for regular full-time employees of the Commission only and is offered at the discretion of the Executive Director; it does not extend to family members of employees or to anyone else associated with the Commission who is not an employee.

Educational assistance is subject to budget constraints and internal needs for employee training. The Executive Director is responsible for determining whether coursework qualifies for reimbursement.

Employees seeking educational assistance must present supporting information to the Executive Director and must obtain the Executive Director's written approval before enrolling in a course. To qualify for the educational expenses benefit, an employee must start and complete a course while a regular full-time employee of the Commission on the active payroll (i.e., not on a leave of absence).

Upon completion of an approved course, the employee must provide certification that all course requirements were completed along with the official grade. The employee will be reimbursed based on the grade received according to the following schedule:

A	75%
B	50%
C	25%
D or below	0%
Pass	25%

Attendance at work-related professional development seminars and workshops approved in advance by the Executive Director will be reimbursed 100 percent.

VIII. TIMEOFF/LEAVES OF ABSENCE

A. Holidays

The Commission observes the following paid holidays:

1. New Year's Day
2. Civil Rights Day
3. Presidents Day
4. Memorial Day
5. Juneteenth
6. Independence Day
7. Labor Day
8. Indigenous Peoples Day
9. Veterans Day
10. Thanksgiving Day
11. Friday following Thanksgiving
12. Christmas Day, or other single day

If different units of government observe any of these designated holidays on different dates, the Executive Director decides when the Commission will observe them. When a designated holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the Executive Director determines whether the Commission will observe the holiday on the preceding Friday or on the following Monday.

When a designated holiday occurs during an eligible employee's paid absence, holiday leave will be substituted for paid leave.

Employees may choose, with pre-approval of the Executive Director, to flex a holiday. Flexed holidays must be used within the Fiscal Year. Failure to do so will result in a forfeiture of that time. Requests to flex a holiday must be submitted to the Executive Director in advance, in writing using the Holiday Flex Form.

The Executive Director will grant requests for other holidays away from work, when possible, on a first-come, first-served basis, taking staffing needs into consideration.

Part-time benefit-eligible employees are entitled to holiday pay for a pro-rated amount of hours (e.g., an employee who typically works 30 hours per week may take six "floating" holiday hours that same week). The schedule for the week may be adjusted to accommodate the total regular hours for the work week.

B. Paid Time Off

SRPC's paid time off (PTO) policy is designed to provide employees with flexible paid time off from work that can be used for purposes that include the following:

- Vacation,
- Personal or Family Illness,
- Medical Appointments,
- Personal Matters,
- Volunteerism,

- Supplemental Bereavement Leave, and
- Maternity/Paternity Leave.

Accruals and Maximum Accumulations of PTO

All regular full-time employees accrue PTO with pay at the rate of 2 days per month of service starting from the date of hire. This accrual rate is fractionally apportioned throughout the 26 pay periods in a year. An additional day is added for each year of service up to a maximum of 32 days per year.

PTO is added to the employee's PTO bank when the bi-weekly paycheck is issued. PTO taken will be subtracted from the employee's accrued time bank and also recorded at the time of paycheck issuance.

PTO may be accumulated up to a maximum of 40 days (320 hours). Any accumulated and unused leave over the maximum will be forfeited at the end of the pay period in which the employee exceeds 320 hours.

All regular part-time employees accrue PTO by the above formula pro-rated to their individual work schedules. For example, an employee working 20 hours per week would accumulate PTO at 50 percent of the rate of a full-time employee with an equivalent number of years of service. Additionally, the maximum accumulated leave will be prorated for regular part-time employees. Using the same example, an employee working 20 hours per week may accrue a maximum of 20 days (160 hours).

An employee will not accrue PTO for pay periods in which the employee is entitled to no wages, unless required under law. Generally, this means when the employee is on unpaid leave, such as FMLA leave.

