



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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LETTER FROM THE BOARD

We look forward to working together, with the employees, on behalf of Buffalo County. The Buffalo County Board of Supervisors recognizes that the effectiveness of the organization is dependent on the contributions, dedication, and professionalism that employees bring to their jobs.

The Buffalo County Employee Handbook has been established to provide an orderly procedure for the handling of personnel matters and to promote greater efficiency in personnel administration that meets the social, economic and program needs of the county. These policies and procedures shall apply to all employees except where the terms of a collective bargaining agreement controls. It shall be the responsibility of every member of supervisory staff to administer these policies in a fair and impartial manner.

The system herein established shall be consistent with the following principles:

1. Recruiting, selecting, and advancing employees based on their relative ability, knowledge and skills, including open competition of qualified applicants for initial appointments.
2. Recognizing good job performance, rewarding exceptional performance, and addressing unacceptable performance, all in a fair and timely manner.
3. Fair treatment of all applicants and employees in all aspects of personnel administration without regard to political preference, race, religion, color, sex, age, nation origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, marital status, military participation, or any other legally protected class status and with proper regard to their rights as citizens in accordance with legal statutes.

The provisions set forth in this policy supersede all prior personnel policies and replaces provisions previously found in the collective bargaining agreements for general municipal employees, which have expired, whether written or established by past practice. Because this policy is based on county operational policies, federal and state mandated policies, and present employee fringe benefit programs which are all subject to change, this manual is also subject to change.

The County Administrative Coordinator, in conjunction with the Buffalo County Human Resources Committee, will review the policies in these documents on a continuous basis for accuracy and appropriateness. The County Administrative Coordinator, County Board Committees, Department Managers or individual employees may request revisions or initiation of new policies. The request(s) must be made in writing and directed to the County Administrative Coordinator. The County Administrative Coordinator will address the Buffalo County Human Resources Committee on policy initiation and revisions, as appropriate. All county employees will be notified of any changes.

Open communication regarding these policies will continue to promote greater efficiency in personnel administration that meets the social, economic and program needs of the county.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission:

Buffalo County will provide solution-oriented services to the citizens of Buffalo County through the application of professional skills, adopted plans, and standards which facilitate the growth of the county's economy and enhance the quality of life and preserve the natural environment for current and future generations.

Our Guiding Principles:

Service - Quality, timeliness, and cost efficiency of services with applicable solutions to the challenges that arise are our number one priority. The citizens of Buffalo County are our customers and the reason for our existence.

Professionalism – Our employees are the source of our identity. Their competence, knowledge, and experience reflect on Buffalo County's reputation and vitality.

Integrity – The members of the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors must conduct its business in a manner that is socially and fiscally responsible.

Resourcefulness – The Buffalo County Board of Supervisors will pursue new ways to “get the job done” with the resources available to us.

Innovation – The Buffalo County Board of Supervisors will be open to innovative ways to address issues, provide solutions to difficult challenges, and promote the Board's mission.

Teamwork and Dedication – The Buffalo County Board of Supervisors will work together to make the Board successful.

Our Objectives:

Accuracy – We will assemble the best data and information available and perform objective analysis for decision-making and provide all possible solutions to each of our particular challenges.

Continuous Improvement – Services and functions should always be re-evaluated to ensure quality services to the citizens of Buffalo County.

User Friendliness – With the needs of the public being our uppermost priority, we will work to provide personal assistance to ensure citizens receive prompt and efficient support as requested.

Courtesy and Respect – We will be open to and provide opportunities for the ideas and concerns of others regarding matters of the Board.

INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

Overview of the Handbook:

This Employee Handbook has been prepared to provide general information and to assist you in finding answers to common questions. The Employee Handbook cannot anticipate and answer all of the questions that may arise in the course of employment with Buffalo County. It is expected that you will turn to your supervisor and other administrative personnel, as necessary and appropriate, in order to find answers to employment questions that are not addressed, or not fully addressed, in the Employee Handbook.

The Employee Handbook should not be considered an agreement, contract of employment, express or implied, or a promise of treatment or guarantee of any benefits or conditions of employment. It is required that all new and existing employees read and acknowledge receipt of this Employee Handbook (see Acknowledgment Form at the end of the Employee Handbook).

The Employee Handbook will be posted on the Buffalo County Employee Intranet. Any changes made in this Employee Handbook will be brought to the attention of all employees by hard copy or via e-mail.

Equal Employment Opportunity:

It is the policy of Buffalo County to provide equal opportunity in employment to all qualified employees and applicants for employment. Buffalo County does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, creed, color, disability, marital status, sex, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, arrest record, conviction record, military service, use or non-use of lawful products off the employer's premises during nonworking hours, or any other legally protected class status. Positive action is required from all employees to help ensure Buffalo County complies with its obligations under state and federal law and does not discriminate with regard to application procedures, hiring, advancement, discharge, compensation, training, or other terms and conditions of employment.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Buffalo County will reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with a disability so that the individual can perform the essential functions of his/her job. An individual who can accommodate for a job without undue hardship will be given the same consideration for a position as any other applicant.

Safety standards apply to all applicants and employees. Applicants/employees who pose a direct threat to the health/safety of other individuals in the workplace, when such threat cannot be eliminated by a reasonable accommodation, shall have their employment status reviewed.

Any employee with questions or concerns about equal opportunities in the workplace, or reasonable accommodation, should bring the issue to the attention of their supervisor. Buffalo County prohibits any form of retaliation for making a report in good faith about issues associated with equal employment opportunity and reasonable accommodation.

Organization and Administration:

Responsibility and Authority:

The Buffalo County Board of Supervisors shall:

- Authorize by resolution any amendments to this Employee Handbook.
- Approve all new non-elected Department Manager appointments as required by State Statutes.

Department Managers shall:

- Utilize this Employee Handbook as it pertains to their respective departments and keep employees informed of its provisions and amendments.
- Recommend to the County Administrative Coordinator any amendments to this Employee Handbook, which improve County operating efficiency or employment relations.

County Administrative Coordinator shall:

- Recommend to the Buffalo County Human Resources Committee any amendments to the Employee Handbook from Department Managers, which improve County operating efficiency or employment relations.

The Buffalo County Human Resources Committee shall:

- Recommend to the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors any amendments to this Employee Handbook by resolution.
- Be responsible for the interpretation, administration and enforcement of this Employee Handbook.

Role of Management:

Employer Rights:

Certain rights and responsibilities are imposed by state and federal laws and regulations. Many of these rights and responsibilities have implications for policies and procedures governing employment. For this reason, the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors reserves any and all management rights regarding employees' employment status. These rights and responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the right to:

- Manage and direct County employees
- Direct all operations of the County
- Establish reasonable work rules and schedules of work
- Hire, promote, schedule, transfer and assign employees in all positions
- Suspend, demote, terminate employees or take disciplinary action against employees
- Lay off employees, in whole or in part, because of lack of work or for other business reasons
- Assign work duties
- Introduce new or improved methods or facilities, or change existing methods or facilities
- Contract out for goods and services
- Discontinue certain operations

- Take whatever action is necessary to carry out the functions of the County in situations of emergency.

Department Work Rules:

Department Managers may develop internal departmental work rules, which are necessary for providing efficient and courteous services to the public and for providing a safe work site for employees, subject to the following:

- All such rules shall be in writing and copies shall be provided, available, and explained to all affected employees. A copy shall be maintained in the County Administration Office.
- Any rules established under this section may be declared void if determined by the County Administrative Coordinator or designee to be in conflict with any regulation or law.

Definitions:

The following words and phrases are utilized in this policy manual will be the definitions set forth, unless a different meaning is specifically afforded to the word or phrase via definition established in the policy.

Casual Part-Time Employees - An individual who is hired and scheduled to meet unexpected needs or perform non-routine activities. Hours are based on notification to the individual and their ability to accommodate the request. Minimum hour requirements exist to receive pro-rated benefits.

Complaint - A written complaint regarding the interpretation or application of the Buffalo County Employee Handbook or an administrative decision affecting the employee's working conditions.

Department Manager - Any county official confirmed by the County Board of Supervisors or hired to assume the responsibility for the operation of a county department.

Domestic Partner – As defined by current Wisconsin State Statutes.

Elected Official - The following County positions: Sheriff, Register of Deeds, County Treasurer, County Clerk, Coroner, and Clerk of Circuit Court.

Emergency - A sudden and unforeseen combination of circumstances, which calls for immediate action and leaves no time for deliberation. The County Board Chair has the authority to act, without County Board direction or approval, in the event of an emergency.

Emergency Services – Include, but are not limited to, Emergency Medical Technicians and Fire and Rescue services.

Employee - A person, other than an elected official of the County, who, in exchange for county salary or wages and fringe benefits, provides the County with certain defined services, subject to the control and direction of a supervisor or the County Board of Supervisors. An "Employee" is an "at will" steward of the County and can be temporarily or permanently removed at any time for any reason not prohibited by law.

Exempt Employee - An employee who is excluded from specific provisions of the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act, such as overtime eligibility, by virtue of being classified as executive, administrative, professional, or certain computer employees and generally paid on a salaried basis.

FMLA - The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) entitles eligible employees of covered employers to take unpaid, job-protected leave for specified reasons with continuation of group health insurance coverage, under the same terms and conditions as if they had not taken leave. FMLA leaves are governed by applicable Wisconsin State and U.S. Federal laws and regulations.

Good Standing – An employee is considered in “good standing” if they have not violated any conditions of the Employee Handbook or federal or state laws.

Highway Management - Highway Commissioner or his/her designee.

Hire Date - The date an employee begins non-temporary employment.

Length of Service - The employee’s length of continuous service from the employee’s most recent date of hire.

Limited Term Employee- An individual who is hired in periods of excessive workload or to substitute for regularly scheduled employees who are absent from work for long periods of time. Hours are based on notification to the individual and their ability to accommodate the request. Minimum hour requirements exist to receive pro-rated benefits.

Non-Exempt Employee - An employee who is covered by the provisions of the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act, classified as an hourly employee and is entitled to receive overtime compensation, or compensatory time off.

Non-Represented Employee - An employee who is not represented by formally recognized collective bargaining units and is classified by such virtue as supervisory, managerial or confidential responsibilities or through voluntary non-representation.

Normal Work Week – A full-time employee consists of forty (40) hours of work in one week, subject to modification by the County Board of Supervisors.

Position Description - A written description of a position containing a title, a general statement concerning the purpose of the position, a list of the duties and responsibilities, any supervisory responsibilities, education and/or experience, necessary skills, abilities, certifications, licenses, registrations, physical demands, work environment and any additional information necessary to describe a particular position.

Regularly Scheduled Part-Time - An individual who is hired for a set schedule. This can be either set days or number of hours per payroll period. Minimum hour requirements exist to receive pro-rated benefits.

Satisfactory Evaluation – Annual evaluation that has an average score in the “acceptable” range or higher and proven achievement of the previous year’s goals as agreed upon with their immediate supervisor and approved by the Administrative Coordinator.

Supervisor - An individual reporting directly to management, that is responsible for a unit and/or employees.

Temporary or Seasonal Employees - An individual hired for a limited term to accomplish a project or task and generally for a duration less than, or equal to, five (5) months. Schedule can be forty (40) hours or less per week based on need. No benefits available.

POLICIES

POLICY 101 - HOURS OF WORK

Purpose: To provide employees with regular work hours and work schedules while ensuring staffing coverage necessary for effective county operations.

Courthouse Hours:

- Regular courthouse hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday for employees working in and from the County Courthouse building excluding corrections/communication officers.
- The Buffalo County Board of Supervisors reserves the right to change these hours.
- If a department has the need to close or does not have staff in the department during courthouse hours, the Department Manager must get prior approval from the County Administrative Coordinator or County Board Chair. The Department Manager shall make arrangements for a means to handle emergency situations.

Communication/Corrections Officers:

- The standard daily work schedule will be shifts for twenty-four (24) hour coverage.

Recycling Department Non-Exempt Employees:

- The standard daily work schedule will be 6:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m, Monday through Thursday. These hours may be seasonally adjusted.

Highway Department Non-Exempt Employees:

- The normal daily work schedule will be between eight (8) and ten (10) hours per day, Monday through Friday. This includes Highway Department office employees (exempt and non-exempt).
- These hours, including, daily start times, may be adjusted by Highway Management as needed for reasons including, but not limited to, seasonal, weather and emergency conditions.
- Highway Management may notify any Highway Department hourly employee(s) that a portion of or all of that workday will be cancelled and that no work will be available for that portion or all of that workday.
- In the event of cancellation, employees may substitute accumulated PTO or compensatory time, if available, to allow the employee to be compensated for up to forty (40) total regular hours for the week.
- Efforts will be made by Highway Management to notify employees at the end of the work shift for any adjusted start time or shop closure for the following standard work day.
- Highway Management shall notify an employee at least forty-five (45) minutes prior to any adjusted start time or closure.
- If an employee is directed by Highway Management to stay at a jobsite up to a specified time within the standard daily work schedule, the travel time back to an employee's starting Highway Shop location may go outside the standard work day and the employee shall be compensated for this drive time.
- Employees within the Highway Department may be directed to work different schedules within the standard work week as deemed by Highway Management as most advantageous to the County.
- In the event of a holiday (paid 8 hours) and the Highway Department is working ten (10) hour days, each employee must make up the additional two (2) hours with first using compensatory time, then PTO and then unpaid time off.

Unauthorized Absences and Tardiness

- To ensure effective operations and public service delivery, Buffalo County expects employees to report to work on time and to maintain regular attendance. However, it is recognized that there may be times when your absence or tardiness cannot be avoided. In that event, the employee must notify their supervisor as early as possible but at least one (1) hour before their scheduled start time and for Communications / Corrections Officers, at least (2) hours before their scheduled start time.
- Unless other arrangements have been made with the supervisor, the employee must contact their supervisor each day they are going to be absent.
- Department Managers shall develop protocol for employees to request any type of paid time for these unplanned absences and tardiness. If an employee does not follow the established protocol, the employee may be considered absent and may be subject to disciplinary action, which may include discharge. The Department Manager may deny the use of a paid leave bank if it cannot be accommodated in the workload of the department.
- An employee absent from duty without approval, including tardiness, may not be paid for absent time, nor may absent time be made up. Such absences are subject to disciplinary action, which may include discharge.

Policy 101 - Effective Date: May 31, 2015; Revised Date: August 25, 2025

POLICY 102 - ALTERNATE WORK SCHEDULE

Purpose: To enhance the ability of the County to fulfill its responsibilities, to render services to the public, and to enhance employee morale.

Policy: In certain instances, it may be advantageous for a particular department to offer an employee alternative, regular work hours which differ from the normal established workplace hours of operation.

- It is recommended that such time of work deviations (within the courthouse) be limited to a daily schedule within the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday of each week. However, there may be instances in which other work schedules may be approved by the Department Manager.
- In all instances, the employee requesting the alteration of regularly scheduled hours of work (in excess of three (3) workdays) must complete a Buffalo County Alternative Work Schedule Request Form (See Appendix A).

