

AUDUBON AREA COMMUNITY SERVICES,

INCORPORATED

Employee Handbook



Audubon Area Community Services, Inc.
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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Audubon Area Community Services (AACS)!

We want you to know and understand AACS policies, procedures, and benefits outlined in the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual. This *Employee Handbook* provides a summary of these policies for your convenience. We suggest that you keep this *Handbook* available at your work area for easy referral when questions arise. We also want to stress that this *Handbook* is *not* intended to be an employment contract in any way. Its purpose is to provide important information that you the employee need to know.

Audubon Area Community Services, Inc. is an “umbrella” agency that operates many projects under its organizational structure. The agency functions like several “businesses” under the unified management of the Executive Director, a consolidated accounting/fiscal control and disbursement system, and the policy environment and oversight of the Board of Directors.

Each agency project has its own budget and “program account” by which funding and budget considerations are made. While every employee is *an employee of the AACS*, he/she is budgetarily attached to one or more program account/funding stream. All programs contribute to the continued growth, success, and services the AACS provides. So, take pride as a member of the Audubon Area Community Services team!

We hope you enjoy the challenges of your AACS employment and we look forward to working with you! We also wish you much success in your future here with us!

Statement of Mission

It is the mission of Audubon Area Community Services, Inc., to serve as a multi-county operations agency for the development and delivery of quality services focusing on human development and self-sufficiency.

Statement of Personnel Philosophy

Audubon Area Community Services, Inc. (AACS) is an agency whose Mission is *human development*. Its programs and client services are directed toward that end-goal. And the same is true with its most vital resource: *its people*, its employees.

The agency values its personnel. It also places the highest value on employee *qualification, performance, and personal growth*.

It is no cliché to say that there is an underlying premise that employees should continually be *growing*. The agency invests much in its employees and their personal growth and development — in their jobs and in them-

selves.

The agency values and rewards *quality people* and *quality work!* It expects no less.

“Seniority” only receives consideration among a number of factors reviewed in the event of determining the order of departure in a reduction-in-force *within* an agency project. (Agency-wide “bumping” is not allowed.) It is crucial that agency employees understand that *years of service* will be valued and assessed in terms of employees’ *personal growth* in their position and *value* with the agency.

Sometimes, a worker might contend a number of years of experience, but in reality what they truly have is one “year” of experience repeated many times over. Simply stated: that person has not grown — either in the job or as an individual. Audubon employees are encouraged to attend to their personal growth and development. Audubon supervisors will counsel and guide employees’ *growth* in their jobs and in their personal growth beyond the job.

Agency History

The agency is a 1975 consolidation of two agencies — one based in Henderson, the other in Owensboro — both founded in 1966 through the efforts of local school and political leaders. In 1980, the agencies became “special districts” of the Commonwealth of Kentucky under K.R.S. Chapters 65 and 273.

The agency incorporated Head Start in the Pennyriple Area January, 1979. The Kentucky Education Reform Act (1990) was the next boost for the agency. Today, the agency has 4-year-old at-risk program contracts with fifteen local school systems.

From 1975 to 1993 the agency grew from \$1 million in funding and sixty-five staff members to approximately \$15 million in annual funding, with nearly 700 staff and other paid personnel. In 1975, the agency served seven counties — the Green River Area. Today, sixteen counties are included in the AACS service area — the nine Pennyriple counties served only by Head Start.

The agency’s principal funding sources are the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services — the AACS’ “cognizant agency” (the “lead” grantor agency which supervises AACS fiscal operations), the Kentucky Cabinet for Families and Children (formerly the Cabinet for Human Resources), the Kentucky Department of Education — through local school boards, ACTION, HUD, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, and the United Way. (Refer to page 20 for a brief summary of agency programs.)

The agency is under the guidance of a twenty-seven member Board of Directors composed of local public officials, private and consumer representatives. Head Start operates under the guidance of a Policy Council composed of parents with children in the program and community representatives. Also, a number of other AACS projects have the guidance and support of advisory councils composed of clients and community-minded persons.

On the following in alphabetical order is a summary of some key policies from the agency's Personnel Manual. The reference numbers beside each heading indicate where to find the full text of the actual policy in the manual.

“AT-WILL” EMPLOYMENT: (1.11)

The AACS is an employer “at-will” agency, meaning that employment is *not guaranteed or assured* for any definite period of time. AACS employment is “terminable-at-will” by the employee or the AACS at any time with or without reason, notice, or cause. *Only* the Executive Director may authorize any binding agreement with any employee either consistent or contrary to the *Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual* terms and conditions. Any other “agreement” whether stated or implied in its behalf *will not* be honored by the agency. **(Please read the *Disclaimer* on page 20 or the back cover.)**

ATTENDANCE: (6.4)

You are expected to be reliable and punctual in reporting to work. Absenteeism and tardiness is discouraged because it reflects poorly on the agency. In emergency or unavoidable circumstances, you need to notify your supervisor of your absence or tardiness and inform him/her of your location and estimated time of arrival. Failure to notify your supervisor may result in disciplinary action.

CARE OF AGENCY PROPERTY: (6.14 and 6.17)

You are responsible for the professional appearance of your own work area. You need to ensure a clean and well-maintained working environment. Employees must also properly use and maintain AACS property, equipment, and vehicles. AACS tools, equipment, and vehicles are *not* available for private use. But, in some cases, employees may — with supervisory approval — be allowed to borrow certain agency tools or equipment for personal use *on AACS premises*. You must understand and agree that you will be held responsible for any personal injuries which may occur as well as any malfunctions of or damages to agency-owned equipment.