All requests to use PTO leave must be approved by the Executive Director. PTO leave may be used in minimum increments of one-half hour. All requests for PTO equal to or greater than one (1) full business day must be submitted in QuickBooks Time, the SRPC timesheet software. Planned PTO leave requests extending beyond three (3) consecutive business days must be submitted with at least one-week notice.

Employees may not ask to take unpaid time away from work until all of their available accrued earned PTO has been used.

The SRPC Executive Director retains the authority to consider comparable experience at similar agencies and hire staff at any step on the PTO accumulation schedule. The SRPC Executive Committee retains the authority to consider comparable experience at similar agencies and hire the Executive Director at any step on the PTO accumulation schedule.

SRPC allows three (3) days of paid bereavement leave due to the death of immediate family members (separate from PTO). Supplemental bereavement leave, beyond three days, is an eligible use of PTO.

Conversion of Accumulated Sick and Vacation Time to PTO

PTO shall replace sick and vacation/annual leave under the SRPC Personnel Policy effective July 1, 2022. For employees that have accrued amounts of sick and vacation/annual leave, the SRPC will allow the conversion of that time to PTO as follows:

- Vacation/annual time converts to PTO at a 1:1 ratio
- Sick time converts to PTO at a 1:1 ratio

As of the date of adoption of this policy, all new SRPC employees shall accrue PTO and be subject to this policy.

PTO Balances Payable Upon Separation of Employment

Upon notice that an employee is leaving the SRPC's employment, the employee shall be eligible for payment not to exceed 50% of accrued PTO balances for a maximum of 160 hours or 20 days (full time employees, prorated maximums for regular part-time employees).

C. Voluntary Leave Donation

Employees may voluntarily donate accumulated paid time-off for the benefit of another employee who is unable to work due to a medical emergency or major disaster and has exhausted all previously paid time-off.

To be eligible to receive voluntary paid time off donations, the employee must:

- Be a regular employee working at least 20 hours per week.
- Be employed with SRPC for a minimum of one year.
- Be experiencing a **medical emergency**, defined as a medical condition of the employee or an immediate family member that will require the prolonged/extended absence of the employee from duty and will result in a substantial loss of income to the employee due to the exhaustion of all paid leave available. An immediate family member is defined as a spouse, child or parent. Nothing in this policy will be construed to limit or extend the maximum allowable absence under the Family and Medical Leave Act.
- Be experiencing a **major disaster** as defined as a disaster by the president under §401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (the Stafford Act), or as a major disaster or emergency declared by the president pursuant to 5 U.S.C. §6391 for federal government agencies. An employee is considered to be adversely affected by a major disaster if the disaster has caused severe hardship to the employee or to a family member of the employee that requires the employee to be absent from work.
- Have not submitted a request for separation or retirement.
- Have exhausted their paid time-off balance.

To request paid time-off donations, the employee must complete a Donation Request Form and submit it, along with all documentation outlined in the form, to the Executive Director. All requests are to be approved by the Executive Director. (The Executive Director may waive this requirement in the event the employee is incapacitated). An employee receiving Short or Long-Term Disability benefits may only use donated paid time off to supplement the STD or LTD benefits and not to go above and beyond their normal salary.

The recipient's identity and illness will not be disclosed. Recipient agrees to hold harmless and indemnify the Strafford Regional Planning Commission and administrators of this policy in regard to discovery by staff of the recipient's identity and/or nature of their emergency.

An employee who wishes to voluntarily donate paid time-off must:

- Be employed with SRPC for a minimum of one year.
- Have a minimum of 44 hours of accumulated paid time-off and cannot reduce their leave balance below 40 hours.
- Not currently be on an approved leave of absence.
- Not be permitted to borrow against future sick/personal time.

Employees will be given the opportunity to voluntarily donate PTO annually during benefits open enrollment. The donated PTO time will be transferred from the donor to the leave pool on June 30. Staff will be notified if the bank is depleted and if more time has been requested. The time bank shall not exceed a balance of over 40 hours.