Request: The completed Alternative Work Schedule Request Form shall:

- Be completed by the employee in advance of any schedule change and fully document the specific reason(s) for the requested alteration of scheduled work hours, and the specific schedule of work hours requested.
- Be submitted to the immediate supervisor for review and recommendation.
- Be submitted to the Department Manager for review and approval if the immediate supervisor is not the Department Manager.
- Be submitted to the County Administration Coordinator for final approval or denial.
- A copy of the form shall be returned to the Department Manager to be shared with the employee of the approval or denial with a copy retained in the County Administration Office.
- The Department Manager shall monitor the alternative work schedule to assure the needs of the department are met.

POLICY 103 - OVERTIME, COMPENSATORY TIME, ON CALL AND SHIFT DIFFERENTIAL

Purpose: To provide a consistent system for distributing overtime and compensatory time in compliance with the overtime-pay provisions of the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

Definition: Overtime is any time worked in excess of forty (40) hours within a weekly payroll period beginning on Sunday and ending on Saturday.

Accrual: Any paid benefit time (paid time off, extended leave bank, floating holiday hours, compensatory time used, etc.) shall not be counted as hours worked for overtime purposes including earning of compensatory time. Compensatory time shall not accumulate beyond forty (40) hours.

Use and Approval: The employee's Department Manager or their designee will have the right to approve or deny overtime and compensatory time requests. Except in emergencies, all overtime and compensatory time either earned or utilized must be approved in advance and documented on the employee's time sheet.

- An employee with earned compensatory time must use said time prior to any other available paid leave to reduce balance prior to the other paid leave balances.
- An employee who works unauthorized overtime or compensatory time may be subject to employee disciplinary action.
- Employees must use this earned comp time during the year. Employees will not be allowed to carry any balance in their banks from year to year. For any non-exempt employees, any remaining balance in the compensatory time bank will be paid out on the final check annually. Exempt employees will not be paid out for any unused compensatory time for any reason and will not be allowed to carry a balance over from the final paycheck of the year.

Exempt/Non-Exempt Employees:

- Each position is designated as either "Non-exempt" or "Exempt" from the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and state wage and hour laws. (Appendix B)
- For non-exempt employees, overtime shall be compensated by payment of one and one-half (1½) times the regular rate of pay, or accrued as compensatory time off at a rate of one and one-half (1½) for hours in excess of forty (40) hours per calendar week.
- Exempt employees, excluding Department Managers and exempt supervisory employees, working in excess of their bi-weekly schedule of 80 hours earn compensatory time on the basis of one hour compensatory time for one hour worked as approved by the Department Manager.
- Exempt Department Heads and supervisory employees are not eligible for compensatory time except for the Chief Deputy and Patrol Superintendent positions. It is understood that Department Heads and supervisory employees are paid a salary for their overall responsibility and accountability and may work in excess of their weekly schedule in order to complete necessary job tasks. These positions who work more than 80 hours in a pay period may utilize flextime to modify start or end times. It is preferred that this be done during the same pay period when possible. Timecard tracking must accurately reflect actual times worked in the pay period.
- Highway Department office employees are included in this.

Communication/Corrections Employees Overtime:

- Overtime is any time worked in excess of forty (40) hours within a standard work week beginning on Sunday and ending on Saturday. Time worked includes travel to and from trainings held outside of the courthouse building.
 - Schedules are subject to change due to meetings, staffing needs or training to minimize use of overtime hours.
 - Overtime will be paid for anything outside the employee's work schedule if the schedule change is made with less than twenty-four (24) hour notice.
- Communications/Corrections cannot accumulate compensatory time. Overtime will be compensated by payment at one and one-half (1 ½) time the regular rate of pay.
- If a communication/corrections employee is called in to work outside of their normal work shift, the employee shall receive overtime pay at the rate of one and one-half (1 ½) his/her hourly wage. The employee's time sheet shall identify this as "unscheduled". This only applies to full-time employees and not those working as part-time. Part-time would need to work 40 hours within a standard work week before qualifying for overtime compensation.
- If a communications/corrections employee is scheduled for training or staff meeting prior to the start of a shift or immediately after a shift or on their scheduled day off, overtime is paid if the employee has excess of forty (40) hours of time worked within the standard work week.
- If a communications/corrections employee is requested to remain at work beyond the normal completion of their scheduled work shift to complete assigned duties, time will be credited towards time worked and overtime will be paid if the employee has excess of forty (40) hour of time worked within the standard work week.

Highway Department Overtime:

- Overtime shall be compensated by payment of one and one-half (1 ½) times the regular rate of pay.
- Due to flexible daily work schedule, overtime shall be paid for any hours that exceed ten (10) in a day or forty (40) in a standard work week beginning on Monday and ending on Friday.
- A minimum of two (2) hours shall be paid to employees called into work for outside the standard work week.
- All hours on Saturday, Sunday and holidays shall be compensated at one and one half (1 ½) times the regular rate of pay.

Highway Department Compensatory Time:

- Upon approval of Highway Management, in lieu of overtime payout for any overtime accumulated, an employee may accumulate compensatory time at time and one-half (1½) for each hour worked.
- Compensatory time may be accumulated up to a maximum of forty (40) hours; if compensatory time is not used, all hours accrued shall be paid out to zero on the payroll following June 30th and prior to December 31st.
- Accumulated or earned compensatory time can only be used in at least one-half (1/2) hour increments. If an employee wishes to use accumulated compensatory time, the employee must do so by indicating on the daily time sheet for that day approved by Highway Management.

On Call Pay (Health and Human Services Employees):

- Employees required to be on call shall be paid at the rate approved by the Buffalo County Human Resources Committee, Buffalo County Finance Committee and Buffalo County Board of Supervisors through the normal budget process.

- Employees performing non-direct duties, i.e., phone contacts, time will be logged in ten (10) minute, non-overlapping increments for the purposes of compensation.
- Direct contact situations will be actual time and shall be compensated at a minimum of one (1) hour.
- Compensation will be in the form of compensatory time at the straight time rate for exempt employees.

Shift Differential (Communication/Corrections Employees):

- Shift differential policy allows for extra compensation to nonexempt employees who are scheduled on a regular, rotating or sporadic basis to work during evening or night shifts.
- Employees required to work shifts designated below shall be paid at the rate approved by the Buffalo County Human Resources Committee, Buffalo County Finance Committee and Buffalo County Board of Supervisors through the normal budget process.
- The shift differential rate will be applied for those employees working the entire 12-hour shift, when the shift starts between 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- Shift differential will not be added to any paid leave (PTO, Holiday, Emergency Leave, PSLB, etc.).

Policy 103 – Effective May 31, 2015; Revised May 21, 2024

POLICY 104 - PAYROLL & DEDUCTIONS FROM PAYROLL

Purpose: To provide standardized payroll procedures in accordance with applicable State and Federal guidelines and to ensure accurate and up-to-date personal information is on file within the County Administration Office for all employees.

Payment of Wages:

- Method of payment – All county employees shall be paid by direct financial institution deposit after initial pay period or any institutional change.
- Pay Period and Payday – All county employees shall be paid every other Friday. When the payday is a holiday, payroll deposits will be available on the preceding Thursday. If there are any two (2) holidays during a payroll processing week, the payroll deposits will be available the following Monday.
- Payroll Distribution – Employee payroll check facsimiles shall be issued by the County Treasurer's Office to the Department Manager or designee for distribution to personnel on each payday by making them accessible electronically on the designated employee self-service portal.
- Pay Upon Leaving Employment – All wages due to an employee upon separation shall be paid in accordance with Wisconsin State Statutes.

Personal Data Changes:

- Employees are to notify the County Administration Office of any personal data changes by electronically submitting the change on the employee self-service portal within two (2) days of any change. Personal mailing addresses, telephone numbers, numbers and names of dependents, individuals to be contacted in the event of an emergency, educational accomplishments, marital status, W-4 changes, benefit changes, certification of achievements, and other such status reports must be accurate and current at all times.
- An employee not notifying the County Administration Office of a change which affects their payroll deductions may require adjustments in future payroll withholdings or cash repayment.

- Department Managers are to notify the County Administration Office within two (2) days of any employee providing them notice of retirement or employment separation. The original signed notice from the employee is to be filed in the employee's personnel records.

Deductions:

- Employee Responsibility - If you have any questions or concerns about your salaried status or you believe that any deduction has been made from your pay that is inconsistent with your salaried status, you should immediately notify your Department Manager who can assist you in understanding the information that is required in order to investigate the matter. The employee may be instructed to contact the County Administration Office directly to address any questions or concerns.
- Employer Responsibility - Buffalo County is committed to investigating and resolving all complaints as promptly, but also as accurately, as possible. Consistent with the U.S. Department of Labor's policy, any complaint will be resolved within a reasonable time given all the facts and circumstances. If an investigation reveals that you were subjected to an improper deduction from pay, you will be reimbursed, and the County will take whatever action it deems necessary to ensure compliance with the salary basis test in the future. The County Administration Office will work with an employee to resolve any issues that result in an overpayment of wages paid in error to the employee.

Timekeeping:

- Purpose: To provide time reporting requirements for all employees of Buffalo County.
- Records: All employees are required to complete time sheets showing all time worked and absence from work with appropriate codes (hours worked, paid time off, extended leave bank, and so forth) that were incurred for the pay period.

Employees will mark their time sheets in tenths for the purpose of computing regular hours as follows:

One hour no minutes	1.0	One hour 30 minutes	1.50
One hour 5 minutes	1.08	One hour 35 minutes	1.58
One hour 10 minutes	1.17	One hour 40 minutes	1.67
One hour 15 minutes	1.25	One hour 45 minutes	1.75
One hour 20 minutes	1.33	One hour 50 minutes	1.83
One hour 25 minutes	1.42	One hour 55 minutes	1.92

- Employees and Elected Officials whose time is used as an in-kind match for a grant must clearly identify and allocate that time on their time sheets. This must include an identifier such as the grant name or number. Employees or Elected Officials with overall reporting responsibility on a grant must communicate to employees that they are reporting in-kind time for as to what identifier they should use for in-kind reporting on the time sheet to ensure consistency for that grant recordkeeping.
- Employees on official business outside the normal work schedule (compensatory time or overtime) shall be clearly noted on their time sheets.
- Time sheets for each two week pay period must be completed accurately and submitted to the approving supervisor by all employees by the designated department deadline. Department Managers or their designee shall submit payroll input to the County Administration Office according to the due dates and times noted on the annual payroll calendar.

- All meal periods and breaks, paid or unpaid, should be noted accordingly on the time sheet.
- Department Managers will review time records for accuracy and completeness and verify overtime/compensatory/on-call entries prior to submission for data input and approve the time sheet prior to forwarding to the County Administration Office.
- All Department Managers shall immediately notify the County Administration Office in writing of any personnel changes which may affect the pay status of an employee.
- The County Administration Office shall maintain central payroll records for all county departments.
- The County Administrative Office shall be responsible for the preparation of all required reports such as federal or Wisconsin state tax withholding, social security, retirement, health insurance, etc.

Policy 104 - Effective May 31, 2015; Revised June 23rd, 2025

POLICY 105 - TOTAL BASE WAGES & OTHER FORMS OF COMPENSATION

Purpose: To review and provide total base wages in accordance with State law which authorizes collective bargaining for total base wages only; to allow for consideration of other forms of compensation outside of collective bargaining.

Policy: The County is prohibited from engaging in collective bargaining with municipal employees on any form of compensation except for total base wages.

- Premium pay, merit pay, automatic pay progressions and any other form of supplemental compensation may be considered, but not bargained, by the County.
- The wage rates for new hires are established by the Buffalo County Human Resources Committee.
- The County may bargain with units comprised exclusively of public safety employees, as defined by law, on any terms or conditions of employment, including any form of compensation, except as set forth in Wis. Stat. 111.70(4)(mc).

Salary Administration:

- Supervisory Staff/Employee Salaries:
The Buffalo County Human Resources Committee will review and recommend upcoming year's salaries for all employees to the Buffalo County Finance Committee for approval by the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors during the annual budget process.
- Elected Officers Compensation:
Every two years (or as established by current Wisconsin State Statute) the Buffalo County Human Resources Committee shall review, and recommended to the Buffalo County Finance Committee who will forward to the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors, salary schedules for all elected officers of the County in accordance with the State Statutes.

Payroll Administration:

- The County Administration Office shall:
 - Plan, organize, and develop procedures to ensure effectiveness and accurate reporting and processing of employee payrolls.
 - Ensure that payrolls are processed in accordance with all applicable laws

- Suspend payment or processing of any transaction submitted by any payroll unit or department when it is determined that any applicable laws or county policy may be or has been violated.

Policy 105 - Effective May 31, 2015

POLICY 106 - EMPLOYEE BREAKS

Purpose: To provide employees with regular meal and break periods throughout the normal workday.

Policy:

- Employees are entitled to a fifteen (15) minute paid break for each four (4) hour period of work when position allows.
- If an employee works greater than four (4) but less than six (6) hours, they will be entitled to either a fifteen (15) minute paid break or a thirty (30) minute unpaid lunch break, but not both.
- Breaks cannot be accumulated or used at the beginning or end of a workday or used to extend the lunch break.
- Employees are entitled to a thirty (30) minute unpaid lunch break per eight (8) hour day when positions allow. Department Managers may develop other department rules to address unpaid lunch breaks.
- Highway Department and Recycling Department employees working ten (10) hour workdays will receive two (2) paid breaks that are fifteen (15) minute in length at varying times throughout their workday.
- Department Managers shall make every effort to keep offices open during lunch breaks. If an office must close for lunch breaks, the Department Manager or designee shall.
 - Place a visible sign as to when the department will reopen; and
 - Place a visible sign as to where help can be found.

Policy 106 – Effective May 31, 2015; Revised May 21, 2024

POLICY 107 - EMPLOYEE MEETING ATTENDANCE

Purpose: To allow employees the opportunity to interact with committees and establish guidelines for compensation.

Policy:

- Buffalo County employees are encouraged to interact with the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors and participate in County Board and Standing Committee meetings.
- Department Manager must approve meeting attendance for any employee to be compensated. Such approval shall be documented on the employee's time sheet.
- Department Manager may approve personal time off, vacation, compensatory or personal time for an employee to attend any meetings if the absence of the employee does not adversely affect the department during working hours.

Policy 107 - Effective May 31, 2015

POLICY 111 - JOB CLASSIFICATION & COMPENSATION SYSTEM

Purpose: It is the policy of the Employer to administer a uniform employee compensation system.

- The salary and benefits provided by the County to its employees are for the purpose of obtaining and retaining competent individuals to perform services which the County is either required to or discretionally provides to its residents.
- The County will provide salaries and benefits based on external competitiveness and internal equity whenever possible and within the financial limits established.

Goals:

- Recognize the value that each position and employee bring to Buffalo County.
- Pay salaries that are competitive for the work being performed.
- Attract and retain fully qualified employees.
- Increase an employee's understanding of pay administration.
- Increase department manager accountability for administration of pay.