COMMUNICATION: (11.3)

We value the importance of communication within the agency and encourage you to do the same. Bulletin boards are kept in various agency locations for your convenience and awareness of what is happening in the agency environment. You should check these boards regularly to note official announcements, job openings, personal announcements, or local news. Employees are allowed to post items with the Executive Director’s approval. Another line of communication is *The Curious Journal*, published once a month. This publication provides all AACS employees interesting and informative news pertaining to agency activities, employees’ accomplish-

ments, conferences, and local community events. We also appreciate any suggestions you may have for needed improvements for agency operation. Submit your written concerns or suggestions to your supervisor, the Executive Director, or the *Suggestion Box* located in the Owensboro central office.

Electronic Communications (6.19). AACS employees must conduct themselves with honesty and ethical integrity in the use of any and all electronic media, including telephone/fax, electronic mail (e-mail), the Internet, the AACS *IntraNet*, and all other means of electronic transmission of data and information. Use of AACS communications equipment is for business-related, non-commercial purposes.

“Personal Mail” (11.9) All mail received at AACS addresses is deemed “agency mail” and therefore subject to review regardless of any indications to the contrary. Care should therefore be taken to ensure that any “personal” correspondence is sent to an address other than that of any AACS location.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION, NON-DISCLOSURE OF: (6.1)

All employees must sign a Statement of Confidentiality in which you agree to keep agency information confidential. Examples include (but are not limited to) information on specific clients, their families, income, and so forth. Head Start employees must also understand and abide by the provisions of the Family Rights and Privacy Act and the “Buckley Amendment”. They must keep student records confidential except in regard to parents’ rights. Disciplinary action will be taken if an employee violates any of these policies.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: (6.7)

A conflict of interest can be any situation in which your personal ties or relationships conflict with your job responsibilities to the agency or others with whom you, as an agency employee, do business. The AACS prohibits conflicts of interests as well as illegal, ill-gotten personal gain including kickbacks, bribes, and gifts from clients or vendors. If you are unsure about a potential conflict of interest, ask your supervisor or the Executive Director.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE: (11.4)

Employees violating AACS policies, regulations, or standards of conduct may be disciplined according to the agency’s disciplinary guidelines. The primary goal of employee discipline is to return work performance to an acceptable and productive level within a reasonable period of time. Disciplinary actions are usually taken privately and recorded in the employee’s personnel file. Since AACS employment is “at-will,” employment may be terminated for any reason at any time. Written warnings, conference, or suspensions *may or may not* be used as disciplinary actions prior to termination. During a suspension, an employee may be released from duty without pay. If the employee is not terminated, then he/she may receive “back pay”

for the suspension period.

DRESS CODE: (6.13)

First impressions are *very* important! AACS employees are expected to dress appropriately for a professional environment. Your appearance should be suitable for your profession, responsibilities, setting, and professional peers. The dress code requires you to be well groomed and neatly dressed. As designated by their supervisors, some maintenance workers, weatherization staff, and other specified employees may be excused from certain provisions of the dress code policy. Check with your supervisor about appropriate dress for your position or refer to the *Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual*. Violations of the dress code policy may result in disciplinary action.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY: (6.10)

The AACS complies with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1989 in ensuring an alcohol- and drug-free workplace. *At no time* shall employees be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while on company time, in the workplace, attending agency activities, or operating agency vehicles. The AACS prohibits the illegal manufacture, possession, transfer, purchase, sale, or use of alcohol or drugs. Any physician prescribed and over-the-counter (OTC) medications must be reported to the Personnel Director for verification that any side effects do not impair your work performance. Any violations of the Drug-Free Workplace Act will result in disciplinary action.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS: (Section 4)

Vacation Leave (4.4) - Regular full-time employees may accumulate paid annual leave according to the following scale:

The first five years.....7½ hours per month

Six through ten years.....9½ hours per month

Eleven years or more.....11½ hours per month

Head Start field-based contract-agreement and GRITS hourly employees do not qualify for Vacation Leave.

Vacation Leave requests require prior supervisory approval and must be submitted within five days before the time requested. You cannot carry more than 225 hours of Vacation Leave beyond any calendar year. Hours in excess of 225 will be forfeited after any December 31st. Vacation Leave time may be paid when you are terminated or resign from the agency *with proper notice*.

Forfeiture Allowance: Following the end of a calendar year, an employee with accumulated Vacation Leave in excess of the 225 hour limit may receive a token payment of \$10 per day for each full 7½-hour day “given back” to the agency. This token is given as a “reward” to those

employees who give service “above and beyond the call” and whose work demands are such that they **cannot** take the Vacation Leave to which they are entitled.

Personal Leave Time (4.4) - Regular full-time employees may have a maximum of three days (22½ hours) of Personal Leave per calendar year. Personal Leave is converted from your accrued Health Care Leave, but it does not accumulate from one year to the next; any allowable Personal Leave not used in a calendar year will be forfeited after any December 31st.

Health Care Leave (4.4) - The AACS compensates eligible employees unable to work during a personal illness. Health Care Leave *accrual* begins immediately upon employment; however, paid leave will not be granted until you have completed the Introductory Ninety Day (IND) period. Regular full-time employees — who work at least than 37½ hours per week — will receive 7½ hours Health Care Leave for each full month of employment. You cannot carry more than 540 hours beyond any December 31st. Excess hours will be forfeited. Employees who use no more than 22½ hours of Health Care Leave within a calendar year may receive a year-end cash incentive of \$50.00. *The 22½ hour limit shall include any Health Care Leave time converted to Personal Leave.*

Family Medical Leave (5.2) - Up to twelve weeks’ leave (including other paid leave as outlined above) is permitted in accordance with the terms and provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) for the purpose of an absence due to personal illness or to provide *needed* care for an immediate family member—typically, a parent, child or spouse only. The requirements and limitations are very technical, so employees should carefully review Section 5.2 before requesting the FMLA leave. (*See also: Leaves of Absence/Family Leave on page 12*)

Exempt Staff Administrative Leave (4.4) - This leave only applies to employees in *exempt* positions. They may *earn* “Administrative Leave” on an hour-for-hour basis for time worked in excess of forty-five hours per week. (Or in excess of 87½ hours over a two-week pay period *only* for Family Preservation Program staff.) A maximum of eighty hours may be carried over to the next calendar year. Any excess hours will be forfeited after any December 31st.