An employee who wishes to donate paid time off must submit a Request to Donate Paid Time Off Form to the Executive Director indicating the amount of time being donated (no less than 4 hours but ideally in 8-hour increments. Statements are to be submitted as soon as possible for inclusion in the next payroll.

With approval of the Executive Director, donations of paid time-off shall be deducted from the donating employee's accumulated paid time-off account and transferred into a "time bank." When a request is received and approved by the Executive Director, the requested amount will be transferred from the 'time bank' and into the requestor's paid time off balance. The value of donated paid time off shall be calculated at the recipient's regular rate of pay at the time of disbursement. Unused donated paid time-off shall be put back into the time bank. All time above 40 hours that is not needed shall be removed from the time bank.

The maximum amount of paid time-off to be donated to any single employee (recipient) shall be eighty (80) hours annually and forty (40) hours per donor annually, to be disbursed at a maximum rate equal to the employee's (recipient's) regular week's pay.

The use of donated paid time-off shall be used for medical emergencies or major disasters only. Donated paid time-off may only be used for time off related to the approved request. Donated paid time-off shall not serve to change any existing conditions of employment or extend an employee's tenure in a position. Ultimately the decision to approve an employee's request for donated time or request to donate time is at the discretion of the Executive Director.

Donor employees may not claim an expense, a tax deduction or a charitable contribution for any of the paid time off donated under the plans. All paid leave granted to the recipient employee is considered wages and is subject to appropriate tax withholding.

The Voluntary Leave Donation Policy and its utilization will be reviewed by the Executive Committee on a yearly basis.

D. Maternity Leave

Pursuant to New Hampshire law, all female employees may take an unpaid leave of absence for the period of temporary physical disability resulting from pregnancy, childbirth, or related

medical conditions. A maternity leave under this policy begins when an employee is medically determined to be disabled and ends when she is medically able to return to work.

Eligible employees may qualify to receive short-term disability benefits. Any paid leave, including use of PTO and short-term disability benefits, runs concurrently with maternity leave, and any remaining maternity leave will be unpaid. Employees will be required to exhaust all of their unused, accrued PTO before taking any unpaid leave under this policy. An employee will not accrue PTO during the pay periods in which they are entitled to no wages, such as during maternity leave, unless required by law.

Employees on maternity leave who are eligible for paid time off or short-term disability will remain eligible to continue to participate in the Commission's health/dental insurance benefit as set forth in the organization's Short-Term Disability Policy (available from the Human Resource Department). Employees who remain disabled as a result of pregnancy, childbirth, or related conditions and who are not eligible to receive short-term disability benefits will be allowed to participate in our health/dental insurance benefit for 30 days. When those 30 days expire, the employee may continue medical insurance coverage by making arrangements with the Human Resource Department to pay the entire amount of the appropriate monthly premium in advance each month. An employee's health insurance coverage may be canceled if the premium payment is more than 30 days late.

When an employee on approved maternity leave is physically able to return to work, their original job or a comparable position will be made available to them, unless business necessity makes this impossible or unreasonable. If the employee fails to return to work when released by her healthcare provider, they will be considered to have voluntarily terminated their employment. Employees on maternity leave should contact the Financial Manager to make arrangements for paying their health insurance premiums during their leaves.

Employees requesting maternity leave are asked to notify the Office Coordinator (Human Resources) or Executive Director of the need for such leave and its expected duration, as far in advance of the leave as possible.

Medical certification of the period of physical disability related to an employee's pregnancy, childbirth, and/or related medical condition(s) must be obtained and provided to the Executive Director as soon as possible after the need for the leave is determined, and the employee may return to work only upon certification of her healthcare provider releasing her to return to work.