Format:

- Non-Represented Position Placement on Salary Schedule:
 - All positions within the Buffalo County Wage Schedule shall be placed in a pay grade based upon factors set forth below.
- Non-Represented Position Titles and Categories:
 - All positions within the Buffalo County Wage Schedule are assigned an official title and assigned to a pay grade.
 - All position requests are expected to conform to the identified titles.
 - New or modified titles shall be approved by the Buffalo County Human Resources Committee as recommended by the Department Manager, Standing Committee and County Administrative Coordinator and reflected on the Buffalo County Wage Schedule.
 - No position shall be moved between pay grades merely because an employee in the position has greater knowledge, skill or ability than the position requires.
- Ranges:
 - Each pay grade shall have a step range for each position assigned to the pay grade using the lowest and highest step wages for that pay grade.

Salary Administration:

- Current Non-Represented Employee Placement:
 - All current employees in positions identified on the Buffalo County Wage Schedule shall be placed at least to Step 1 of their assigned pay grade. As per section 4.3 below, this will not apply to current employees who have submitted their intent to separate employment with Buffalo County.
 - The Buffalo County Human Resources Committee with recommendation from the County Administrative Coordinator and Department Managers may provide placement above the minimum step based on available financial resources to place employees closest to the employee's current salary without a decrease in rate of pay. If the employee's current salary exceeds the maximum rate in their pay grade, the employee's wage shall be "frozen".
 - Placement in pay grades shall be determined by factors that may include, but are not limited to, education and experience required, scope of supervisory responsibility, knowledge and discretion, customer and client service orientation, occupational skills, exposure and risks, hazards and physical efforts, similar positions in similar counties and internal equity where possible.
- New Hires:

- Placement of new hires with the minimum skills and qualifications will normally be hired at Step 1 of that positions pay grade.
- A new hire may be hired up to Step 3 subject under the following conditions:
 - The new hire has a level of experience or skill set which enables the employee to perform the job with little or no training immediately upon hire.
 - The market conditions demand a higher starting step.
 - Approval of the County Administrative Coordinator as recommended by the Department Manager with identified funding source within the department's budget to cover expenses.
- A new hire may be hired above Step 3 subject to approval of the Buffalo County Human Resources Committee and the Buffalo County Finance Committee as recommended by the County Administrative Coordinator and Department Manager.
- Starting a new hire at Step 6 is discouraged.
- The placement of other current employees within the pay and grade must be considered before approaching the Human Resources Committee for placing a new hire at Step 6 or above.
- The Department Manager must identify a funding source within the department's budget to fill the new position to start at Step 6 and obtain approval from the Buffalo County Human Resources Committee and the Buffalo County Finance Committee.
- Separation of Employment:
 - If an employee has provided their intent to separate employment from Buffalo County, including but not limited to written notice of resignation or retirement, minimum pay scales or step increases implemented after such notification will not be implemented.

Salary Schedule Adjustments:

- The County Wage Schedule may be adjusted at the County's discretion.
- Adjustments may be made to the Wage Schedule upon approval of the County Board of Supervisors as recommended by the Buffalo County Human Resources and Buffalo County Finance Committee by resolution under Policy 105 of the Employee Handbook.

Step Increases:

- Current Employees
 - Employees must have a "Successful Performer" final performance evaluation rating or higher from their Department Manager or Home Committee to qualify for any step increase.
 - Step increases may occur effective each calendar year commencing on January 1, 2016, and for subsequent years, as designated by the HR Committee, which may specify the implementation date on or around January 1st, or be inclusive of a full payroll period, as well as a partial implementation with a mid-year wage adjustment.
 - Department Managers shall return the original performance evaluation to the County Administration Office by November 30th of each year. The Administrative Coordinator and Human Resource Manager will review and approve all final evaluations before a wage step increase is issued.
 - Occasionally employees in a pay grade may exceed the maximum rate upon initial placement when this system was implemented or reach the maximum rate of pay in their current pay grade. This employee's rate of pay will remain constant until the maximum rate of pay in the classification is raised above the employee's current wage rate and the employee has met the performance evaluation criteria to merit a step increase. Otherwise, the employee is considered "frozen", and no step or other increase will occur.

- New Employees
 - New employees hired in the last quarter of the calendar year will not be eligible for a step increase. If new hires in the last quarter of the calendar year, are below the revised pay scale Step 1 or minimum for the next years Wage Schedule, they will be adjusted to the minimum rate for their position's pay grade.

Demotion:

- Demotion is the movement of an employee from one pay grade to a lower pay grade resulting from disciplinary measures, as a request for a voluntary demotion, or in response to position/department change(s).
- Wage Schedule placements for demotions shall be as follows:
 - For demotions that occur because of position changes and/or position consolidations (not based on the performance of an employee), the wage shall be "red circled" and frozen at that level until the wage range of the new pay grade catches up to the employee's wage.
 - For demotions that occur because the employee voluntarily applied for and accepted a position in a lower pay grade, the wage will be reduced to within the new pay grade applicable to the placement as a step to be determined by the Buffalo County Human Resources Committee as recommended by the County Administrative Coordinator or Department Manager.
 - For demotions that result because of the employee's performance or discipline, the employee's wage will be decreased to within the salary range of the new pay grade and step as determined by the Buffalo County Human Resources Committee as recommended by the County Administrative Coordinator or Department Manager.

Appeal Process:

- Employees in positions included within the Buffalo County Wage Schedule may appeal their initial grade and step placement to the Buffalo County Human Resource Committee within fifteen (15) days of placement. This includes employees who have been placed in a new pay grade.
- If changes occur in a position which may impact the placement on the pay grade, the Department Manager that has that position within their department may request a review by the Buffalo County Human Resource Committee. An employee may not initiate a position review, only a Department Manager may do so.
- Any employee who disagrees with their direct supervisor, Department Manager, or Committee Chair's employee performance evaluation because it results in no step increase may file a request for review to the Buffalo County Human Resource Committee within fifteen (15) days of receiving a written copy of the employee performance evaluation form.
- The Buffalo County Human Resource Committee will review the request and make a determination on each appeal, if possible, within six (6) weeks of the appeal being filed. The Buffalo County Human Resource Committee's decision shall be final.

Exception to Policy: Performance Evaluations are not required for positions identified as Part-Time (non-benefits eligible or seasonal) on the wage scale. The one wage rate designated on the wage scale will apply.

Policy 111 - Effective January 1, 2016; Revised September 24, 2024

POLICY 201 - PAID HOLIDAYS

Purpose: To identify employee holidays and establish a consistent procedure for scheduling and payment.

Paid Holidays: The courthouse, except the Law Enforcement Center, will be closed on the following holidays observed by the County, and eligible full-time employees will receive eight (8) hours of holiday pay:

New Year's Day
The Friday before Easter
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Veterans Day
Thanksgiving Day
The Day after Thanksgiving
Christmas Eve
Christmas Day
(1) Floating Holiday

Eligibility:

- To be eligible for holiday pay, an employee must be on the active payroll the day before and the day after such said holiday.
- Holidays within any unpaid period of absence, except Worker's Compensation leave, shall be without pay.
- Otherwise eligible employees who are on an approved paid or unpaid leave of absence such as FMLA immediately before and/or after a holiday, will not be paid for that holiday unless the employee is paid for a full regular shift by either working or through using any available paid leave on what would be their normal scheduled shift before the holiday and is paid for a full regular shift by working or through any available paid leave on their next scheduled shift after the holiday.

Scheduling:

- In the event that a holiday falls on a Saturday, the proceeding Friday shall be observed as the holiday; should a holiday fall on a Sunday, the following Monday shall be observed as the holiday.
- For floating holiday usage, the employee must receive supervisor approval and the day must be used as a full day increment equal to (8) hours or as listed below for part-time employees.

Holiday Pay for Highway Employees: All non-exempt employees shall receive one and one-half (1 ½) times their regular hourly rate of pay for all hours worked on a holiday in addition to their holiday pay.

Holiday Pay for Communication/Corrections Employees:

- Columbus Day will replace the Floating Holiday for these employees.
- Holiday pay for Communication/Corrections employees will be accrued at eight (8) hours per holiday according to the list above. Holidays for this work area will be recognized on the actual day the holiday occurs during the calendar year and not always the day the courthouse observes the holiday. All communications/corrections employees will accrue for eleven (11) holidays per year, for a total of eighty-eight (88) holiday hours. Holiday pay for this work area may be used in 2 hour increments at the beginning of a shift, the end of a shift, or for a full shift. They may take these holidays any time during the year with the approval of the Sheriff or his/her designee. If

days cannot be scheduled as time off due to an unreasonable burden to the County, said remaining holiday balance earned but unused before December 31 of that year shall be paid at the hourly rate earned by the employee up to a maximum of 88 hours. This payout shall be paid out to zero on the payroll prior to December 31st annually. In the event of separation, employees who have taken more days than allowable shall have any overpayment deducted from final wages.

- If a Communication/Corrections employee works any of the set 11 holidays, the employee shall have an additional four (4) hours of holiday pay added to their holiday accrual balance. To earn this extra holiday pay, the employee must work a full 12 hour shift. No extra pay will be earned when working less than a 12 hour shift. A maximum of twenty-four (24) hours of holiday pay may be carried over if an employee works Christmas Eve Day and/or Christmas Day, which must be utilized as pay or time off within the first three (3) months of the year.

Holiday Pay for Part-time Employees: Part-time employees shall receive holiday pay up to the number of hours they are normally scheduled to work or it shall be pro-rated based on previous years' hours worked and their current work schedule. This is not to exceed eight (8) hours. This also applies to when a part-time employee elects to use their floating holiday.

Policy 201 - Effective May 31, 2015; Revised September 24, 2024

POLICY 202 – LEAVE - BEREAVEMENT

Purpose: To grant time away from work for employees for bereavement.

Policy:

- Immediate Family - All full-time county employees may receive up to three (3) day funeral leave with full pay for the death of a father, mother, sister, brother, spouse, domestic partner, child, stepfather, stepmother, stepchild, mother-in-law, father-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, grandparent, or grandchild as approved by the Department Manager at his/her discretion.
- The Department Manager may make a recommendation to the County Administrative Coordinator to grant the authorization of up to three (3) days of emergency leave with pay in the event of the death of any member of the employee's family not identified above at his/her discretion.
- Pallbearer/Military Funeral - All full-time employees may receive one (1) day with pay when requested to be a pallbearer or to participate in a military funeral. This time shall not be in addition to any funeral day(s) allowed under the Immediate Family provision.
- Funeral leave as described above is available to regular part-time employees (minimum 30% employed) for normal hours scheduled to work.
- Employee must submit documentation that verifies eligibility for leave when requested by Administration.

Policy 202 – Effective May 31, 2015; Revised January 23, 2017

POLICY 203 - LEAVE – JURY DUTY

Purpose: To grant time away from work with pay for employees summoned to jury duty.

Policy: An employee shall be given time off with pay when subpoenaed to appear before a court, public body, or commission in connection with county business or fulfill their civic responsibilities when required.

- An employee shall provide prior notice to the Department Manager or designee.
- Any witness fees received, less travel allowance, shall be returned to the County Treasurer.

Policy 203 - Effective May 31, 2015

POLICY 204 - LEAVE – EDUCATIONAL

Purpose: To provide employees with the opportunity for time off to increase their knowledge, proficiency, ability and skills.

Policy: Employees may be granted an unpaid leave to further their education, subject to the staffing needs of the department.

- The County shall not reimburse any expenses incurred while on an educational leave.
- Employees may request four (4) hours of paid time off per week—not to exceed forty (40) hours as a lifetime maximum—to further their education if approved by: Department Manager, County Administrative Coordinator, and the Buffalo County Human Resources Committee.
- Upon approval, a contract must be signed by the employee. This can be obtained from Administration and will be kept on file in the County Administration Office.
- If an employee chooses to separate employment with Buffalo County within two (2) years of utilizing the four (4) hours off of paid time per week clause, or failed to obtain their degree, the time paid must be reimbursed to Buffalo County at the pay rate the employee was at when the time was utilized and shall typically be deducted on their final payroll payment.

Policy 204 – Effective May 31, 2015; Revised January 23, 2017

POLICY 205 - LEAVE - EMERGENCY CONDITIONS

Purpose: To provide a plan for employees in the event of an emergency closing due to inclement weather or another emergency situation.

Policy: Buffalo County makes every effort to maintain its normal schedule of operations. Departments that provide safety services for the County should clarify with their Department Manager as to whether or not the provisions of this policy are applicable.

- Emergency Absences and Shutdown of Facilities:
 - The County Administrative Coordinator or designee in concurrence with Highway Management and/or Sheriff, Public Health Officer or Emergency Management Director may order certain departments to be closed or staffing curtailed. Included but not limited to the following situations: inclement weather, lack of electricity, lack of heat or air conditioning, power outages, a natural disaster, or quarantine imposed by health officials.
 - Emergency closure of the courthouse will be communicated through Department Managers or Elected Officials. The County Administrative Coordinator or his/her designee will contact the Department Managers and Elected Officials who will then notify the employees in their departments or offices.
 - If the Governor of the State of Wisconsin declares a State of Emergency which closes State offices, Buffalo County may follow such declaration.
- Record Keeping Provision:
 - If the courthouse is closed before noon, employees reporting to work will be paid for actual time worked.

- If the courthouse closed after noon, employees reporting to work will be paid for the whole workday.
- If the courthouse closed prior to opening for the day, the employee may charge lost time to accumulated PTO.
- If an employee has no accumulated PTO, they may charge lost time to time off without pay.
- Department Managers may allow the employee to make up lost time within the same week.
- Lost time may not be charged to PSLB time.
- Employees failing to report for work in a timely manner due to inclement weather conditions will be paid only for those hours actually worked.
 - Employees may apply accrued PTO to receive full pay for scheduled hours absent.
 - If accrued time is not available all absent hours shall be without pay with the Department Manager's approval.
 - Department Managers may allow the employee to make up lost time within the same week.
 - Lost time may not be charged to PSLB.

Policy 205 - Effective May 31, 2015; Revised May 20, 2019

POLICY 206 - LEAVE - FAMILY, MEDICAL & MILITARY

Purpose: Child rearing, family illness, employee medical leave, and military call-to-duty and military caregiver leave are available to employees as specified below. The intent of this Policy is to comply with both the Wisconsin and Federal Family and Medical Leave Acts. Should this policy conflict in any way with the applicable federal and state statutes or regulations, the statutes, or regulations will control.

Policy: Eligible employees may qualify for unpaid leave under Wisconsin's Family and Medical Act (WFMLA) and/or the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). When applicable, the leaves shall run concurrently. Employee rights posters for both laws are in the workplace for reference by all employees. Additionally, employees may apply for medical leave to donate bone marrow or to be an organ donor. An explanation of employee rights and responsibilities are set forth below.