Health Insurance (4.2) - Health coverage is available for eligible employees at agency expense. Single rate premiums are paid by the agency for full-time and designated Contract-Agreement employees (see the *Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual*). Coverage is effective after the completed application has been processed by the insurance company. Rules, requirements, and provisions of the coverage are

addressed in the health insurance booklets which you receive directly from Blue Cross/Blue Shield. Non-eligible employees may *not* purchase the health insurance on their own.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) (4.2) - The EAP is a confidential counseling and support service provided for all full- and part-time staff to help you and your household family members cope with difficult, personal or job-related problems. The agency will cover the expense for six sessions; however, you may continue attending sessions at your own expense. For more information contact the Personnel Director or call one of the EAP providers:

EAP Providers:

Green River Area Service:
Employee Assistance Services
(EAS, Inc.)
(502) 686-8984 (Owensboro)
1-800-491-7144

Pennyriple Area Service:
Pennyroyal Mental
Health Center
(502)886-5163 (Hopkinsville)
1-800-264-5163

Wellness Program (4.2) - Since the AACS is interested in your well-being, we strive to help you remain healthy. We provide an opportunity for all regular full- and part-time employees to participate in a health and lifestyles analysis program. (Participation is optional.) The agency endeavors to help educate employees about known health risks, needed behavioral changes, and better lifestyles.

Kentucky County Employment Retirement Systems (CERS) (4.3) - All mandated eligible employees *must* enroll in the CERS retirement system after successful completion of the Introductory Ninety Day (IND) period. The System requires that you work at least 1,200 hours per year to enroll and that you as an enrolled participant contribute 5% of your gross salary toward the plan. The agency also contributes a share required by state law. For more information call the CERS at 1-800-928-4646.

Kentucky Worker's Compensation Insurance (4.3) - Worker's Compensation covers all employees who are injured or disabled while performing AACS duties and responsibilities. This does not include *voluntary* participation in *off-duty* employer-sponsored recreational, social, or athletic activities. Worker's Compensation costs are *not* deducted from your wages.

Unemployment Insurance (4.3) - All AACS employees except Head Start employees, who are covered under a contract-agreement, are eligible for Unemployment Insurance benefits.

Owensboro Federal Credit Union (4.3) - All employees may join the Owensboro Federal Credit Union (OFCU) — with offices in both

Owensboro and Madisonville. The only requirement is a minimum deposit of \$5.00 in a share-draft (savings) account. Payments for loans and credit union services may be payroll deducted.

Owensboro Federal Credit Union locations and telephone numbers:

717 Harvard Drive

Owensboro, KY 42301

(502) 683-1054

1412 Chelsa Drive

Madisonville, KY 42431

(502) 821- 0040

The Credit Union also has a Kentucky WATS (toll-free) telephone number:

1-800-264-1054

Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA) Health Insurance Coverage (4.6) - COBRA offers legal protection against the loss of employer-sponsored group health insurance for certain individuals, who are called “qualified beneficiaries.” (Refer to the *Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual* for definition.) Employees are allowed to continue identical group coverage that would normally be lost due to certain “qualifying events” (e.g., termination, unpaid leave of absence, and reduction in hours worked). You may continue coverage with the agency’s health insurance plan for *at least* eighteen months, *but* you must pay the cost of the monthly premiums. A notice of continuation of health benefits (“Election Notice”) is sent to all qualified beneficiaries upon the occurrence of a “qualifying event.” Failure to pay the cost of insurance and handling cost in a timely manner of the due date will result in the cancellation of COBRA rights and re-entry in the plan. (*There is a thirty-day grace period.*)

EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATION: (2.12)

All employees within the same classification will be given equal treatment and employment benefits. All employees are classified within one of the following categories:

Non-exempt employees are entitled to receive overtime pay (at time and one-half your normal rate of pay) for time worked beyond a forty hour workweek. *All* are subject to all federal-state wage-hour laws.

Exempt employees are paid “for the job” regardless of how much time is required to complete it. All are specified by position in the Personnel Manual. All are salaried and may take leave *only* in full-day increments.

All employees are also classified in one or more of the following categories:

Introductory employees are all “new hires” and newly promoted employees who have not completed the Introductory Ninety Day (IND) period.

Regular full-time employees work at least thirty hours a week and have employment which is not specifically time limited.

Regular part-time employees work less than thirty hours per week or 7½ hours per day. Their employment is not specifically time limited. All are ineligible for agency-paid health insurance benefits.

Temporary full-time employees work at least thirty hours per week, but employment is limited to a specific period. These employees are *not* eligible for employee benefits.

Temporary part-time employees work less than thirty hours per week, have time-limited employment, and are not eligible for benefits.

Enrollees receive transitional employment through work experience or on-the-job-training projects. They usually work no more than two years and are *not* eligible for benefits except those designated in their contract or grant.

Substitutes work on an on-call basis only and do not receive benefits.

Contract-agreement employees — primarily Head Start field-based staff — work at least twenty hours each week and *may* receive *some* benefits *other than health insurance*. Their employment is negotiated and determined through a contract.

Contractual positions are held by persons not AACCS employees-of-record, but who are compensated for their expertise or service to the agency.