E. Personal Leave of Absence

Consideration is always given to a reasonable request for leaves of absence not covered by the types of leave described above for employees who have exhausted all available earned time and leave time and have at least one year of service with the Commission. Any request for a leave of absence without pay must be submitted in writing as far in advance as possible. The Executive Director will review each request individually. An employee will not accrue paid time off during the pay periods in which they are entitled to no wages, such as during a leave of absence without pay, unless required under law.

F. Bereavement

A regular full-time employee may be granted up to three days paid bereavement leave following the death of a family or household member. Family is defined as being of origin, adoption, or of choice and includes the employee's spouse, civil-union or domestic partner, child, son/daughter-in-law, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, or legal guardian. Family member also includes

individuals in the following relationships with the employee's spouse or domestic partner: child, parent, or grandparent. It also includes those persons in a "step" or "half" relationship. If the employee has no spouse or domestic partner, the employee may designate one person as to whom the employee may use leave time under this policy. Such designation must be submitted in writing to the Office Coordinator.

Employees who require additional bereavement time must use available accrued paid time off. Employees must inform their supervisor or the Executive Director as soon as possible of their situation and the estimated time off from work they will need. The Commission reserves the right to request documentation to support this leave.

G. Civil Leave (Jury or Witness Duty)

An employee shall be excused from employment for the day or days required to serve as a juror or witness in any court of the United States or the employee's state of residence. A full-time employee called for jury duty or subpoenaed as a witness shall be granted paid leave for the first 10 days of the civil involvement. For part-time and temporary employees, jury or witness duty should be considered an excused unpaid absence. Employees who are compensated for the civil duty shall be paid the difference between their regular day's pay and the amount of compensation they receive for performing jury duty.

Upon receiving notification for jury duty or other civil duty, an employee must immediately inform their supervisor or the Executive Director of the reporting date(s).

Employees on civil leave are expected to inform daily the designated staff person responsible for employee records of the continuation of service.

Employees released from jury duty or other service during work hours are expected to report to work, unless otherwise instructed by their supervisor.

H. Military Leave

If you are called into active military service or you enlist in the Uniformed Services, you are eligible to receive an unpaid military leave of absence in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. To be eligible for military leave, you must provide management with advance notice of their service obligations, unless you are prevented from providing such notice due to military necessity or it is otherwise impossible or unreasonable to provide such notice.

If you are required to attend yearly Reserves or National Guard duty, you may apply for an unpaid temporary military leave of absence not to exceed the number of days allowed by law (including travel). You should give your supervisor as much advance notice as possible so we can ensure proper coverage while you are away.

While military leave generally is unpaid, if you prefer, you may use some or all of your accrued PTO for this purpose.

During your absence, your length of service accumulates, and your benefits will continue as required by applicable federal, state and/or local law. Upon application within the appropriate time period after your date of discharge from military service, you will receive the then-current rate of pay and the then-current benefits in accordance with applicable federal, state and/or local law.

Please contact the Human Resource Department to discuss eligibility and the extent of your leave. The Commission will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local military leave laws.

I. Crime Victim Policy

In accordance with New Hampshire law, the Commission will grant an employee unpaid time off from work to attend court or other legal or investigative proceedings associated with the prosecution of a crime in which the employee was a victim. For the purposes of this policy, a “victim” is any person who suffers direct or threatened physical, emotional, psychological, or financial harm as a result of the commission or attempted commission of a crime.

An employee may also qualify for leave under this policy if they are part of the immediate family of a homicide victim, of a child under the age of 18 who is a victim of a crime, or of an incompetent adult who is the victim of a crime. For purposes of this policy, “immediate family” means the employee’s spouse or domestic partner, child, son/daughter-in-law, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, or legal guardian. Family member also includes individuals in the following relationships with the employee’s spouse or domestic partner: child, parent, or grandparent. It also includes those persons in a “step” or “half” relationship. If the employee has no spouse or domestic partner, the employee may designate one person as to whom the employee may use leave time under this policy. Such designation must be submitted in writing to the Office Coordinator.