- **Wisconsin Family and Medical Act (WFMLA)**

- Eligibility: Generally, an employee is eligible for leave under WFMLA after they have been employed by the County for more than 52 consecutive weeks; has worked at least 1,000 hours (including paid leave time used) during the preceding 52 week period; and has not exhausted WFMLA entitlement.
- Qualifying Reasons and Entitlement: In a calendar year, up to 2 weeks of leave for the employee's own serious health condition, up to 2 weeks for the serious health condition of an employee's parent, child, spouse or domestic partner (as defined by state law), and up to 6 weeks for the birth or adoption of a child (must commence within 16 weeks before or after the birth or adoption) in a 12-month period. For any part-time employees that qualify, available leave will be prorated when used intermittently. Employees may take no more than 8 weeks of WFMLA in a 12-month period. The 12-month period is defined as the calendar year, January 1 to December 31.
- Definitions: Under Wisconsin law, a serious health condition is a disabling physical or mental illness, injury, impairment, or condition involving inpatient care or outpatient care that requires continuing treatment or supervision by a health care provider.

- Use of Leave: Time designated under this leave may be used continuously, intermittently (in smallest allowed increment allowed under Policy 104), or on a reduced work schedule or a combination.
 - Notice Obligations: An employee must provide as much advance notice as reasonable and practicable for the specific situation. Employees must notify Administration to obtain the appropriate paperwork.
 - Pay and Benefits: An employee may substitute available paid time off bank hours in lieu of unpaid time under WFMLA. The County will maintain the employee's elected benefits on the same terms as if the employee was actively working, and benefit deductions will continue to be taken from their paycheck. If the employee is receiving no pay or doesn't have enough pay to cover deductions, they have 30 days to remit payment to the County for their premiums. If an employee doesn't meet the deadline, they will be notified of cancellation of their benefits. They will be reinstated upon active return.
 - Restoration of Employment and Benefits: At the end of WFMLA, employees generally have the right to return to the same or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits and other employment terms.
- **Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**
 - Eligibility: Generally, an employee is eligible for leave under FMLA after they have been employed by the County for a total of at least 12 months (need not be consecutive), has worked at least 1,250 hours (excluding paid leave time used) during the previous 12 months, and has not exhausted FMLA entitlement.
 - Qualifying Reasons and Entitlement:
 - Twelve (12) workweeks of leave in a 12-month period for the birth of a child and to care for the newborn child within one year of birth; the placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care and to care for the newly placed child within one year of placement; a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the essential functions of his or her job; and any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a covered military member on "covered active duty". For any part-time employees that qualify, available leave will be prorated when used intermittently. The 12-month period is defined as the calendar year, January 1 to December 31. An employee is not entitled to take intermittent leave for the birth and care of a newborn child or for the placement with an employee of a child for adoption or foster care unless the County agrees to the arrangement.
 - Twenty-six (26) workweeks of leave during a single 12-month period to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness if the eligible employee is a servicemember's spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin (military caregiver leave).
 - Definitions: Under federal law, a serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves:
 - Inpatient care with an overnight stay in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility including any related period of incapacity or subsequent treatment; or
 - Continuing treatment by a health care provider which includes any one or more of the following:
 - A period of incapacity of more than three consecutive, full calendar days and:
 - Two or more in person visits to a health care provider for treatment within 30 days of the first day of incapacity; or

- At least one in-person visit to a health care provider for treatment within seven days of the first day of incapacity, which results in a regiment of continuing treatment under the supervision of the health care provider.
 - A period of incapacity due to pregnancy or for prenatal care
 - Incapacity or period(s) of treatment due to a chronic serious health condition which requires periodic visits to a health care provider at least twice a year, recurs over an extended period, and may cause episodic rather than continuing period of incapacity.
 - A period of incapacity which is permanent or long term due to a condition for which treatment may not be effective, but which requires the continuing supervision of a health care provider.
 - Absences for multiple treatments for restorative surgery after an accident or other injury, or for a condition that if not treated, would likely result in period of incapacity of more than three consecutive, full calendar days.
- Use of Leave: Time designated under this leave may be used continuously, intermittently if the County approves (in smallest allowed increment allowed under Policy 104), or on a reduced work schedule or a combination. If intermittent leave is being taken for child bonding, the Department Manager and Administrative Coordinator must approve the use of the leave as intermittent rather than continuous. It is expected that any intermittent leave for FMLA need to be scheduled in a way that causes minimal disruption to the employee's work department.
- Notice Obligations: An employee must provide 30 days advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable. When the 30 days' notice is not possible, employees must provide the County notice of the need for leave as soon as practicable under the facts and circumstances of the particular case. Employees who fail to give a 30 days' notice for foreseeable leave without a reasonable excuse for the delay, or otherwise fail to satisfy FMLA notice obligations, may have FMLA leave delayed or denied. Employees must notify Administration to obtain the appropriate paperwork.
- Pay and Benefits: An employee must use available paid time off bank hours prior to taking any FMLA as unpaid if the employee isn't being paid via any elected disability insurance. The County will maintain the employee's elected benefits on the same terms as if the employee was actively working, and benefit deductions will continue to be taken from their paycheck. If the employee is receiving no pay or doesn't have enough pay to cover deductions, they have 30 days to remit payment to the County for their premiums. If an employee doesn't meet the deadline, they will be notified of cancellation of their benefits. They will be reinstated upon active return. Employees on leave will only accrue PTO for paid hours. Any unpaid hours will result in no PTO accrual.
- Restoration of Employment and Benefits: At the end of WFMLA, employees generally have the right to return to the same or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits and other employment terms.
- **Wisconsin Bone Marrow and Organ Donation Leave Act**
 - Eligibility: Generally, an employee is eligible for this leave after they have been employed by the County for more than 52 consecutive weeks and has worked at least 1,000 hours (including paid leave time used) during the preceding 52-week period.
 - Qualifying Reasons and Entitlement: Up to six (6) weeks leave per twelve (12) month period for the purpose of serving as a bone marrow or organ donor

- Use of Leave: Leave may be taken only for the period necessary for the employee to undergo the donation procedure and to recover from the procedure.
- Notice Obligations: The employee must provide Buffalo County with written verification that the employee is to serve as a bone marrow or organ donor and so long as the leave is only for the period necessary for the employee to undergo the bone marrow or organ donation procedure and to recover from the procedure. Employees must notify Administration to obtain the appropriate paperwork.
- Pay and Benefits: An employee may substitute available paid time off bank hours in lieu of unpaid time under this leave. The County will maintain the employee's elected benefits on the same terms as if the employee was actively working, and benefit deductions will continue to be taken from their paycheck. If the employee is receiving no pay or doesn't have enough pay to cover deductions, they have 30 days to remit payment to the County for their premiums. If an employee doesn't meet the deadline, they will be notified of cancellation of their benefits. They will be reinstated upon active return. Employees on leave will only accrue PTO for paid hours. Any unpaid hours will result in no PTO accrual.
- Restoration of Employment and Benefits: At the end of this leave, employees generally have the right to return to the same or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits and other employment terms.

- **Military Leave:**

- Eligibility: Any employee who is not a temporary employee is covered by the federal law. That includes employees on probationary status and employees who have been with their employer for only a few days.
- Qualifying Reasons and Entitlement: Employees taking part in a variety of military duties are covered. Such military duties include time off serving in uniformed services including active duty, reserve or National Guard, for training, periods of active military service and funeral honors duty, as well as time spent being examined to determine fitness to perform such service. Subject to certain exceptions under the law, these benefits are generally limited to five years of leave of absence.
- Use of Leave: Leave may be taken that aligns with training schedules, military orders, etc.
- Notice Obligations: Employees are expected to provide the County with as much advance notice as possible of the need for military-related leave. The County will request documentation for military absences of 31 days or more upon an employee's return from leave. Employees must notify Administration to obtain the appropriate paperwork.
- Pay and Benefits: Employees who are on leave for annual two-week tour of duty shall be paid the difference between their total military pay (including housing allowances, etc.) and the pay they would have normally earned had they worked. An employee may substitute available paid time off bank hours in lieu of unpaid time under Military Leave. Employees on leave will only accrue PTO for paid hours. Any unpaid hours will result in no PTO accrual. For employees on leave of less than 31 days, the County will maintain the employee's elected benefits on the same terms as if the employee was actively working, and benefit deductions will continue to be taken from their paycheck. If the employee is receiving no pay or doesn't have enough pay to cover deductions, they have 30 days to remit payment to the County for their premiums. For employees on leave of 31 days or more, the employee may elect to continue health, dental and vision insurance coverage under COBRA for up to 24 months or for the period of military service (including the time period allowed to reapply for reemployment), whichever is shorter. State elected life insurance may continue provided the employee pays their share of the

premiums. All other electable benefits terminate the day the employee becomes active military.

- Restoration of Employment and Benefits: At the end of this leave, employees generally have the right to return to the same or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits and other employment terms. To be eligible for reinstatement protection under federal law, the following conditions must have been met:
 - The employee gave the County notice of the need for leave.
 - The period of military service did not exceed 5 years.
 - The employee was released under honorable conditions.
 - The employee returned and applied for re-employment within the following time restrictions:
 - For leaves of less than 31 days, the employee must report to work on the first regularly scheduled work period following the completion of service; no application is required.
 - For leaves of 31 days but less than 180 days, the employee must apply for reinstatement within 14 days after completion of military service.
 - For leaves of more than 180 days, the employee must apply for reinstatement no more than 90 days after completion of military service.

Employee Responsibilities:

- Employees shall make a reasonable effort to schedule medical treatments so they do not unduly disrupt current operations and they shall provide the County with reasonable advance notice.
- Employees must provide sufficient information for the County to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions, the family member is unable to perform daily activities, the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider, or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave.
- Employees also must inform the County if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified.
- Employees will be required to provide a certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave for most leave of absences.
- Employees returning to work from leaves that were taken because of their own serious health condition which rendered them unable to perform their jobs must provide the County with medical certification confirming they are able to return to work and that they are able to perform the essential functions of their position, with or without reasonable accommodations. The County may delay and/or deny job restoration until employees provide return to work/fitness for duty certifications.
- During the time(s) when you are taking FMLA leave, you will not be permitted to work for or on behalf of another employer or perform other work for pay.

Employer Responsibilities: In regard to FMLA, the County must inform employees requesting leave whether they are eligible under FMLA. If they are, the notice must specify any additional information required as well as the employees' rights and responsibilities. If they are not eligible, the County must provide a reason for the ineligibility. Covered employers must inform employees if leave will be designated as FMLA-protected and the amount of leave counted against the employee's leave entitlement. If the County determines that the leave is not FMLA-protected, the County must notify the employee.

Policy 206 - Effective May 31, 2015; Revised September 26, 2022

POLICY 207 - LEAVE – PERSONAL

Purpose: To provide time off for compelling and/or urgent personal circumstances when an employee is not eligible for any other leaves or if they have been exhausted.

Policy:

- **Eligibility:** All employees are eligible except those in positions that are limited term, seasonal, or temporary. The employee must have completed at least three (3) months of continuous service prior to the leave commencing.
- **Length of Leave:** A Personal Leave of Absence may be requested for a period of up to three (3) months. Employees may request a Personal Leave of Absence no more than once in a 12-month period unless approved by the Human Resources Committee due to extenuating circumstances
- **Request:**
 - Any employee requesting leave shall complete the Personal Leave of Absence Request Form and submit the request to the Department Manager who shall then forward on to the County Administrative Coordinator for review and consideration.
 - The approval of a Personal Leave is discretionary, with consideration given applicable laws, the staffing needs of the department, and determining the best interests of the County. Personal Leave will not be granted to allow an employee to seek other employment.
 - A personal leave may only be granted when it is reasonably expected that the employee will return to employment when the conditions necessitating the leave have changed; and when granting a leave is in the best interest of the County.
 - The County Administrative Coordinator may authorize this type of leave for up to thirty (30) calendar days.
 - Any personal leave request extending over thirty (30) calendar days shall be submitted to the County Administrative Coordinator with the recommendation by the Department Manager and will be presented to the Buffalo County Human Resources Committee at their next regular meeting for their review and consideration.
 - The employee shall be notified of any action taken within five (5) working days of the determination.
- **Use of Leave:** Time designated under this leave may be used continuously, intermittently, on a reduced work schedule, or a combination. Intermittent or reduced schedule usage must be approved in advance and scheduled in minimum increments of four (4) hours unless otherwise approved.
- **Notice Obligation:** An employee must provide 30 days' advance notice of the need to take the leave when the need is foreseeable. When the 30 days' notice is not possible, employees must provide the County notice of the need for leave as soon as practicable under the facts and circumstances of the particular case.
- **Pay and Benefits:**
 - Employees on a Personal Leave of Absence shall be required to substitute all available paid leave banks (PTO, sick, holiday, etc.) while on leave.
 - There shall be no PTO accrual or holiday benefits while on unpaid leave. PTO and holiday benefits shall resume upon the employee's return to active employment.
 - Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA)
 - Provides employees covered under an employer's group insurance plan eligibility to continue insurance coverage under the group plan. COBRA contains provisions giving certain individuals the right to temporary continuation of insurance coverage

at the group rate plus a 2% administration fee. This coverage is only available when coverage is lost due to a COBRA qualifying event.

- A COBRA qualifying event while on Personal Leave occurs due to a reduction in hours and occurs when an employee crosses from one month to another month on unpaid time.
- Health Insurance
 - The employee shall remain covered under the group health insurance plan and pay the employee portion of the premium, while the County pays the employer portion during the month in which the employee had paid hours only (i.e. work time, PTO, compensatory time, etc.). The employee will then have the option to continue with the health insurance via COBRA and pay the applicable COBRA rates which include the employer portion of the premiums. The County will not pay any portion of the health insurance premiums when an employee is on this leave except as noted.
 - If the employee returns to work after the Personal Leave, the elected group health insurance coverage will be reinstated the first day of the month that follows the return to full-time employment.
- Dental and Vision Insurance
 - The employee shall remain covered under any elected dental and vision insurance plans and pay the premiums during the month in which the employee had paid hours only (i.e. work time, PTO, compensatory time, etc.). The employee will then have the option to continue with the elected insurance via COBRA and pay the applicable COBRA rates.
 - If the employee returns to work after Personal Leave, the applicable insurance coverage would be reinstated the first day of the month that follows the return to full time employment.
- All Other Insurances
 - Certain types of insurance allow for continuation while out on leave provided the employee pays the premiums and other insurances will end when an employee moves to unpaid status. The employee must contact the Human Resources Manager to understand what options they have for these insurances and make appropriate arrangements to pay premiums, if needed.
 - Failure to make the required payments shall result in termination of employee's elected benefits coverage as indicated under "Termination of Benefits".
- Termination of Benefits
 - Maintaining health, dental and/or vision insurance and all other benefits shall stop if and when the following occur:
 - An employee informs the County of their intent not to return to work during or at the end of the leave period; or
 - The employee fails to return to work when the leave period is used up; or
 - The employee fails to make any required payments while on leave. Health, dental and/or vision insurance, life insurance, or any other benefit ceases if an employee's premium payment is more than 30 days late. If an employee's payment is more than 15 days late, the County shall send a letter notifying the employee that coverage shall be dropped on a specified date unless the payment is received before that date. Health, dental and/or vision insurance and any other coverage shall then be dropped retroactively to the first of the month for the month of coverage that premium payments were not received.