Stipended volunteers are persons who volunteer their services through the Foster Grandparent or Senior Companion programs. They are not subject to these policies, but they do receive certain leave benefits as noted in their *Volunteer Handbook*.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYMENT: (2.1)

The AACCS is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We guarantee equal employment opportunities without regard to race, color, creed, religion, sex, age, national origin, or other characteristic protected by law. We also comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). We ensure that no applicant/employee shall be discriminated against regarding hiring, compensation, advancement, promotion, up-grading, benefits changes, retirement, educational assistance, transfers, discipline, suspension, reduction-in-force, or termination provisions and practices. If you believe your civil rights have been violated, you may register a complaint with an AACCS Equal Opportunity Officer or file a complaint with the Kentucky Human Rights Commis-

sion or the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

FIRING POLICY: (11.6)

Involuntary terminations are ordered by the Executive Director upon recommendation from supervisory staff. Since AACS employment is “at-will,” employment may be terminated for any reason at any time. Terminations may include an exit interview or conference during which you may offer your perspectives of the agency and recommendations for improvement. During this conference, terminated employees must return any agency keys, *Personnel Policies and Procedures Manuals*, or other agency property.

“GRIEVANCE” (CONFLICT) PROCEDURE: (11.5)

The AACS understands the importance of your sense of well-being within the agency. If you are dissatisfied about any condition or treatment you have received, please notify your supervisor for a prompt resolution. Such concerns may include unsatisfactory salary/wages, work hours, or any management action perceived by you to be unfair regarding your employment or discipline. You should inform your supervisor of your grievance within thirty calendar days of its occurrence. If you believe the conflict is not resolved or given fair consideration, then notify the Executive Director. *You have the opportunity of addressing your concerns and problems directly to the Executive Director at any time during your employment.*

HARASSMENT: (2.2)

We take harassment *very seriously* at the AACS because we want you to work in a comfortable, discrimination-free environment. Actions or comments which insult an individual’s sex, race, age, ethnicity, religion, or any legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated. Harassment shall be immediately reported to your supervisor. If this is inappropriate, then notify the Executive Director or personnel director. All harassment complaints are kept in confidence and, if possible, resolved by the Executive Director or referred to an appropriate human rights enforcement agency. *For examples or more information on sexual harassment refer to the personnel manual.*

HIRING POLICY: (2.5 and 2.14)

We hire the *best qualified* persons for vacant AACS positions. Current employees may apply for available positions, however, aside from better qualifications they may possess, they are *not* given advantage over other applicants during the hiring process. Also, individuals with “immediate” family members serving on the Board of Directors or Head Start Policy Council may not be hired for AACS employment.

HOLIDAYS: (5.1)

The AACS celebrates and observes the following holidays:

- New Year's Day** (January 1)
- The Day After New Year's Day** (This holiday may be assigned at the Executive Director's discretion)
- Martin Luther King's Birthday** (Observed the third Monday in January)
- Good Friday** (½ day in the afternoon)
- Memorial Day** (Observed the last Monday in May)
- Independence Day** (July 4)
- Labor Day** (Observed the first Monday in September)
- Veteran's Day** (November 11)
- Thanksgiving Day** (Observed the fourth Thursday in November)
- The Friday After Thanksgiving**
- Christmas Day** (December 25)
- The Day After Christmas**

Holidays occurring on a Saturday will be observed on the preceding Friday. Holidays occurring on a Sunday will be observed on the following Monday. You are not charged for a holiday if it occurs during your Vacation Leave, Health Care Leave, Exempt Staff Administrative Leave, or other leave. Employees taking off for any other holiday not listed above will be charged for accrued leave or leave without pay. **Head Start field-based employees shall follow the school calendar and holiday schedule of their respective districts.**

LEAVES OF ABSENCE: (Section 5)

Family Leave (5.2) - Unpaid Family Leave is granted to employees for a maximum of twelve weeks during a FMLA base year. This leave allows you time off for a personal illness or to provide needed care for an immediate family member (defined in the *Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual*), a new-born, newly adopted child, or foster child. This leave requires the prior use of Health Care Leave and Vacation Leave benefits before you go on unpaid Family Leave. Expectant mothers should ordinarily apply for this leave no earlier than six weeks before the expected birth date. (*See more on Family Medical Leave on page 7*)

*Couples both employed by the agency are restricted to a **total** of twelve weeks between the two of them. Your position or a comparable position will be guaranteed for a maximum of three months from the date of the leave. A minimum two-week notice and doctor's certification may be required before a Family Leave is granted.*

Military Leave (5.4) - Employees are allowed up to two weeks paid

time for annual military service. Military Leave exceeding two weeks requires the use of Annual Leave or Leave of Absence without pay. Paid Military Leave — as with accrued Vacation, Health Care, or Exempt Staff Administrative Leave — shall not be due *if* your military service should occur during any period of *non-pay status*.

Jury and Witness Leave (5.4) - You may be granted time off for jury and witness duty. You must present a court document or summons to your supervisor for leave approval. Also, Jury or Witness Duty should not exceed thirty calendar days. Paid Jury Duty or Witness Duty — as with accrued Vacation, Health Care, or Exempt Staff Administrative Leave — shall not be due to an employee *if* their leave time should occur during any period of *non-pay status*.

Family Bereavement Leave (5.6) - Employees who work at least twenty hours per week are allowed up to three consecutive calendar days for a death in their immediate family. (See the *Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual* for definition.) You are usually expected to return to work the day after the family member's funeral/burial; however, you may be granted an extension with the Executive Director's approval.

Time Off to Vote (5.7) - You may be allowed *up to* two hours leave to vote.

Unpaid Leave of Absence (5.8) - This unpaid leave is granted to regular full-time employees and shall not exceed ninety calendar days. Your position can remain available as long as your return is not later than the approved date of return. *Except in cases of work-related injury or Family Medical Leave, such leave is granted only after all other accrued leave time has been exhausted. Benefits do not accrue during a Leave of Absence.*

NEW EMPLOYEE PERIOD: (2.9 and 2.11)

All newly hired employees will participate in an orientation session with the Personnel and Orientation Director during which you will learn about the agency's programs, policies, procedures, and Mission. New, returning, transferred, reassigned, and demoted employees are classified as "new employees" and must complete an Introductory Ninety Day (IND) work performance verification period. During this time, you will be evaluated every thirty days for job performance and suitability. Benefits are not provided until you gain regular-employment status after successful completion of the IND period. Employees unsuccessfully completing the IND period *may* be given an extension for an additional three months, based exclusively upon the Executive Director's discretion.