Employees who need time off under this policy should notify the Executive Director or Office Coordinator as far in advance as possible. They may be asked to submit copies of the notices for each scheduled hearing, conference, or meeting provided by the court or agency involved in the prosecution of the crime. Failure to submit these copies as requested may result in denial of the leave of absence. The Commission will maintain any such notices or records in confidence and will disclose them only on a need-to-know basis.

The employee will be notified as soon as practicable whether the requested leave has been granted or denied. Leaves requested under this policy typically will be granted unless they would cause undue hardship (i.e., significant difficulty and expense) to the Commission. In determining whether undue hardship may exist, the Commission will consider the size of our operation, the employee’s position and role within the organization, and the Commission’s need for the employee to be at work.

Employees on leave under this policy will be treated for benefits purposes the same as employees on personal leave.

The Commission will not discharge, threaten, or discriminate against an employee for taking leave under this policy.

J. Non-FMLA Family Medical Leave

Regular full-time or part-time employees who meet the following conditions may apply for up to 12 weeks of unpaid non-FMLA medical leave during any 12-month period:

- work at least 24 hours a week;
- have worked for the Commission for at least 12 months as of the date leave is to start;
- have performed at least 1,250 hours of work for the Commission during the 12-month period immediately before the date leave is to start; and
- are not otherwise eligible for FMLA leave

Non-FMLA Family Medical Leave may be used for the following purposes:

- To bond with a newborn child during the first 12 months after their birth.
- To bond with a child during the first 12 months after their adoption or placement with you for foster care.
- To care for an immediate family or household member with a serious health condition, including incapacity due to pregnancy and for prenatal care. “Immediate family” means the employee’s spouse or domestic partner, child, son/daughter-in-law, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, or legal guardian. Family member also includes individuals in the following relationships with the employee’s spouse or domestic partner: child, parent, or grandparent. It also includes those persons in a “step” or “half” relationship. If the employee has no spouse or domestic partner, the employee may designate one person as to whom the employee may take FMLA leave to aid or care for the person. Such designation must be submitted in writing to the Office Coordinator.
- To attend to their own serious health condition involving in-patient care or continuing treatment that prevents them from performing their job.

If an employee’s spouse or domestic partner also works at SRPC, the employee and spouse/domestic partner are limited to a combined total of 12 weeks of non-FMLA leave.

If medically necessary, leave related to a serious medical condition may be taken intermittently or by reducing the number of hours an employee works in a day or week.

Requesting Leave: Employees should give as much advance notice as possible if they intend to take non-FMLA family medical leave, and they should submit leave requests in writing to the Executive Director. The Executive Director may require a certificate or letter from the employee’s physician or health care provider attesting to the illness, its severity, and its expected duration.

SRPC requires an employee to use any accrued, unused paid time off (including annual and medical leave days) concurrently with their non-FMLA Family Medical Leave unless the non-FMLA leave is paid through workers’ compensation, short-term disability, or other benefits. Substituting paid leave for unpaid leave will not extend the non-FMLA Family leave period beyond 12 weeks.

Maintenance of Your Health Benefits: While an employee is on approved non-FMLA leave, SRPC will maintain their health benefits under the same terms and conditions that apply to employees who are not on leave.

If an employee substitutes paid leave for unpaid non-FMLA leave, SRPC will deduct from their pay check (or direct deposit) their portion of their health plan premium.

If a leave is unpaid—or paid through workers’ compensation, short-term disability, or other benefits not provided through SRPC’s payroll system—the employee must make arrangements with the Executive Director or the Office Coordinator to pay their portion of the health plan premium.

Health and other benefit coverage may be canceled if an employee’s premium payment is more than 30 days late.

Benefits based on the time an employee has worked at SRPC will remain at the level earned as of the start of the unpaid leave, and the employee will not accrue additional benefits during the

leave period. For example, an employee will not earn sick days or vacation days while on non-FMLA leave. (They will, however, see such benefits reduced if they take medical leave or vacation days during the non-FMLA leave period.)