- Returning from Leave

- An employee may return to work at an earlier date than scheduled if approved by the Department Manager. This must be communicated immediately to the Human Resource Manager.
- Employees returning to work from leave that was taken because of their own serious health condition which rendered them unable to perform their job must provide the County with medical certification confirming they are able to return to work and that they are able to perform the essential functions of their position, with or without reasonable accommodations. The County may delay and/or deny job restoration until the employee provides return to work/fitness for duty certifications.
- Any employee failing to return to work upon expiration of leave shall be considered to have resigned, not in good standing.
- Upon expiration of Personal Leave, the employee may be reinstated to the vacated position or equivalent position, provided stated qualifications are met.
- In extreme situations, a Personal Leave of Absence exceeding three (3) months may be approved in which the employee upon returning may be eligible for reinstatement to a vacant position for which qualified, if available.

Policy 207 - Effective May 31, 2015; Updated August 25, 2025

POLICY 208 - LEAVE – SICK

Purpose: To provide employees with a means of utilizing accrued sick leave time.

- **Personal Sick Leave Bank (PSLB):**

- Each employee has a Personal Sick Leave Bank (PSLB) account, except for represented Law Enforcement employees.
- Accrued sick leave is placed in the PSLB upon start-up of the program, and thereafter is added at an annual basis.

Maximum levels of the PSLB are:

480 hours for a full-time employee

360 hours for 75% part-time employee

240 hours for 50% part-time employee

144 hours for 30% part-time employee

- Exceptions to these hours will be employees with more than 480 hours, up to a total of 720 hours, as of the effective date (June 1, 2013) or for Communications/Corrections Officers hired before April 6, 2014, with more than 480 hours up to a total of 800 hours, as of the effective date of January 1, 2017, of this policy. No additional hours may be added to an employee's PSLB account if the amount exceeds 480 hours.
- Time placed in the PSLB is available for an employee's personal illness, well-care and medical and dental appointments. This time may also be used for illness and well-care of a member of an employee's immediate family (including the employee's spouse, child, parent, or domestic partner.) Employees utilizing their PSLB due to personal illness must contact their Department Manager no later than one (1) hour before the start of their schedule for that day except in cases of emergency or development of illnesses during work hours. Communications/Corrections Officers notification shall be at least two (2) hours before the start of their shift except as stated above.
- Employees that are not out on approved Family Medical Leave must furnish physician's statement of an illness for any accumulation greater than two (2) working days in two

week pay period. This must be provided to Administration upon their return to work. At the discretion of the Department Manager, the employee may be required to submit a physician's statement for leave taken immediately before or after a holiday, weekend, or vacation. If such documentation is not forthcoming, any pay granted for such leave may be deducted from the next paycheck.

- All PSLB is lost when employment ceases, including when the individual is appointed to, or elected by the voters, to a full-time elected County position. An exception to this is when a County, non-elected employee retires (reference Policy 303-Benefits-Retirement).

Policy 208 - Effective May 31, 2015; Revised January 24, 2023

POLICY 209 - LEAVE – PAID TIME OFF (PTO)

Purpose: The purpose of the Paid Time Off (PTO) Plan is to provide regular full-time and regular part-time employees a flexible means to carefully plan their time away from work and maximize time spent on the job.

- PTO can be utilized for any purpose, subject to approval by the Department Manager. At a minimum, documentation of PTO must be recorded on the individual employee's timesheet.
- This benefit is available to regular non-represented employees. Temporary, seasonal, and casual employees and elected officials are not eligible for PTO.

Earning Time:

- PTO time is earned based on length of service and number of regular hours, up to a maximum of 80, paid in each pay period.
- The number of hours paid is calculated by a multiplier to determine PTO hours credited to the employee per pay period.
- This time is available after it is accrued.

Based on 2080 Work Hours Annually				
Multiplier Level	Years of Service	Annual Limit (In hours)	Multiplier	Full Time Accrual Amount (Per pay period)
Level 1	0 – 4	176	0.0846	6.77
Level 2	5 – 9	216	0.1038	8.30
Level 3	10 – 14	240	0.1154	9.23
Level 4	15 – 19	256	0.1231	9.85
Level 5	20 – 24	272	0.1308	10.46
Level 6	25 plus	296	0.1423	11.38

Note: 0 – 4 means from the beginning of employment to the end of the 4th year.
5 – 9 means from the beginning of the 5th year to the end of the 9th year, etc.

Accumulation:

- Each employee has a PTO account.
- As time is earned it is credited to the account.
- Maximum PTO Accumulation is:
 - 320 hours for a 100% full-time employee
 - 240 hours for 75% part-time employee
 - 160 hours for 50% part-time employee
 - 96 hours for 30% part-time employee

- Once the maximum is reached any additional hours are forfeited until PTO hours are utilized.
- It is the employee's responsibility to understand this provision and carefully plan their PTO usage and distribution to ensure that PTO is not lost.

Annual Paid Time Off Options:

- On the first day of each year, the employee has the option of placing up to the maximum allowed into the Personal Sick Leave Bank from their Paid Time Off (PTO) bank:
 - 96 hours for a full-time employee
 - 72 hours for 75% part-time employee
 - 48 hours for 50% part-time employee
 - 28 hours for 30% part-time employee
- The employee should notify the County Administration Office in writing of the number of hours they wish to transfer from PTO to PSLB.
- The request must be made with the payroll period which includes the date of December 31 of that year.
- PTO hours up to the maximum accumulation will be continued into the following year. If an employee does not indicate a choice, all PTO hours up to the account maximum will be carried forward.
- Communications/Corrections Officers- Effective November 1, 2022, through October 31, 2023, Communications/Corrections Officers will have a total of two (2) times that they may transfer up to 96 hours on each transfer from PTO to PSLB. The dates will include December 31 and July 1. The request must be made with the payroll period which includes each of the dates.

Termination in Good Standing: An employee who leaves Buffalo County in good standing is paid for all PTO hours remaining in the employee's account at their current rate of pay.

Use of Paid Time Off:

- To maximize work integrity and personal well-being, one (1) week of employee's regular scheduled hours of continuous Paid Time Off (PTO) is recommended for use each year.
- PTO time is to be scheduled with the Department Manager or their designee as far in advance as possible.
- Department Manager, or their designee, may deny the use of PTO if it cannot be accommodated in the workload of the department.
- PTO hours shall be paid at the current rate of pay at time of usage.
- Unscheduled PTO hours for unforeseen emergency circumstances must be made at least one (1) hour before the start of the workday or shift except in cases of emergency or development of illness during work hours. Communications/Corrections Officer's request shall be at least two (2) hours before the start of their shift except as stated above.
- Part-time employees may only take the number of PTO hours that part-time employee is scheduled to work the day PTO is being requested for. Part-time employees cannot take PTO on days not scheduled to work.
- The County reserves the right to require use of PTO while an employee is on worker's compensation.
 - An employee must use enough PTO hours, if available to the employee to recover the employee share of benefits and mandatory deductions.
 - If no PTO hours are available, the employee shall make arrangements with the County Administration Office for payment of employee's share of benefits and mandatory deductions.

- If you are ill you should not report to work. Employees who report to work appearing to be ill will be sent home on PTO time by the Department Manager, or their designee.
- PTO time cannot be used in increments of less than one-half (½) hour.
- PTO may not be used beyond employees last day actually worked.
- PTO and PSLB time may not be given away or loaned without authorization of Buffalo County Human Resource Committee and verified and approved by the County Administrative Coordinator or designee and Department Manager.
 - When an individual employee is transferring PTO and/or PSLB hours they must maintain a minimum of 120 hours in each of the PTO or PSLB. Additional guidelines will be applied according to the “Buffalo County Voluntary Transfer of PTO/PSLB Hours” form, which is available in the County Administration Office or on the employee intranet.
 - Employees will receive unpaid time for overdrawing accounts and be subject to disciplinary action.
- Employees cannot be paid for time at work and receive PTO time at the same time.

New Employees:

- New employees begin earning Paid Time Off (PTO) time on the first day of work.
- Newly hired employees may request to the Department Manager, or their designee, and the County Administration Office that their PTO bank be authorized to carry a negative balance within the first six pay periods from hire date for emergency situations only not to exceed 24 hours.
- Authorized negative balances must be restored through accrual to a positive balance before any further PTO hours may be taken by the employee.
- Employees who separate employment and have a negative PTO bank balance at the time of separation, will have their final pay adjusted from regular hours worked to restore the PTO bank to a zero balance.

Policy 209 - Effective May 31, 2015; Revised October 24, 2022

POLICY 210 - LEAVE – VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY SERVICE

Purpose: To encourage employees to volunteer for emergency services in their community and provide a means for taking time off.

Policy:

- County employees who have joined these services may be permitted to leave during work hours to answer volunteer emergency calls.
- Department Managers shall set a policy for volunteer emergency calls to prevent the disruption of operations in their department.
- No county office may be closed during standard hours as a result of an employee’s response to a volunteer emergency call.
- It is up to the discretion of Department Manager to set a policy on how to account for the time when an employee is away from work for volunteer emergency service.

Policy 210 - Effective May 31, 2015

POLICY 301 - HEALTH INSURANCE AND COBRA

Purpose: To provide health insurance to those employees who qualify for coverage.

Coverage:

- The design and selection of health care plans is determined by the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors as recommended by the Buffalo County Human Resource Committee consistent with applicable state, federal and insurance regulations. Employees will receive notification of the health plans as adopted. The plan document is available for review on the Employee Benefits portal.
- Any employee required to pay all, or any portion of the health insurance premium will make such payment by payroll deduction, except when an employee is receiving worker's compensation payments.
- Insurance will be canceled if the employee fails to remit payment upon notice of delinquency. Employees on FMLA will continue to pay their contribution.

Eligibility:

- All full-time employees and elected officials who qualify for coverage may participate in the Health Insurance Plan. Eligible employees will contribute, and the County will contribute, to the costs for the Health Insurance Plan.
- The group health insurance policy is available to all full-time and part-time non-temporary employees. Part-time, non-temporary employees must be scheduled a minimum of 30 hours per week (75% FTE or greater). Premium will be a pro-rated county share with standard employee contribution rates.
- Employee/employer contribution rate levels for full-time, part-time, non-temporary employees and elected officials will be established periodically by the Buffalo County Human Resources Committee and may be adjusted at any time.

Effective Date:

- Health insurance coverage will be effective the first of the month following thirty (30) days from date of hire, provided the employee has completed their new hire enrollment. Employees not applying upon hire may subsequently attain coverage with a qualifying event and a certificate of credible coverage. Late enrollees date of coverage will be effective as per plan document language.
- Health insurance coverage will cease the last day of the calendar month in which the employee separates from employment. Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) continuation provisions are identified below.

Payment for Health Insurance Premiums: Payment for health insurance premiums will be made in twenty-four (24) equal payments through payroll deductions throughout the year.

Health Insurance Waiver Incentive:

- A Buffalo County employee who is eligible to participate in the county health insurance plan who elects not to participate in the county health insurance plan and upon providing proof of health insurance coverage from another source is eligible for a cash payout subject to all appropriate taxes and withholdings, herein referred to as Insurance Incentive.
- The Buffalo County Finance Committee shall determine, in its sole discretion, the amount, timing and administration of Insurance Incentive contributions by the County prior to each Plan Year.
- Restrictions:

- The alternative health plan cannot be a Buffalo County sponsored plan or Medical Assistance.
- Proof of alternate health insurance coverage is required annually. A letter from an insurance company or spouse/partner's employer with listing of dependents covered and effective date must be provided between December 15th and no later than January 15th for the upcoming year.
- Incentive will be pro-rated for eligible part-time employees who are scheduled a minimum of 30 hours per week (75% FTE or greater).
- Incentive will be pro-rated for plan participants enrolled during the plan year; provided proof of alternative health insurance coverage is presented within 30 days of health plan eligibility.
- Payment:
 - Insurance Incentive will be added to the employee's regular employment compensation each pay period which will be subject to all appropriate taxes and withholdings.
 - Payment will commence after the first month of non-coverage under a Buffalo County sponsored plan.

Coverage Upon Separation:

- Under state law and the Federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 ("COBRA") and subsequent amendments to the Act, employees covered under an employer's group health care plan are eligible for continuation of health care coverage under the group plan upon the employee's termination (except for gross misconduct) or reduction in hours.
- COBRA regulations also allow the employee's spouse and covered dependents to elect continuation coverage upon the employee's death, divorce or legal separation, an employee's entitlement to Medicare, a dependent's loss of dependent status under family coverage, or the employer's filing of a bankruptcy proceeding.
- All employees, as well as their qualified dependents, will receive notice of mandated insurance continuation benefits at the time of hire or whenever the plan coverage for the employee begins.
- If a qualifying event occurs which entitles the employee and/or qualified dependents to continuation coverage, the plan administrator will notify the qualified beneficiaries of their right to elect continuation coverage. Unless otherwise agreed, continued participation is solely at the participant's expense.
- In addition to your right to insurance continuation, there may be other coverage options for you and your family under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Being eligible for COBRA does not limit your eligibility for coverage for a tax credit through the Health Insurance "Exchange" or "Marketplace."
- Additionally, you may be eligible for a special enrollment opportunity for another group health plan for which you are eligible (such as a spouse's plan), even if the plan generally does not accept late enrollees.
- Employees will be mailed information on COBRA as it applies.
- Employees discharged will have insurance coverage only through the month in which the discharge is effective.
- Employees receiving worker's compensation payments will have the County's share of their premiums paid by the County for a period of one (1) year.

Health Reimbursement Arrangement:

- The current County health insurance plan is no longer paired with a Health Reimbursement Arrangement.
- Balances as of December 31, 2018 are frozen to be used by retired employees for reimbursement of qualified health insurance premiums.
- Termination of employment prior to retirement results in the employee forfeiting any accumulated HRA balances.

Spouse also Employee:

- The County will provide coverage under only one (1) family plan or two (2) single plans when spouses are employees.
- As identified in Insurance Waiver Incentive above, when spouses are employed by Buffalo County, insurance incentive dollars cannot be claimed for Opting Out of the Health Insurance Plan.

Policy 301 – Effective May 31, 2015; Revised May 21, 2024

POLICY 302 - OTHER INSURANCES

Life Insurance:

- Life insurance is available for employees who are covered under Wisconsin Retirement Plan.
- Employees must apply within the first thirty (30) days of employment. Employees applying after the thirty (30) days will be considered as a late enrollee. Late enrollees must complete insurability application and be approved by the insurance company.
- The effective date for coverage will be the first of the month after thirty (30) days of employment.
- Payment for life insurance premiums will be made in twenty-four (24) equal payments through payroll deductions throughout the year.
- Life insurance coverage will cease the last day of the calendar month in which the employee separates from employment.