NON-SMOKING POLICY: (6.12)

We want you to work in a healthy environment. Smoking is prohibited in all AACS offices and centers. Smoking areas *may* be designated (only by the Executive Director) *at* the various agency buildings and facilities. Smoking is prohibited in all agency vehicles and areas where children are present.

OUT-OF-AREA TRAVEL: (9.1)

All “out-of-area” travel must be approved by the Executive Director prior to its occurrence. Employee business-related travel expenses will be reimbursed based upon the approved per diem rate schedule issued in the form of “Operational Memorandums” or, in some cases, the schedule specified by state contract.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT: (6.6)

You may hold an outside job *if it does not conflict* with your AACS employment. A second job will be unallowable as an excuse for poor work performance or negligence of AACS job responsibilities. You must notify the Executive Director for his/her approval *before* accepting outside employment.

OVERTIME: (3.3)

Regular, non-exempt employees may receive overtime compensation for time worked beyond a forty hour workweek. You will be paid at one and one-half times the normal hourly pay rate for overtime. All overtime work *must* receive prior approval from the Executive Director (*Head Start employees are not allowed to work any overtime*). Exempt employees receive no compensation for overtime and do not need prior approval. However, they *may* earn “administrative leave” time for time worked beyond a forty-five hour workweek.

PAYDAY/PAY PERIOD: (3.2)

AACS pay periods begin at 12:01 a.m. Saturday and end fourteen days later on Friday at 12:00 a.m. (midnight). Payday is Friday, fourteen days after the pay period ends. If a holiday is celebrated on a payday, your pay check will be issued during the prior workday. New employees may work up to four full weeks before receiving their first paycheck. Work hours are recorded on Time and Attendance Reports, which must be prepared correctly. If they are incorrect or incomplete, you may be penalized. You may either receive a late check, no check, or no payment until the next pay period. Advanced payments or credit against unearned wages are not usually provided for employees; but the Executive Director *may* use his/her discretion in allowing such “advances” for wages/salary earned but for which no regular payroll

check was issued due to late receipt of an employee time sheet. Providing false information on your report can also result in disciplinary action or your discharge.

PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS: (3.7)

Deductions withheld from an employee's wage earnings include federal, state, and local taxes, Social Security taxes, benefits/subscription expenses, charitable contributions, reimbursements to the agency, and any other deduction approved by the employee or mandated by law.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS: (8.1)

Your performance as an AACS employee will be evaluated at least annually. Performance Appraisals allow you to assess your performance and improve the quality of your work. New employees, designated as "Introductory" employees, are evaluated near the end of their ninety day introductory period. You will meet with your supervisor to review, discuss, and sign the appraisal form. Superior performance appraisals may *enhance* the possibility of a pay increase or promotion. Employees usually (but not always) have a specified, limited time period to correct problems or unsatisfactory performance revealed in their performance appraisals. Such unsatisfactory appraisals warrant close supervision and may dictate suspension or possible termination.

Each employee should receive a copy of his/her Performance Appraisal form and job description at the time of their new employee or program orientation.

PERSONNEL RECORD CHANGES: (11.2)

All employees are required to report any changes in their personal data to the Personnel Director. Such changes include marital status, mailing addresses, telephone numbers, insurance status, retirement, number and names of dependents, individual(s) to contact in an emergency, educational accomplishments, etc. All changes will be recorded and maintained in your personnel file.

REDUCTION IN FORCE / "RE-CALLS": (11.6)

From time to time it may be necessary to reduce the employment force in some program or location due to loss or reduction of funding or other compelling reasons. When determining the order in which staff are retained or "reduced," the AACS' provisions for retaining staff in this eventuality call for the preference in supervisory staff over non-supervisory and regular staff over introductory staff or those on disciplinary status. Within that context, employees relative performance appraisal ratings prevail. Staff let go in a "reduction in force" who are re-called within a period of six

months may have their “seniority” and accrued leave restored *except for* Vacation Leave which was “purchased” from the employee upon their original separation from the agency. Staff re-called **after** the six-month limitation may *not* have their prior leave time restored.

RESIGNATION NOTICE: (11.6)

Exempt employees should submit a written notice of resignation *one month* before their departure date. Non-exempt employees should give a minimum two-week written notice. The use of accrued leave — including Vacation, Personal, and Exempt Staff Administrative Leave — is not allowed during your last ten working days. Terminations, voluntary and involuntary, may include an exit interview or conference during which you may offer your perspectives of the agency and recommendations for improvement. During this conference, terminated employees must return any agency keys, *Personnel Policies and Procedures Manuals*, or other agency property.

SAFETY PROCEDURE: (10.1 and 10.4)

Safety is one of our primary concerns of all agency activities. Our safety rules are designed to help prevent injury and maintain a clean, healthy environment. All employees need to be familiar with safety procedures/requirements concerning the workplace and correct use of all agency equipment, tools, and vehicles. Employees who drive agency vehicles must first receive clearance through all supervisory channels, including the AACS central office. Any accident involving an AACS vehicle *requires* that a police report be secured and submitted to the central office. In most instances, an employee drug screening test is also required.

You are also expected to concern yourself with the safety of fellow workers and immediately report any accidents or injuries to your supervisor. Failure to follow the agency’s safety rules may result in disciplinary action.

Workplace Violence. Violence or threatening in any form on the premises of an AACS workplace is an immediate-termination offense. This includes physical, mental, or verbal abuse or threatening behavior. It is strictly prohibited for **anyone** —other than an on-duty law enforcement officer—to bring a firearm, concealed or unconcealed, or other weapon on to an AACS premises.