Confirmation of Familial Relationship: An employee who requests non-FMLA leave to care for a family member may be asked to provide reasonable documentation or a statement of the familial relationship. This documentation can take many forms, including a child's birth certificate or a court document.

Reporting While on Leave: An employee who takes non-FMLA leave to care for their own serious health condition, to care for a covered family member, or for some other qualifying reason must regularly update the Executive Director about the status of their need for the leave and about their intention to return to work. If the dates of the leave change, or if they were not known when the leave was requested, the employee must notify the Executive Director as soon as they can—within two days, if possible—once that information becomes available.

No Work While on Leave: Employees on non-FMLA leave or other authorized leave may not take another job or engage in freelance work or other form of self-employment. If they do, they may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including loss of employment with SRPC.

When the Leave is Over: At the end of non-FMLA leave, the employee will return to the position held when the leave started—or to an equivalent position with the same pay, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment—unless the position would have been eliminated anyway during the leave period.

If an employee decides not to return to work at the end of their unpaid non-FMLA leave, they will be required to reimburse SRPC for the cost of the premiums paid by the Commission to maintain their coverage while on leave. The only exceptions allowed are if an employee cannot return to work because of a serious health condition or because of other circumstances beyond their control. An employee who took non-FMLA leave for a condition covered under SRPC's short- or long-term disability insurance—and they are covered by that insurance—can apply for benefit coverage.

Employees who have any questions about SRPC's non-FMLA Family Medical Leave policy are asked to contact the Executive Director.

IX. APPEALS

A. Process

Any decision made by the Executive Director in the implementation of this Employee Handbook, or in the general management and operation of the Commission, may be appealed. Employees, including recently terminated employees, are encouraged to first discuss any problems or concerns with the Executive Director on an informal basis prior to making a formal appeal. The appeal process follows three steps:

1) WRITTEN APPEAL TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - The employee or recently terminated employee shall notify the Executive Director of his/her intent to formally appeal a decision, action or policy and set forth the reasons for the appeal in writing. Within one week, the Executive Director shall respond to the employee as appropriate and document the appeal and any decision in writing;

2) WRITTEN APPEAL TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - If the employee or recently terminated employee is not satisfied by the decision of the Executive Director, he/she/they may transmit in writing to the Executive Committee the reasons for furtherance of the appeal. The Executive Committee will take appropriate action and respond to the employee in writing as soon as reasonably possible but not later than by 3 days following the next regularly scheduled Executive Committee Meeting;

3) HEARING BEFORE THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - The employee or recently terminated may seek further redress through a personal hearing before the Executive Committee by written request. If warranted, such a hearing may be granted as soon as reasonably possible but not later than the next regularly scheduled Executive Committee meeting following receipt of the request. The Executive Director shall be available for the hearing, and the decision of the Executive Committee shall be rendered in writing within one week of the hearing's conclusion.

Appeals shall be made within 30 days after the aggrieved action occurs. Employee complaints considered in the judgment of the Executive Committee to be trivial or malicious shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment

B. Decisions

All actions of the Executive Committee regarding appeals are final.

X. CLOSING

Again, we are delighted to have you joined us at the Strafford Regional Planning Commission. We hope the policies and information in this handbook provide you with a respectful, safe, and productive work environment. If you have any questions about any of the material, please do not hesitate to ask the Executive Director or the Office Coordinator.

APPENDIX A: TELECOMMUTING POLICY & AGREEMENT

A. Telecommuting Policy

Definition

Telecommuting is an agreement between the employer and employee in which the employee works outside of the SRPC office for a specified and regular number of days a week, using telephones, computers, and related voice, video, and text technology. The specific scheduling of which being subject to the approval of the Executive Director. It is the exception, not the rule.