Worker's Compensation:

- Immediate notification shall be given to the County Administrative Office by the Department Manager when an employee is injured on the job or suffers from job-related injury at work.
- All employees injured at work must call the nurse help line after their Department Manager is notified.
- An employee may become eligible for certain benefits under the Worker's Compensation Act of the State of Wisconsin.
- This Act provides weekly compensation payments based on the salary rate of the employee.
- Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) forms will be required for all leaves in excess of three consecutive days and may be required for less than three days given the circumstances. Worker's compensation leave of absence will run concurrently with any approved FMLA leave.

Group Dental Plan:

- The County will make available a voluntary group dental plan. Employees who participate in the plan will pay the entire premium in twenty-four (24) equal payments through payroll deductions throughout the year.
- Coverage will be effective the first of the month after thirty (30) days of employment.
- Coverage will cease the last day of the calendar month in which the employee separates from employment.

- Employees may apply for coverage at Open Enrollment annually. No late enrollments are allowed unless the employee has a qualifying event.
- The plan document is available for review on the Employee Benefits portal.

Group Vision Plan:

- The County will make available a voluntary group vision plan. Employees who participate in the plan will pay the entire premium in twenty-four (24) equal payments through payroll deductions throughout the year.
- Coverage will be effective the first of the month after thirty (30) days of employment.
- Coverage will cease the last day of the calendar month in which the employee separates from employment.
- Employees may apply for coverage at Open Enrollment annually. No late enrollments are allowed unless the employee has a qualifying event.
- The plan document is available for review on the Employee Benefits portal.

Income Continuation Insurance Plan:

- Effective January 1, 2023, the County will participate in the ETF Income Continuation Program that is voluntary. Employees who participate in the plan will pay their portion of the premium over twenty-four (24) equal payments through payroll deductions throughout the year if a premium is due. The county will pay their portion as required by the insurance if a premium is due.
- Coverage shall be effective the first day of the calendar month that first occurs during a newly eligible employee's 30-day enrollment period. Coverage terminates on the date an employee resigns, is dismissed, terminates, retires, or dies, whichever comes first. Full month's premium is required for any month or portion of a month in which earnings are paid.
- Employees may apply for coverage at Open Enrollment annually. No late enrollments are allowed unless the employee has a qualifying event. Annual open enrollment period for adding supplemental coverage is January 1 through March 1. Employees must meet the salary threshold qualifications to add coverage.
- Employees may cancel coverage at any time which is effective the first day of the calendar month on or after the date the ICI Application cancelling coverage is received by the County.
- Employees should refer to the ETF ICI webpages for more information on the rules of the program.

Policy 302 – Effective May 31, 2015; Revised May 21, 2024

POLICY 303 - BENEFITS - RETIREMENT

Purpose: To provide retirement contributions to eligible employees in accordance with state law.

Eligibility:

- Once eligible for coverage under WRS, coverage is mandatory, and an employee may not “opt out” of WRS.
- Eligibility is based on the following:
 - If the employee was initially employed by a WRS employer prior to July 1, 2011 and was enrolled in WRS and is expected to work at least 600 hours for at least one year, the

employee will be enrolled immediately in the WRS with the effective date as the first date that compensable service is rendered;

- If the employee was initially employed by a WRS employer on or after July 1, 2011 and is expected to work at least 1,200 hours for at least one year, the employee will be enrolled immediately in the WRS with the effective date as the first date that compensable service is rendered.
- If the employee does not meet the eligibility requirements at time of hire, the employee will not be enrolled in WRS. However, if the employee subsequently meets the requirements, the employee will be prospectively enrolled.

Cost of Plan: Employers and employees are required to pay a percentage of each payment of earnings equal to one-half of the total actuarially required contribution rate for a general participant as determined by the Employee Trust Fund Board. Employee contributions are pre-tax. If an employee enrolled in protective status as a Communications/Corrections Officer prior to January 1st, 2024, deductions are post-tax.

PTO Retirement Payout:

- An employee who retires from Buffalo County employment (immediately receives a pension from the Wisconsin Retirement System): PTO hours remaining in the employee's account is paid out at their current rate of pay.
- An employee who retires on or after June 2, 2013, may elect to transfer up to all remaining PTO hours to their PSLB to use to pay premiums for an approved IRS tax-exempt health insurance program. Exception to these hours will be employees with more than 480 hours, up to a total of 720 hours, as of the effective date (June 2, 2013) or for Communications/Corrections Officers hired before April 6, 2014 with more than 480 hours up to a total of 800 hours, as of the effective date of January 1, 2017 of this Policy.

Personal Sick Leave Bank Retirement Payout: Upon retirement, the Personal Sick Leave Bank (PSLB) will be paid into an approved IRS tax-exempt health insurance program at no cost to the County. The PSLB will be paid at a daily rate of \$30.00.

Policy 303 - Effective May 31, 2015; Revised May 21, 2024

POLICY 304 - OTHER BENEFITS

Purpose: The Buffalo County Human Resource Committee will determine the design and selection of benefits and retains the right to changes these benefits. Employees will be notified of any such changes.

- **Social Security:** The County shall provide social security coverage to all employees under the Federal Old Age, Survivors, Disability and Health Insurance System pursuant to the provision of Wisconsin Statutes section 40.41 (1), except for exemptions provided by law.
- **Deferred Compensation Plan:** All eligible county employees and elected officers will be afforded the opportunity to voluntarily participate in the Buffalo County employee Deferred Compensation or Roth plan pursuant to the rules, terms and conditions outlined in the plan.
- **Section 125 Plan:** Buffalo County makes available to its employees and elected officials an IRS Section 125 Plan if they desire.

- **Group Disability Plan:** The County will offer a group long-term disability plan and group short-term disability plan on a voluntary basis. Any employee participating in the plan shall have their premiums paid by payroll deduction.

Policy 304 - Effective May 31, 2015; Revised January 23, 2017

POLICY 305 - EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Purpose: The County recognizes that employees may have times when personal problems become complex and can affect personal health, family harmony, life satisfaction and job performance. Therefore, the County offers an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that will provide confidential assessment, short-term counseling and referral services at no cost to the employee or their family.

Procedure:

- The County encourages the use of EAP through informal referral (also known as self-referral) by employees or their family members. Each employee will receive information on how they can contact EAP should they wish to refer themselves.
- Supervisors or Department Managers may also refer an employee to EAP through the supervisory referral process when employee experiences work performance problems. The decision to accept a supervisor referral to EAP rests with the employee, due to the voluntary nature of the program.
- A Supervisor or Department Manager referral to EAP in no way replaces the standard disciplinary policies of the County. The supervisory referral serves as an additional avenue through which employees can address problems which may adversely affect work performance. An employee's job security or future career advancement will not be jeopardized because of their participation in the Employee Assistance Program.

General Provisions:

- All employees of Buffalo County and their immediate family members are eligible for free EAP sessions. The County incurs the cost for the EAP benefit. Any ongoing counseling or other services pursued by the employee will be his/her responsibility. In many instances, private health insurance provides some coverage for additional help.
- Appointments with an EAP consultant can be scheduled by contact the EAP office at 800-222-8590. The EAP has 24-hour telephone coverage, as well as the ability to intervene with crisis situations at any hour.
- The EAP is a confidential service. No information about a client will be shared without a signed consent form. Federal and/or State regulations do not protect from disclosure of information related to suspected child abuse and neglect, situations deemed potentially life threatening, or commission of a crime against property or personnel.
- When an employee is experiencing work performance problems, the Department Manager, following established procedure, should work with the employee in an effort to reestablish accepted levels of performance. If it appears that the substandard performance is or may be due to problems or impairment, the Department Manager may formally refer the employee to EAP as part of a performance improvement plan. In a supervisor referral, the Department Manager will discuss the referral with the employee and notify EAP that a referral has been made. The referral to EAP in no way lessens the expectation that work performance be improved.
- It is appropriate and encouraged for a Department Manager or supervisor to consult with an EAP consultant regarding employee concerns. The EAP consultant maintains a position of neutrality regarding workplace conflict.

POLICY 401 – TECHNOLOGY, EMAIL, AND NETWORK - ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to define acceptable usage of Buffalo County's network, computer devices, and email systems. This policy is to protect Buffalo County's employees, partners, and the residents from illegal or damaging actions by individuals, either knowingly or unknowingly. Internet/Intranet/Extranet-related systems, including but not limited to computer equipment, software, operating systems, storage media, network accounts providing electronic mail, web browsing, and application services are the property of Buffalo County. Effective security is a team effort involving the participation and support of every Buffalo County employee and affiliate who deals with information and/or information systems. It is the responsibility of every computer user to know these guidelines, and to conduct their activities accordingly. This policy covers accessing our network, passwords, security, prohibited use, and user responsibility.

Scope: This policy applies to all employees, contractors, and temporary staff who use, access, or interact with Buffalo County's technology resources, including, but not limited to, computers, laptops, tablets, mobile devices, software, hardware, networks, and internet access.

Technology Use: Buffalo County provides computer/laptop/other electronic devices and network access as a professional resource for employees to fulfill business needs and is not intended for personal use.

- You may access, use, or share Buffalo County Information and/or Information Systems only to the extent it is authorized and necessary to fulfill your assigned job duties.
- Buffalo County information stored on electronic and computing devices must be protected through legal or technical means that information is protected.
- You have a responsibility to promptly report the damage, theft, loss, or unauthorized disclosure of Buffalo County information and/or Information Systems.
- For security and network maintenance purposes, the County reserves the right to monitor, access, and review all activities conducted using its technology resources, including email, internet usage, and shared data, with or without notice, to ensure compliance with this policy and applicable laws.

Email Use:

- All use of email must be consistent with Buffalo County policies and procedures of ethical conduct, safety, compliance with applicable laws and proper business practices.
- Buffalo County email accounts should be used for Buffalo County business-related purposes; non-Buffalo County related uses are prohibited.
- The Buffalo County email system should not be used to harass or make threats, nor be offensive or disruptive in nature; should not include language or images related to race, gender, age, sexual orientation, unless specifically related to your job duties; pornography, religious or political beliefs, national origin, or disability, unless specifically related to your job duties; should not present personal views as the county's own; should not engage in commercial activity unrelated to the county; should not unlawfully distribute copyrighted material; and should not share confidential material, trade secrets, or proprietary information outside of the county, unless specifically related to your job duties. Employees who receive any emails with this content from any Buffalo County employee should report the matter to their supervisor/Department Head/Administration Department immediately.

- Users are prohibited from automatically forwarding Buffalo County email to a third-party email system. Individual messages which are forwarded by the user must not contain Buffalo County confidential or above information, unless specifically related to your job duties.
- Use of Buffalo County resources for personal emails is not acceptable.
- Sending chain letters or joke emails from a Buffalo County email accounts is prohibited.
- Buffalo County may monitor messages without prior notice.
- All messages sent or received are and remain the property of the County. They are not the private property of any employee.

Network Access: Any user (remote or internal) accessing Buffalo County network and/or devices must be authenticated using a unique user ID and Password. Other methods of authentication may be used but must be approved by the Buffalo County Information Technology (IT) Department.

The unique user ID assigned to each individual is used for access and control to data and systems. All logging and tracking requirements for privacy, auditing, security, and monitoring are recorded based on this unique user ID. Users will be held responsible for all actions taken under their user ID as recorded by our network and systems. It is strictly forbidden that your user ID and password be used by others.

Obtaining User Id and Password: In order to issue a user id and password, the Buffalo County IT Department must receive the following:

- Notification from the Department Head indicating the account need the appropriate ticket system. Any needed applications and data access must be submitted through a ticket by the Department Head.
- The user must read and sign this policy, acknowledging acceptance thereof.
- Users needing access to data owned by another department will only be granted access upon written approval from his/her Department Head and the data's owner.

Passwords:

- Passwords must conform to the following:
 - Must be at least eight (8) characters long.
 - Must contain at least one alphabetic and one non-alphabetic character. Non-alphabetic characters include numbers (0-9) and punctuation.
 - Must contain at least one lower case and one upper case alphabetic character.
 - Must not be similar to passwords that they had previously employed.
 - Must be difficult to guess. Do not use derivatives of user-IDs, and common character sequences such as "123456" must not be employed. Likewise, personal details such as spouse's name, automobile license plate, social security number, and birthday must not be used unless accompanied by additional unrelated characters. User-chosen passwords must also not be any part of speech. For example, proper names, geographical locations, common acronyms, and slang must not be employed.
- Each user of Buffalo County computer systems will be given six attempts to enter a correct password. If a user has incorrectly entered a password six consecutive times, the user ID will be locked out for 15 minutes.
- All users will be automatically forced to change their passwords upon receipt of an IT issued password and at least once every forty-five (45) days.
- Users must never write down or otherwise record their password.
- Users must never reveal their user id or account password to others or allow the use of their account by others.

- All passwords must be promptly changed if they are suspected of being disclosed or known to have been disclosed to unauthorized parties.
- Users may request a password reset by e-mail, phone or in person. For non-employees your password will not be given verbally but will be sent to your registered email address.
- Every work account should have a different, unique password.
- Whenever possible, also enable the use of multi-factor authentication.

Security: Buffalo County will implement physical and technical safeguards to ensure the integrity of the county hardware, systems, and data.

Users will be granted access to information on a “need-to-know” basis. That is, users will only receive access to the minimum applications and privileges required to perform their jobs.

It is the responsibility of the user to practice the following security measures:

- Do not allow others access through your user ID and password. Providing access to another individual, either deliberately or through failure to secure its access, is prohibited.
- Secure workstations (screen lock or logout) prior to leaving area to prevent unauthorized access.
- You must lock the screen or log off when the device is unattended.
- Log out of all applications when not in use.
- Complying with all applicable password policies and procedures.
- Never install unauthorized software on any workstation/laptop/device.
- Know the level of security associated to network drives and system directories when storing data.
 - Personal Access – can only be seen by user (currently [\\BCC-DC2\Users](#) and [\\BCC-DC2\Users2](#))
 - Department Access – can be accessed only by users associated to the Department
- Do not store sensitive information on workstation/laptops, instead store all sensitive information, including protected health information (PHI) in a network directory.
- Ensure that monitors are positioned away from public view.
- Do not store sensitive data on portable storage devices such as CD, DVD, and USB.
- Never use portable storage devices (CD, DVD, USB, etc) from unknown or suspicious sources.
- Never download files from unknown or suspicious sources
- Must never disable or interfere with the anti-virus software unless given explicit permission from Buffalo County IT Department
- Must never disable or interfere with the firewall unless given explicit permission from Buffalo County IT Department
- Ensure proprietary software per your department is up to date.
- Ensure workstations are left on but logged off in order to facilitate after-hours updates.
- Ensure workstations and laptops are restarted at least weekly, in order to facilitate after-hours updates.
- Exit running applications and close open documents at the end of the day or when away from the device for an extended period.
- If a user has any questions or suspicions regarding emails or files, they must contact the IT Department immediately.

Prohibited: The following activities are strictly prohibited:

- To engage in any activity that is illegal under local, state, federal or international law while using Buffalo County-owned resources.