SALARY ADMINISTRATION: (3.1)

The AACS strives to maintain competitive wage scales and fair compensation to all employees. The Executive Director determines all salaries based on the Board of Directors’ position/classification and wage/salary charts. Salaries shall be proportionate to job responsibilities and required experience or knowledge. Payment shall also be linked to job performance evaluated by the Performance Appraisals.

Copies of the current Salary and Wage Charts are included on pages 26 and 27 of this Handbook.

One-time Salary Adjustment. (3.4) A one-time “salary adjustment” (some may liken it to a “bonus”) may be awarded an employee *once* in a given program administrative year for “superior performance and quality service”—truly exceptional work—if extra money is available in a given program’s budget. These may not exceed \$1,000 with the executive director’s recommendation and the Board’s Compensation Committee’s approval, or \$500 with the executive director’s approval. All must be duly recommended and documented by project and supervisory personnel.

TELEPHONE USAGE: (6.8)

You may use business telephones for brief, personal conversations at your supervisor’s discretion. Personal long distance calls and fax charges *require* supervisory approval and your reimbursement to the agency.

TRANSFERS: (2.14)

Employees may be transferred to different positions or locations for various reasons including employee request, conflict, personal advancement, and reduction-in-force. Transferred employees must work a ninety-day work performance verification period in which they must prove their fitness and proficiency in the new position assignment. Also, the Executive Director may mandate transfers at any time for any reason with or without the Board of Directors’ approval.

VISITORS: (11.7)

A person who is not a *current* employee is a visitor. All visitors must “check in” with the supervisor, secretary, or receptionist at each AACS business location.

WASTE CONTROL AND PREVENTION: (10.1 and 10.2)

The AACS wants you to understand and be committed to the importance of conservation. We are an environmentally-concerned agency committed to help reduce landfill and energy demands — as well as improve agency waste disposal procedures. If you observe wasteful practices within the agency, please report them to the Executive Director or Chairman of the Board.

WORK HOURS AND BREAK TIME: (2.10)

AACS office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. You are allowed one fifteen-minute break each morning and each afternoon. You also have no less than a one half-hour unpaid lunch period each day.

Following are policies that pertain only to those persons employed in the agency's Head Start program. The requirements and benefits addressed in those references *do not apply to non-Head Start staff*.

HEAD START PROGRAM — Supplementary Policies

CHILD DEVELOPMENT CREDENTIALS AND REQUIREMENTS: (Section 13.7)

All Head Start and day care/child development teachers must hold minimum credentials or enroll in a Child Development Associate (CDA) program. Head Start teachers shall enroll in an accredited CDA program within the completion of one year of agency employment and successfully complete the program within three years of their initial date of employment. Day care/child development teachers or infant/toddler caregivers without college degrees shall enroll in a CDA program within one year of employment and successfully complete the program within five years of their initial date of employment.

The AACS holds a contract with Owensboro Community College to provide CDA training with college credit for AACS Head Start/day care employees. The agency will bear the expense for tuition, books, travel, assessment fees and staff costs for substitutes, advisors, and college instructors to aid the employees in completing their CDA.

GRANTS FOR COLLEGE TUITION AND BOOKS: (13.8)

Subject to the availability of budgeted funds, we support Head Start/day care employees who wish to further their education by attending college courses. The agency shall provide grants for tuition and books for regular full-time employees who receive approval from the Head Start Director. To be eligible you must have a high school diploma or equivalent, have worked for more than one year with the agency, and not be on a “conditional” appointment or disciplinary report. A maximum of nine (9) semester hours may be taken during the summer session and six (6) semester hours during the fall and spring sessions. Your grades for each course will be sent to the AACS to be placed in your personnel file. *Refer to the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual for more information.*

HIRING PROCEDURES: (13.4)

The AACS hires Head Start/day care employees consistent with state and federal day care laws, regulations, and guidelines. All Head Start/day care employees must provide a Criminal Records Check — at their cost (\$4.00) — a copy of a physical exam and TB skin test, and a signed “Child Abuse and/or Neglect and Violent Crime Conviction Declaration Form.” All of these shall be placed in the employee’s personnel file. Most Head Start

employees work by contract agreement and attain this status *after* successful completion of their Introductory Ninety Day (IND) period. Many day care employees do not work by contract agreement.

INCENTIVE COMPENSATION: (13.9)

The agency promotes the educational attainments of the Head Start staff. Certain college degrees qualify employees for an “incentive compensation” including: Family Service Associate (FSA), junior college “Associate” (AA) degree, Bachelor’s (BA or BS) degree, or Master’s (MA or MS) degree. For each degree earned you may receive a one-step increase in compensation but no more than three steps-in-grade over the total period of your employment with the agency. This policy is subject to the availability of funds in each program year/project budget.

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE COMPENSATION: (13.10) and “COLA”
COMPENSATION: (13.11)

Added compensation may be provided Head Start employees based on these two policies. The latter is usually based in some form of mandated “cost-of-living-adjustment” (COLA) based in federal appropriations. The stipulations for these compensation adjustments are in their respective Personnel Manual sections.

Employee Recognition Program

The AACS invests in and believes in its staff as the foundation of all its good work and service. The AACS is in the business of *developing human potential*. That work begins with its own staff.

Many fine and dedicated people work at Audubon Area Community Services, Inc. The AACS publicly recognizes and lauds at least one employee each month who has been nominated and selected under the *Encourage Excellence* Employee-of-the-Month program. Application forms are available at each AACS location. All employees, except for senior management staff (program directors), may be nominated and selected. Anyone may submit a nomination. Nominations are then reviewed and honorees selected by an anonymous selection committee.



Honorees are presented in *The Curious Journal*. They receive a beautiful plaque and *Encourage Excellence* pins. They and their spouse/partner/friend, their nominator(s), and their project directors are then invited to an annual dinner to celebrate their achievement.



Employment Disclaimer

Audubon Area Community Services, Inc. is strictly an “at will” employer. This *Handbook* and the *Personnel Policies and Procedures* manual provides *only* for “at-will” employment.