Telecommuting Guiding Principles

1. Telecommuting is an alternative method for meeting the needs of our customers, our office and our employees;
2. Telecommuting increases employee productivity and is an inducement for the Commission to attract and retain high quality staff;
3. Telecommuting requires effective, supportive and ongoing communication by the employee with the public, other employees, and their supervisors;
4. Telecommuting has a positive impact on the environment by reducing employee vehicle miles traveled with corresponding reduction in use of gasoline and reduction of air pollution;
5. Telecommuting is a privilege that employees may earn and lose (based on their work performance and demonstrated ability to successfully work independently, etc.). It may be refused to individuals or terminated at any time.

Eligibility

The following factors will be used to decide whether telecommuting is an option for those employees interested in participating in this work option:

1. Does the employee have clearly defined tasks that can be accomplished off-site?
2. Can performance be effectively measured without supervisor oversight?
3. Can the present level of customer service be maintained or improved through telecommuting?
4. Is the current level of interaction with the public and employee minimal or can it be scheduled to permit telecommuting?

Employees that have a rating of below expectations on their annual performance evaluations are not eligible to participate in telecommuting.

Prior to initiating the telecommuting work option, the employee will sign the SRPC Telecommuting Agreement (part of this Appendix) and submit it for approval. The supervisor will periodically meet with the telecommuter, and other staff as appropriate (e.g. support staff, etc.), to evaluate the telecommuting experience and make improvements as needed.

Workspace

Employee understands their workspace is considered an extension of the Commission workspace. Telecommuters must maintain a dedicated safe, secure, and ergonomic work environment.

Employee is responsible for providing telephone, printing, networking and/or internet capabilities at the telecommute location and shall not be reimbursed by the employer for these or related

expenses. Internet access needs to be via DSL, Cable Modem, or an equivalent bandwidth network.

Workers compensation from job related accidents would continue to exist within the defined workspace during telecommuting hours. Employee shall report work-related injuries to Executive Director at the earliest reasonable opportunity. Employee agrees to hold the Commission harmless for injury to others at the alternate work site.

Dependent Care

Telecommuting is not a substitute for dependent care. Telecommuters must make dependent care arrangements, as they are required when working in the office, to permit concentration on work assignments off-site.

Equipment & Information Security

With the aid of various technologies such as phone, email, internet, and remote work software, SRPC employees are expected to maintain the same level of office productivity while telecommuting.

Office equipment and records: Equipment owned by SRPC and used in the telecommute location shall be accurately listed and updated on the Telecommuting Agreement. Employee shall protect Commission-owned equipment, records, and materials from unauthorized or accidental access, use, modification, destruction, or disclosure. All equipment, records, and materials provided by the Commission shall remain the property of the Commission. The precautions described in this policy apply regardless of the storage media on which information is maintained, the locations where the information is stored, the systems used to process the information, or the process by which the information is stored. Employee shall report to the Executive Director any incidents of loss, damage, or unauthorized access at the earliest reasonable opportunity.

Should the telecommuting agreement be revoked, employees are required to return Commission-owned equipment, records, and materials within the 48 hours of termination of this agreement. Any software provided for telecommuting will be deleted from any computer not belonging to the Commission. Within 48-hours of written notice, Employee must return Commission owned equipment for inspection, repair, replacement, or repossession.

Phones: Employees that telecommute must provide their own landline and/or cell phone. Employees are responsible for forwarding work calls to this phone while off-site and are expected to answer calls and/or check voicemail in a rate and manner consistent with on-site work.

B. Telecommuting Agreement

Telecommuting is the use of telephones, computers, and related voice, video, and text technology to enable an employee to work outside of the traditional workplace for a specified and regular number of days a week. It is the exception and a privilege, not the rule. This is an agreement between the telecommuting employee and Strafford Regional Planning Commission.

Telecommuting Employee: Click or tap here to enter text.
 Supervisor: Click or tap here to enter text.
 Effective Date: Click or tap here to enter text.

General Work Arrangement

I (the employee) understand and agree to the terms and conditions as stated in the SRPC Telecommuting Policy.