- Violations of the rights of any person or company protected by copyright, trade secret, patent or other intellectual property, or similar laws or regulations, including, but not limited to, the installation or distribution of "pirated" or other software products that are not appropriately licensed for use by Buffalo County.
- Unauthorized copying of copyrighted material including, but not limited to, digitization and distribution of photographs from magazines, books or other copyrighted sources, copyrighted music.
- Pornography, Child Pornography, Nudity, or other Sexually Explicit Material; not specifically related to your job duties.
- Deliberately create, propagate, or distribute malicious programs into the network or server (e.g., viruses, worms, Trojan horses, e-mail bombs, etc.).
- Logging into a device with an account that the user is not expressly authorized to access.
- Disrupt network communications. This includes, but is not limited to, network sniffing, ping floods, packet spoofing, denial of service, port scanning or security scanning and forged routing information.
- Port scanning or security scanning is expressly prohibited.
- Executing any form of network monitoring which will intercept data.
- Circumventing user authentication or security on any network, workstation, device or system.
- Using any program/script/command, or sending messages of any kind, with the intent to interfere with, or disable, a user's session.
- Export or Copy information about, or lists of, Buffalo County employees to parties outside Buffalo County. Exceptions would be for compliance of Open Records Requests laws.
- Copy or Export county-owned software, intellectual property.
- Copy, export and distribute data not specifically related to your job duties.
- Using any Instant Messaging (IM) software communications service that enables you to create a kind of private chat room with another individual in order to communicate in real time over the Internet from any device.

Remote Access: Refer to Policy 404 Virtual Private Network (VPN).

Social Media and Online Conduct: Refer to Policy 403 Social Media.

Policy Violations: Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or contract, as well as legal penalties, where applicable.

Policy 401 - Effective May 31, 2015; Revised June 26, 2023

POLICY 402 - POLITICAL ACTIVITIES & OTHER FORMS OF SOLICITATION

Purpose: Employees are free to engage in political activity, solicitation and sales outside of work hours and to the extent that it does not adversely affect the performance of job duties, working relationships or county operations, subject to the following guidelines. When engaging in political activity, solicitations or sales, or engaging in discussion of issues of public importance, employees are expected to ensure that their actions and positions are not attributed to the County. County resources may not be used for promoting a particular candidate or political party or community organization or for advocating a particular position on an issue that has been identified as the viewpoint of a particular candidate or part.

Definitions: County Resources is office supplies, electronic equipment including e-mail, facsimile and photocopying machines, bulletin boards and other public spaces. Use of bulletin boards requires authorization by the County Clerk.

Policy:

- All employees and elected officials shall have the right to freely express their views as a citizen and cast their vote.
- No employee or elected official shall directly or indirectly use or seek to use their authority or influence of their position to control or modify the political action of another person.
- No employee or elected official shall, except as provided by law, engage in political activities while on duty including, but not limited to, any of the following:
 - Campaign, by any method, for any candidate or political party
 - Make campaign speeches or engage in other activity to elect a candidate
 - Collect contributions or sell tickets to political fundraising functions
 - Distribute or post campaign materials in any election
 - Organize or manage political meetings
 - Circulate nominating petitions
 - Display political badges, buttons, posters or stickers in any county building in any area which can be reviewed by a member of the public
- No employee or elected official shall, at any time, use any county-owned or leased equipment for any personal political activity.
- No employee shall be removed, discharged, reduced in pay or position, or otherwise discriminated against because of the employee's political opinions or affiliations, except as provided for in this section.

Policy 402 - Effective May 31, 2015

POLICY 403 – SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Purpose: To address the fast-changing landscape of the internet and the way residents communicate and obtain information online, Buffalo County Departments may consider participating in social media formats to reach a broader audience. Buffalo County encourages the use of social media outlets to further the goals of the County and to meet the mission statement of the County.

Policy:

- It is the policy of the County that employees may not use social media technology while at work or off of work to engage in or post communications or material that would violate any Personnel Policy, including, but not limited to, using technology to post communications or materials that are derogatory or offensive with respect to race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, age, or any other legally protected class status.
- Do not create any "offensive" or disruptive messages or documents or use in a manner that adversely affects your job performance or is disruptive to the job performance of co-workers. A post is "offensive" if it could reasonably be construed to intentionally harm someone's reputation, contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of a protected classification, incite violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct, or disparage members of the public/customers, co-workers/associates or suppliers.
- Employees may not modify, delete, or destroy any county document created by any electronic media unless specifically authorized to do so.

General Guidelines for Social Media Use:

- *Only on Your Own Time.* Unless you have received advance permission from your supervisor or unless such activity is directly related to the performance of your job, you may not engage in social media activity on work time and in work areas (you may engage in social media activities during break times and pre/post work time.)
- *Post as Yourself.* Make clear that you are expressing your personal views alone, not those of the County.
- *Be Respectful and Nice.* Do not post communications or material that is disparaging of services, or employees; obscene, profane, vulgar, bullying, threatening, or maliciously false.
- *Use Good Judgment.* Because what you say online is accessible to the public, use good judgment in your communications.
- *Obey the Law.* Do not post any material that violates the law, such as material that is obscene, profane, defamatory, threatening, harassing, or that violates the privacy rights of someone else. The posting of such material may subject you to criminal and civil liability.
- *Don't Expect Privacy.* Because your social media communications are publicly available, you should not expect that your communications are private in any way. Once you post something online, it is completely out of your control and generally available to anyone in the world.
- *Ask for Guidance.* If you have any questions about what is appropriate to include in social media communications, ask your manager or a member of the Administration Office.
- *Comply with Harassment/Discrimination and Other Policies.* Employees may not use social media to engage in or post communications or material that would violate any other Personnel Policy, including, but not limited to, the Harassment and Discrimination Policy.
- *Keep Secrets.* You must not disclose "confidential information" which does not include discussions with third parties about your wages, hours and/or conditions of employment.
- These guidelines are not intended to prevent employees from discussing with others their wages or other terms and conditions of employment.

Reporting Deviations from Policy:

- All employees are encouraged to report any discovered or suspected unauthorized or improper usage of social media with impact on the workplace.
- The County prohibits taking negative action against any employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation.
- Any employee who retaliates against another employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy and/or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge from employment.

Policy Violations: Employees who violate this policy may be subject to discipline, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

Policy 403 - Effective June 26, 2023

POLICY 404 – VIRTUAL PRIVATE NETWORK (VPN) POLICY

Purpose: The Virtual Private Network (VPN) Policy is to provide guidelines for the appropriate use and management of VPN connections. The policy aims to ensure the security, integrity, and availability of Buffalo County information and systems while enabling authorized remote access.

Scope: This policy applies to all employees, contractors, and temporary staff who use, access, or interact with Buffalo County's VPN services.

Requesting VPN Access: Employees must complete a VPN Agreement form. The request is subject to approval by the employee's supervisor and the Buffalo County Administrative Coordinator. If approved, Buffalo County IT will install the access to the VPN on the device.

Access to the VPN services is granted on a case-by-case basis and is restricted to those that hold positions that require the need for this due to field work or telework.

VPN Use:

- Buffalo County's VPN services are provided for official County business purposes only.
- Users must not use VPN services for personal, non-work-related purposes or commercial gain.
- Only Buffalo County owned devices are allowed to connect via VPN.

Security:

- Users are responsible for maintaining the security and confidentiality of their assigned VPN user IDs and passwords. Sharing credentials with others is strictly prohibited.
- Users must immediately report any security incidents, breaches, or suspected vulnerabilities related to the VPN services to the Buffalo County IT Department and Buffalo County Administrative Coordinator.
- Users must ensure that their remote devices meet the County's minimum-security requirements including up-to-date antivirus software, security patches, and firewalls, before connecting to the VPN.

Data Protection and Privacy:

- Users must comply with Buffalo County's data protection policies and guidelines when accessing or transmitting sensitive or confidential information via the VPN services.
- Users should have no expectation of privacy regarding the use of Buffalo County's VPN services. The County reserves the right to monitor, access, and review VPN usage, with or without notice, to ensure compliance with this policy and applicable laws.

VPN Etiquette:

- Users may connect to VPN upon the start of their work shift and must disconnect from the VPN upon completion of their work shift.
- Users must disconnect from the VPN services when not in use to optimize available bandwidth and resources for other users.
- Users must not use the VPN services to engage in activities that may consume excessive bandwidth, such as streaming video or downloading large files, unless necessary for official County business purposes.

Policy Violations: Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or contract, as well as legal penalties, where applicable. The County reserves the right to revoke access to VPN services at any time, with or without notice.

Policy 404 - Effective June 26, 2023

POLICY 108 - TRAVEL, MEALS, AND LODGING

Purpose: To establish a uniform system for determining county responsibility for expenses incurred by employees while performing official county business.

Policy:

- Business activities, trips and travel are inclusive to Buffalo County employees.
- No family, friends or others will be allowed to accompany employees during county sponsored activities including travel to/from: trainings, meetings, seminars, conventions, etc.
- Special consideration may be granted upon approval from the Department Manager and the County Administrative Coordinator or Buffalo County Board Chair. Exceptions may be allowed for other government employees to encourage collaboration with other agencies or counties to reduce overall expenses to the County.
- Department Managers will determine departmental travel and training needs and authorize expenditure. Department Manager shall notify the County Administrative Coordinator if the employee's travel and training is beyond the adjoining states to Wisconsin.

Lodging:

- When overnight lodging is necessary to carry out the business of the County, the cost of such lodging will be paid by the County utilizing the maximum "State Rate" for Wisconsin or if traveling outside of the State of Wisconsin, the rate established by their state.
- Prior approval is required by the Department Manager.
- Lodging expenses will be eligible based on distance away from "home" or the County Courthouse. The destination should be a minimum distance of 50 miles (one way).
- Additional evening stay with approval by the Department Manager may be authorized if the commute time home is greater than three (3) hours and anticipated "home arrival" should be after 9:00 PM or scheduled end of conference is after 6:00 PM. Hospitality activities are not included.
- Sales tax exemption status should always be claimed.

Meal Reimbursement:

- Employees are expected to utilize meeting meals and hotel breakfasts as provided.
- The meal per diem reimbursement will equal the General Service Administration (GSA) rates and will be adjusted annually as needed with any rate changes being effective January 1st following any increase GSA makes. Current rates are available from Administration or the Employee Self-Service Portal.
- The maximum gratuity allowed will be based on 15% of the meal and is part of the maximum allowable reimbursement rate.
- Employees are eligible for reimbursement for "morning" or "evening" meals when traveling outside of Buffalo County and occurring outside two hours of their normal work shift, (i.e., for a normal day shift – leaving home before 6:00 AM or arriving home after 6:30 PM.)
- Lunch meals will be reimbursed when in route outside of the County as they would normally occur during a scheduled shift period leaving the courthouse before 10:00 AM and returning to the courthouse after 2:30 PM.
- Elapsed time between reimbursable meals should not be less than four (4) hours.
- Department Managers may grant exceptions on a case-by-case basis and expenses are within their department budget.

Mileage Reimbursement:

- The County shall reimburse an employee for necessary and reasonable travel for use of personal vehicle(s) for work purposes. Use of the county fleet vehicles is encouraged whenever possible.
- Mileage reimbursement will be paid at the current standard mileage rate as set by the IRS.
- When the workday begins or ends at a location other than Alma, only differential mileage will be paid.
- Proof of vehicle insurance is required to be on file in the County Administration Office to receive the current established mileage reimbursement rate.
- The alternative mileage reimbursement rate is \$0.26 per mile when proof of insurance is not on file.
- Vehicle mileage is not reimbursable for entertainment purposes.
- Mileage shall be detailed on a STATEMENT OF EXPENSES INCURRED FOR THE COUNTY OF BUFFALO form which is available from County Administration and be signed by the employee and approved by the Department Manager or designee. Alternatively, this can be logged onto an employee's timesheet in the time tracking system with the required information including starting and ending points, total miles, and business purpose of trip.

Receipts:

- Receipts are required for reimbursement and allocation of expenses as defined by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Valid receipts will normally include the following:
 Name of Store/Restaurant/Hotel, etc. (handwritten if not machine generated)
 Date of Purchase
 Description of Purchase
 Total Cost
 Purchasers signed name
- Failure to provide valid receipts may affect reimbursement amount or the use of account issued credit card.
- Allowable expenses shall be detailed on a STATEMENT OF EXPENSES INCURRED FOR THE COUNTY OF BUFFALO form which is available from County Administration and be signed by the employee and approved by the Department Manager or designee. Alternatively, this can be logged onto an employee's timesheet in the time tracking system with the required information.

County Issued Credit Cards:

- Some departments have authorized county issued credit cards. Department Managers with county issued credit cards will develop department policies to allow for proper allocation and approval of expenses.
- Department Managers needing an emergency expenditure requiring the use of a county issued credit card shall work with the County Administrative Coordinator or his/her designee.

Policy 108 - Effective May 31, 2015; Revised October 1, 2024

POLICY 109 - FLEET POLICY AND EQUIPMENT

Purpose: To provide guidelines and assign responsibilities for the safe operation and use of vehicles owned by the County.

Policy: The County has established a fleet of vehicles (automobiles, SUVs and pickups) to be available for business related use by the employees of the County. By making use of a county owned fleet vehicle, the individual's overall risk exposure (liability) will be greatly reduced and the cost of departmental

vehicle related mileage reimbursement expense should be diminished, thus leaving funds available for other departmental uses.

- Whenever a county owned fleet vehicle is available for business related purposes, employees are required to use the fleet vehicle in place of a personally owned vehicle unless prior approval is granted from department manager or designee.
- The scheduling and maintenance of the county owned fleet vehicles will be the complete responsibility of the County Administration Office or Department Manager or designee if a county vehicle is assigned to their department. Department Managers will develop policies for scheduling vehicle usage in their control.
- A fleet vehicle (for outside of Buffalo County use) can be reserved through the County Administration Office via e-mail using the County Admin Office e-mail address.
- Reservation priority will be given to business related trips for extended periods/distance traveled for meetings, training, conferences or the transport of multiple authorized passengers via e-mail using the County Admin Office e-mail address.
- All requests for reservation of a county owned fleet vehicle must contain: employee name, departure date and time, destination, and estimated return date and time.
- When multiple duplicated date and time requests are received, preference will be given to the trip(s) which will incur the most out of county mileage during a given period of time, and/or when multiple employees (or authorized passengers) will be attending the same meeting.
- Reservations are confirmed with the information being placed on an Outlook Express calendar (computerized) under Public Folders under County Car that can easily be accessed by all employees.
- The County Administration Office will not normally notify individuals of any changes made to vehicle reservations. However, it is best to periodically verify that a fleet vehicle has been reserved for you by confirming the information contained in the Outlook Express calendar in the Public Folders under County Car.
- Please schedule your vehicle usage as far in advance as possible. Reservation alterations (bumping) will not normally be allowed within three (3) working days of the scheduled departure date.
- Please be certain to make your vehicle reservations on a timely basis. Please note that fleet vehicles for use solely within Buffalo County are available on a first come, first serve basis and cannot normally be reserved. These in-county vehicles are not normally available for out of county usage.
- It is the responsibility of each employee to maintain all Buffalo County vehicles and equipment in a well-kept manner and to perform a safety check of the vehicle. At a minimum, the employee should do a visual check of lights, brake lights and signal checks, horn and tires prior to leaving.
- Prior to your departure, please obtain the fleet vehicle keys, fuel card and mileage log from the County Administration Office.
- Please fill the fleet vehicle with fuel, before returning keys, if the tank is less than one-half full.
- Upon your return, please assure the vehicle mileage log sheet is accurately completed; take the vehicle keys, fuel card and all documents (including any fuel receipts) to the County Administration Office.
- If returning a fleet vehicle after normal business hours, please deposit the mileage log sheet clipboard, keys, fuel card and all documents (including any fuel receipts) in the overnight box located in the entryway of the Sheriff's Department entrance.
- Please inform the County Administration Office personnel of any problem(s) you encounter with a fleet vehicle, to allow for corrective action to be taken/appropriate maintenance to be completed. Forms are provided on the clipboard to document issues related to the vehicle.