Nothing in this *Handbook* or the *Personnel Policies and Procedures* manual of Audubon Area Community Services, Inc. shall be construed or interpreted to imply any contractual obligations between the agency (the employer) and its employees. No express promises are made or implied in these policies nor may they be made by any agent of Audubon Area Community Services, Inc. other than by its executive director in writing. (*Only the executive director may authorize any binding employment agreement with any employee, and that must be in writing to hold any validity.*) The agency will *not* honor any other “agreement,” whether stated or implied, by *any other agent* in its behalf.

Employment is “terminable-at-will” by either the employee or the agency. That is, employees or the employer may terminate their employment relationship at any time, with or without notice or cause except as may be required by law — for example, as in the “reasonable accommodation” requirement of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Neither this *Handbook* nor the *Personnel Policies and Procedures* manual guarantees continued employment for any specified period of time, nor does it require that an employee be discharged for cause.

All agency employees are required to safeguard confidential client information. Following is a copy of the statement you signed. Refer to it often.

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

The success of Audubon Area Community Services, Inc. (AACS) depends to a substantial extent upon the degree of confidentiality. For some, coming to an agency such as the AACS can be a very frightening experience, especially when clients may be concerned that friends or neighbors may find out they are seeking assistance. It is essential that every one affiliated with the AACS (employees, Board members, students, and volunteers) have a commitment to confidentiality. This involves respecting the client's right to privacy and creating a level of trust so clients may receive effective services through open discussions and dialogue. The policy on confidentiality, as set forth below, will be adhered to:

- 1) **DO NOT** disclose to anyone, the name or identity of clients unless it is necessary for the purposes of providing services. Take particular caution of disclosure to family, friends, or other agencies.
- 2) **DO NOT** discuss a client's situation with non-staff persons. This includes telephone calls or messages from clients; be especially careful about discussing a client or their situation openly in front of others.
- 3) **DO NOT** leave telephone messages or notes regarding client phone calls lying around in an open area. All messages should be processed and held in strict confidence.
- 4) **DO NOT** release client information to outside inquirers without appropriate verification of callers.
- 5) **DO** be aware of your surroundings when discussing a client or using a client's name. Keep all client records and/or documentation secured to the extent possible.
- 6) **DO** handle inquiries from outsiders regarding clients or coworkers in the appropriate manner, i.e., refer inquiries to the Executive Director or supervisory level staff. This includes verification of employment of past and current coworkers/employees, as well as verification of services to clients.

I understand and hereby agree to hold all information obtained in the course of employment with the AACS, Inc., in the strictest confidence. My signature implies that I respect the privacy of clients, the agency, and its employees, and will not inappropriately discuss or disclose any information regarding client cases to which I have been assigned, and/or have access to. I will also abide by the confidentiality requirements set forth herein. I agree to deliver promptly to the AACS at the termination of my employment, or any other time at AACS's request, without retaining any copies, all documents and other material in my possession relating, directly, and indirectly, to any confidential information.

Employee Signature

Date

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF AGENCY SERVICES

Community Services, Homeless and Relief Services, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, Federal Emergency Management Agency

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) helps to provide a wide range of services for low-income and elderly persons. Through CSBG the Senior Community Service Employment Program helps people age fifty-five and over find full time unsubsidized employment. Other agency services include a comprehensive and integrated homeless program, distribution of the federal government's surplus commodity foods, assistance for utility companies which participate in the WinterCare Energy Fund, Inc., and provision of warm winter coats for persons who would otherwise be cold during the winter. The LIHEAP program assists low-income households with their home energy costs. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides funds for counties within the agency's service area for utilities, food banks, rent, etc.

Family Preservation (FPP) / Family Reunification (FRP) Programs

These programs focus on family unity by providing short-term intensive counseling and supportive services to families in crisis. Therapists help families make needed changes so that children can safely remain in their homes with their families. The goal is to preserve/restore the family and prevent an out-of-home placement for the children.

Green River Intra-county Transit System (GRITS)

This transportation service provides increased mobility for rural citizens, especially the elderly, poor, and handicapped. It increases these citizens' physical access to food, health, and social services.

Head Start, KERA, Day Care, Family Development, Free To Grow

Head Start offers a comprehensive child and family development program for economically disadvantaged preschool children and their families. The major components of the program are: (1) Education, Disability, Mental Health (2) Health (3) Social Services (4) Nutrition (5) Parent Involvement. This program also provides quality child care to children whose parents are employed or actively seeking employment or job-training skills.

Home Weatherization Program / Affordable Housing Services

The main purpose of weatherization services is to improve the safety of home heating systems for low-income families. The program provides home repairs and services such as stopping air infiltration routes and installing storm windows, doors, and attic insulation. The AACCS also performs housing rehabs and affordable housing support. It owns the Lincolnshire/Lincolnshire North Apartments (208 units) in Owensboro

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)/Senior Health Promotion Program

RSVP encourages older citizens to volunteer their services for children, elderly, and physically/mentally challenged persons. The program also promotes the positive public awareness of aging as a productive and enriching experience.

Senior Companion Program (SCP)/Foster Grandparent Program (FGP)

The Senior Companion Program provides an opportunity for low-income persons age sixty and over to assist other adults. They provide individualized care and help elderly persons to continue living independently in their own homes. The Foster Grandparent Program allows older, low-income persons to provide supportive services to children with special or exceptional needs.

Where to find what you need in the PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

This Handbook is only a broad-sweeping general guide to the agency's personnel policies and procedures. It should not be relied upon as an authoritative source of information concerning those policies. Rather, staff should use this Handbook as a general guide to those policies and consult the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual when specific, detailed, and authoritative information is needed concerning any particular policy or policies.

A copy of the agency's Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual is located at each AACS office or center location. Please use them and be familiar with the actual policies on which this Handbook is based and attempts to summarize.