SRPC and I agree that at SRPC’s discretion, I may perform portions of my assigned duties for SRPC at a location other than at SRPC as a telecommuter.

Employee’s telecommuting schedule is:

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday

Start Time: Click or tap here to enter text. End Time: Click or tap here to enter text.

Employee’s regular telecommuting site location is: Click or tap here to enter text.

Employee’s regular telecommuting phone number is: Click or tap here to enter text.

SRPC encourages staff not to share their personal phone number with work clients and partners beyond SRPC staff.

The employee has been provided with the following equipment for which they are responsible:

- Click or tap here to enter text.
- Click or tap here to enter text.
- Click or tap here to enter text.
- Click or tap here to enter text.

1. While telecommuting, Employee will:
 - a. remain accessible during the telecommute work schedule;
 - b. check in with the Executive Director or colleagues to discuss status and open issues;
 - c. be available for teleconferences, scheduled on an as-needed basis;
 - d. be available to come into the office if a business need arises;
 - e. request Executive Director approval in advance of working any overtime hours (if employee is non-exempt); and
 - f. request Executive Director approval to use paid time off or other leave in the same manner as when working at Employee’s regular work location.

2. Employee’s duties, obligations, responsibilities, and conditions of employment with the Commission remain unchanged except those obligations and responsibilities specifically addressed in this agreement. The employee will continue to comply with the Commission policies and procedures while working off-site. Employee’s salary and benefits remain unchanged. Job responsibilities and standards of performance remain the same as when

working at the Commission's regular work site. The Executive Director reserves the right to assign work as necessary at any work site.

3. The employee will always remain responsible and maintain professional standards of behavior, as noted in the Employee Handbook. The employee will not use their home as a meeting location to conduct the Commission business. If the employee leaves their home when Telecommuting for any Commission purpose, they will dress and present themselves in a professional manner.
4. The employee agrees that their Telecommuting does not adversely impact the support staff either way when they return to the office (i.e., major mailing the next day etc.) or when they are working from home. The employee realizes this will require effective and frequent communication.
5. The employee understands that telecommuting is a privilege that may be revoked at any time under the discretion of the Director. The parties acknowledge that this agreement may be evaluated on an ongoing basis to ensure that Employee's work quality, efficiency, and productivity are not compromised by the telecommuting arrangement described herein.

<hr/>	Click or tap to enter a date.
Employee	Date
<hr/>	Click or tap to enter a date.
Supervisor	Date

Insert a photo of your telecommute workspace here:



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

This Employee Handbook has been prepared for your information and understanding of the policies, philosophies and practices and benefits of the Commission. PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY. Upon completion of your review of this Handbook, please sign the statement below, and return to the Executive Director or Office Coordinator.

I _____, have received and read a copy of the Commission's Employee Handbook, which outlines the goals, policies, benefits, and expectations of the Commission, as well as my responsibilities as an employee.

I have familiarized myself with the contents of the handbook. By my signature below, I acknowledge, understand, accept, and agree to comply with the information contained in the employee handbook provided to me by the Commission Secretary. I understand this handbook is not intended to cover every situation that may arise during my employment, but is simply a general guide to the goals, policies, practices, benefits, and expectations of the Commission.

I understand that the policies and benefits described in the handbook are subject to change at the Commission's sole discretion at any time. I further understand that the handbook is not intended as an express or implied contract for employment, benefits, or other terms and conditions of employment between the Commission and any of its employees.

I acknowledge that I have the right to terminate my employment with the Commission at any time, with or without cause or notice. In turn, I acknowledge that the Commission has the right to terminate my employment at any time, with or without cause or notice, at its sole discretion.

I understand that this version of the handbook supersedes and replaces all previous manuals, handbooks, policies, procedures, and understandings.

I understand that my signature below indicates that I have read and understood the above statements.

Print Employee Name _____

Employee Signature _____

Date: _____

(version: April 21, 2023)