Table of Contents—AACS Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual

Section 1 - General Statements

- 1.1 Introduction and General Provisions
- 1.2 Personnel Policies and Amendment Procedures
- 1.3 AACS Board of Directors' Role and Authority
- 1.4 Board of Directors' Key Committees
- 1.5 Executive Director's Role and Authority
- 1.6 Personnel Director's Role
- 1.7 Supervisors' Roles and Responsibilities
- 1.8 Employee Limitations
- 1.9 Employer-Employee Relations Code
- 1.10 Definitions and Acronyms
- 1.11 Employment Disclaimer

Section 2 - Employment

- 2.1 Equal Opportunity and ADA Policy
- 2.2 Harassment
- 2.3 AIDS Policy
- 2.4 Advertising Employment Vacancies
- 2.5 General Hiring Policies
- 2.6 Selection Procedures
- 2.7 Disclosure of Criminal Records
- 2.8 Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986
- 2.9 Orientation
- 2.10 Work Schedule/After Hour Entry
- 2.11 New Employee Period
- 2.12 Employee Status and Categories
- 2.13 Position Descriptions/and Amendments
- 2.14 Transfers and Promotions
- 2.15 Multiple Family Members

Section 3 - Compensation

- 3.1 Salary Administration
- 3.2 Salary Payment Procedures
- 3.3 Overtime
- 3.4 Salary Adjustments
- 3.5 Payroll Corrections

- 3.6 Program Funding Limitations
- 3.7 Payroll Deductions
- 3.8 Exempt Positions
- 3.9 Restrictions Regarding Board Members' Immediate Family

Section 4 - Employee Benefits

- 4.1 Disclosure of Benefits
- 4.2 Group Benefits/Health and Wellness
- 4.3 Retirement and Income Protection Benefits
- 4.4 Accrued Leave Time
- 4.5 Severance Pay
- 4.6 COBRA Health Insurance Conversion Rights
- 4.7 Employee Morale Benefits

Section 5 - Absence From Work

- 5.1 Holidays
- 5.2 Family Leave
- 5.3 Military Leave
- 5.4 Jury and Witness Leave
- 5.5 Excused Absence
- 5.6 Family Bereavement Leave
- 5.7 Time Off to Vote
- 5.8 Unpaid Leave of Absence
- 5.9 Emergency Closings

Section 6 - Employee Conduct

- 6.1 Non-Disclosure of Confidential Information
- 6.2 Employee Conduct, Rules
- 6.3 Agency Loyalty
- 6.4 Tardiness and Absenteeism
- 6.5 Client Relations
- 6.6 Outside Employment
- 6.7 Conflict of Interest
- 6.8 Personal Telephone Calls and Postage Meter Use
- 6.9 Telephone Communication
- 6.10 Drug and Alcohol-free Workplace
- 6.11 Hatch Act (restrictions on political activity)
- 6.12 Non-smoking Policy
- 6.13 Dress Code
- 6.14 Work Area Maintenance
- 6.15 Security Inspections
- 6.16 Personal Property
- 6.17 Personal Use of Agency Property
- 6.18 Computer Software (Unauthorized Copying)
- 6.19 Electronic Communications

Section 7 - Complaints of Discrimination

- 7.1 Equal Opportunity Officer Responsibilities

Section 8 - Employee Development

- 8.1 Employee Performance Appraisal
- 8.2 Employee Career Development

8.3 Professional and/or Organizational Career Development

Section 9 - Employee Travel

- 9.1 General Travel Policies
- 9.2 Travel Terminology
- 9.3 Allowable Transportation Expenses
- 9.4 Subsistence Expenses
- 9.5 Travel Advances

Section 10 - Safety and Reduction-In-Waste

- 10.1 Safety Rules
- 10.2 Preventing Fraud, Waste, and Abuse
- 10.3 Reduction in Environmental Waste
- 10.4 Workplace Violence

Section 11 - Administrative Procedures

- 11.1 Personnel Records
- 11.2 Personnel Information
- 11.3 Suggestion Procedures
- 11.4 Disciplinary Procedures
- 11.5 Conflict Resolution Procedures
- 11.6 Terminations
- 11.7 Visitor's Policy
- 11.8 Donations
- 11.9 Personal Mail

Section 12 - Public Information Policy

- 12.1 Public Availability of Records/News Releases

Section 13 - Head Start/Child Development Policies & Procedures

- 13.1 Head Start Director's Role
- 13.2 Head Start Policy Council's Role
- 13.3 Policy Council Personnel Committee
- 13.4 Hiring Regulations Under the Head Start/Child Development Unit
- 13.5 Corporal Punishment & Isolation
- 13.6 GED Requirement for Head Start Staff
- 13.7 Child Development Credentials for Head Start Teachers
- 13.8 Grants for College Tuition and Books (Head Start Only)
- 13.9 Incentive Compensation for Head Start/Child Care Workers
Enhancing Their Educational and Professional Credentials
- 13.10 Years of Experience Compensation for Head Start
and Child Development Staff
- 13.11 Cost of Living Adjustment ("COLA") Compensation for Head Start

Salary Chart (*Monthly Salaries*)

Disclaimer.

The chart above was re-worked and recalculated in October 1996 for re-publication in this *Handbook*. Due to the use of a different algorithm in the later version of the spreadsheet software used to compile this chart some figures were slightly altered from the one previously in use. *No retroactive changes* will be made in salaries and wages in effect prior to the compilation of this chart. However, the AACCS will employ this chart in future salary assignments and adjustments (increments).

Please check your Position Description, Letter of Appointment, latest increment notice or other documentation for your assigned Grade and current step. If you need assistance in determining your assigned Grade or current Step-in-Grade, contact the Personnel and Orientation Director (686-1629) in the Central Office.

Wage Chart (Hourly Wages)

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Notes

Notes

HANDBOOK DISCLAIMER

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This Handbook is the Property of

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