General Vehicle Usage Policy Guidelines:

- These are not meant to be all inclusive, but rather cover several of the more common questions.
- The fleet vehicles are not to be used for personal use without express permission of the County Administrative Coordinator, County Board Chair or Department Manager. Any personal mileages may be taxable under IRS regulations and must be noted on the mileage log.
- For overall safety purposes, there will be no food consumed in the fleet vehicles by the driver while the vehicle is in motion. No beverage may be consumed in the fleet vehicle if it causes the driver to be inattentive.
- In addition, whenever usage of a cell phone is required by the driver, the vehicle must be safely stopped and adequately parked, except Law Enforcement. Violations of this provision are subject to disciplinary action and legal prosecution.
- If you do not intend to make use of a fleet vehicle for a county business related trip, you must inform your Department Manager or designee, in writing or by department policy, in advance of your trip, of the specific reason you wish to be exempted from the use of a fleet vehicle.
- The appropriate Department Manager or designee will review the request and determine if the request for exemption is to be allowed, based on the merits of the request, and inform the employee of their decision.
- In the event an employee does not request an exemption, in advance, regarding the use of a fleet vehicle, or the request for exemption is denied by the Department Manager or designee, and the employee uses a personal vehicle for a business related trip (when a county fleet vehicle is available for use), individual mileage reimbursement will be limited to the rate per mile applied when the appropriate vehicle insurance coverage information is not on file – currently \$ 0.26 per mile.
- If the use of a personal vehicle is specifically authorized for a combination business and personal use trip, an employee will be reimbursed the prevailing mileage rate for the mileage incurred on one (1) way only (to the actual location of the business function).
- The fleet vehicles will be assigned in a consistent predetermined manner by the County Administration Office or department policy if the vehicle is under the control of the department.
- Requests for use of a specific fleet vehicle cannot normally be honored. However, exceptions may be granted as appropriate.
- Please address all questions to your Department Manager. Your Department Manager will then correspond with the County Administration Office.
- There will no doubt be situations or questions that arise which are not covered in this document.
- Each such unique situation or question will be addressed by the County Administration Office as they are encountered.
- At the conclusion of each use, all debris and equipment must be removed from the vehicle.
- The Buffalo County Employee Safety Handbook details the overall policy. This policy will be enforced by random checks performed by the County Administration Office or designee, your governing “Standing” Committee of the County Board of Supervisors or the County Board Chair.
- Do not drive under the influence of alcohol, prescription medicines that warn against operating a vehicle, sleepiness, or illegal drugs. Alcoholic beverages or any illegal drugs are not permitted in county vehicles at any time.

Fines Incurred by Employees:

- Any fines (monetary or otherwise) incurred by employees while performing official county business, due to the employee’s actions, are the sole responsibility of the employee, with the

exception of Wisconsin Statute 895 (State and political subdivisions thereof to pay judgments taken against officers).

- Where applicable, such actions may result in disciplinary action.

Policy 109 – Effective May 31, 2015; Revised January 23, 2017

POLICY 110 – CELL PHONES

Purpose: To provide efficiency through the use of technology, the County shall provide a county issued cell phone or a personal cell phone allowance to authorized individuals. The use of a cellular device allows the employee to remain available for work-related communication while away from their office land line and enable them to complete the essential functions of their job. This policy is not intended to reimburse an employee who is required to have a phone number on file to be contacted for weather related activities or emergency services as part of their job duties.

Policy: The respective Department Managers are responsible for identifying the needs of their departments and requesting needed equipment and services.

All requests for a cellular phone allowance require authorization by the Department Manager and shall meet the following justification guidelines:

- Employee has management responsibility which requires a cellular phone for operational tasks; or
- Task driven functions that require a cell phone including any of the following: an identifiable and articulable need, for a specific task or function, or the use of which shall enhance efficiency or effectiveness of county operations.

Allowances: Once a Department Manager has determined a specific need for an employee to possess a cell phone for the efficiency of county operations, and that employee either currently has a personal cell phone or agrees to obtain a cell phone at their own expense, that employee shall receive a monthly allowance for the proposed use of that phone for county business. The allowed stipend will be considered a non-taxable fringe benefit to the employee.

- \$25.00 per month per designated employee.
- The allowance is for monthly phone use only. Allowances shall be paid on the first payroll of the month for the preceding month. To be eligible for the monthly allowance, an employee must have worked the majority of the month.
- If the employee separates employment the 1st – 15th of the month, they are not eligible for the month's allowance. If the employee separates employment the 16th – end of the month, they are eligible for the month's allowance.
- Employees shall not be reimbursed for the cost of any lost, stolen, or damaged personal cell phones.

County Owned Cell Phone: County owned cell phones are for work purposes only. No personal use of a County owned cell phone is allowed except for “de minimus” use, defined as limited incidental calls of two (2) minutes or less per call not to exceed five (5) times a month.

- Employees in possession of County equipment such as cell phones are expected to protect the equipment from loss, damage or theft. Upon separation of employment or at any time upon request, the employee may be asked to produce the phone to return for inspection, upgrade or changes. Like all county equipment, it is the employee's responsibility to maintain and protect the equipment. In the event of damage or loss, this should be immediately reported to the employee's supervisor.

- Employees will not be allowed to purchase county owned cell phones upon separation unless approved by the County Administrative Coordinator.

Procurement: Department Managers are responsible for designating staff that is responsible to manage and administer cellular phone contracts with vendors, including purchasing and payment of charges. Department Managers shall complete a Cell Phone Agreement Form once an employee is either issued a county owned phone or is to receive a cell phone allowance that shall be returned to the Administration Office upon completion and approval.

Phone Usage: While at work, employees are to exercise the same discretion in using cell phones as they do the County phones. Excessive personal use during the workday, regardless of the phone used, can interfere with employee productivity and can be distracting to others. Employees shall limit personal use while on-duty or at work so that they do not interfere with the performance of their duties. Employees are asked to make any personal calls on non-work time when possible and to ensure that friends and family members are aware of the County's policy. Employees are not required to carry a cell phone unless they have been authorized and approved to receive an allowance or a county owned cell phone.

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

Employees whose job responsibilities include regular or occasional driving and who are issued a cellphone for business use are expected to refrain from using their phone while driving; use of a cellphone while driving is not required by the company. Safety must come before all other concerns. Regardless of the circumstances, including slow or stopped traffic, employees are required to use hands-free operations or pull off to the side of the road and safely stop the vehicle before placing or accepting a call. Employees are encouraged to refrain from discussion of complicated or emotional matters and to keep their eyes on the road while driving at all times. Special care should be taken in situations where there is traffic or inclement weather, or the employee is driving in an unfamiliar area. Reading or sending text messages while driving is strictly prohibited.

This policy applies to employees operating any vehicle whether county owned or personal while performing county business.

Employees who are charged with traffic violations resulting from the use of their phone while driving will be solely responsible for all liabilities that result from such actions.

Policy 110 - Effective April 16, 2019; Revised May 22, 2023

POLICY 112 - COUNTY CREDIT CARD USE

Purpose: To ensure that County transactions are carried out as effectively as possible through the use of credit cards as appropriate and in accordance with the Overview and Statement of Intent outlined below and to guard against any possible abuse of County issued credit cards.

County credit cards will be procured by the County Administration Office and will be issued in the name of Buffalo County (hereinafter referred to as "the County") and will be distributed to an authorized employee, Department Managers or County Representatives under the provisions of this policy.

Overview and Statement of Intent: County credit card for Department Managers and certain other authorized department employees and/or County Representatives to use for legitimate business purposes in accordance with the County's Purchasing Policy. Permissible uses for a County-issued credit card include expenses relating to justified County meetings (including meal expenses), travel, hotel accommodations and certain other non-emergency minor expenditures for which a Purchase Order is not able to be used. Expenses that normally require the issuance of a Purchase Order may be purchased using a County-issued credit card only in emergency circumstances or if a Purchase Order has been issued authorizing the purchase. Under no circumstances is the use of a County-issued credit card intended to enable the user to circumvent any provision(s) of any existing or future County Purchasing Policy and/or Travel Policy. Furthermore, use of a County-issued credit card does not alleviate the employee from his or her obligation to submit a Statement of Expense in accordance with the County policy.

Procedure:

- Issuance of Card to Department or Office: Credit cards will be issued per department as approved by the County Finance Committee. Prior to issuance of the card to a department, the Department Manager shall sign the County credit card Compliance Agreement stating they have read and will adhere to the policies and procedures outlined in this policy. This is available from the administration office. A signed original of agreement must be on file in the County Administration Office prior to the card's issuance.
- Issuance of Cards to County Administration Office. The County Administration Office may be issued up to four (4) County credit cards to be used by departments not issued a department card.
- The Department Manager or employee using the County credit card is responsible for payment or resolution of all charge transactions placed on the County credit card, with no exceptions.
- Employees or department managers are responsible for the safekeeping of the County credit card. In the event that the card has been lost or stolen, or if unauthorized transactions are detected, it is the employee's responsibility to immediately notify the County Administration Office.

Credit Limits: Credit limits, including any increases in credit limits, will be established as appropriate by the County Finance Committee.

Credit Card Expenditures in General: The department manager or employee agrees that:

- Under no circumstances is the use of the County-issued credit card intended to enable the employee to circumvent the existing county Purchasing Policy and established procedures regarding fixed assets, budgeting, purchasing and/or the use of Purchase Orders, or the employee's obligation to submit an itemized statement in accordance with the reimbursement policy.
- The card will only be used for those activities that are a direct consequence of the employee's function within the county and that under no circumstance will the card be used for personal reasons; furthermore, the employee agrees to be personally liable for any unauthorized transactions unless the card is lost, stolen or used fraudulently by a third party.
- Maximum credit limits established for the card by the County Finance Committee will not be exceeded.
- When using the card to make on-line internet purchases, the employee shall make every effort to ensure that sales tax is not assessed and the purchase is made from a secure website using secure on-line access, thereby limiting the risk of fraud or theft.
- No purchasing of any amount of alcohol is permitted.
- All credit card purchases that require shipment will be shipped to the employee's business address. In no instance shall any shipment resulting from a credit card purchase be shipped to the employee's home address.

- An exception may be granted for a program which requires the shipment to be sent directly to a client's home address approved by the Department Manager or designee with proper documentation.
- Credit card statements will be reviewed each month to ensure that the card is used for authorized purchases; adequate receipts and/or sufficient documentation to support purchases is provided by the employee; and card use is not in violation of County policies. The employee agrees to cooperate fully with such review and to immediately place into operation any recommendations resulting from such review.
- Any credits or rewards issued by the Credit Card Company shall remain the property of the County.
- If a rebate or other reward can be gained from a purchase, the applicable receipt, rebate form and any other needed information shall be provided to the County Administration Office to be processed. The County Administration Office will process and keep a record of all rebates or similar rewards obtained and to which respective department or office that the rebate should be used by. Receipts associated with the use of all rebates/ rewards shall be turned to the County Administration Office as well for record keeping purposes. Any unused or partially used rebate will also be held at the County Administration Office until immediately needed for a purchase.

Credit Card Expenditures in Conjunction with County Travel: When utilizing the County credit card for travel expenses associated with County business, the employee agrees that:

- A Reimbursement Request will be completed by the employee in accordance with county policy.
- Use of the credit card to purchase in-room movies during the hotel stay while on County business is not allowable. Statements submitted without the required documentation will forfeit future use of the County credit card and shall be considered misuse and grounds for disciplinary action in accordance with the Buffalo County Employee Handbook.
- Use of the credit card for meal reimbursement (including maximum gratuity) shall not exceed the maximum amount allowed under the Meal Reimbursement Policy of the Buffalo County Employee Handbook. Amounts over the meal limit are to be paid directly by the employee to the vendor at the time of service.

Credit Card Statements: A monthly credit card statement will be mailed from the bank to the County. The Department Manager or employee agrees:

- For all purchases, to obtain and retain sufficient supporting documentation (itemized receipts) to validate all expenditures made using the card. A credit card authorization receipt that does not include an itemized detail of purchase does not constitute supporting documentation.
- In the event sufficient documentation (including non-itemized, missing or lost receipts) is not provided, the employee's privileges may be suspended, and the expenditures may be required to be reimbursed.
- To review the credit card statement and report any inaccuracies to the County Administration Office.
- To verify that the goods and/or services listed on the credit statement were in fact received.
- For each credit card statement, to (1) Attach itemized receipts supporting each expenditure to the credit card statement; (2) for each purchase, note the departmental expense account code to be charged; (3) acknowledge approval of the expenditure; (4) verify that the expenditure has been made for official purposes by signing and dating the statement; and (5) if applicable, obtain approval of the expenditures by the Department Manager.
- To forward receipts and supporting documentation to the County Administration Office in at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the due date for payment in order that payments may be

submitted without incurring late fees. In the event more than three late fees are incurred within a six-month period, the employee's privileges will be suspended.

Return of County Credit Card: The Employee agrees to return the card in the event the Employee retires, resigns, or his or her employment with Buffalo County is otherwise terminated. Additionally, the Employee agrees to return the card in the event it is determined there is no longer a need to retain his or her card or if the card has been cancelled by the bank.

Credit Card Misuse: Any misuse of the County credit card will serve as grounds for disciplinary action, including and up to termination of employment. Additionally, whenever a breach in this policy occurs, the County Administrative Coordinator reserves the right to report the misuse to law enforcement for criminal investigation.

Gift Cards: Any gift cards that are donated to the County or purchased by the County, shall be tracked as to when purchased, the value and to whom they were issued and when they were issued. If the card was a gift/ donation then the following shall be documented: who received the card, date received, the value of the card, who was given the card and the date given.

Policy 112 - Effective March 11, 2019; Revised May 22, 2023

POLICY 501 - CODE OF ETHICS

Purpose: In order to ensure that county decisions be made in proper channels of the governmental structure; that public office not be used for improper gain, and that conflicts between private interests and public responsibilities be avoided, employees are expected to adhere to the following code of ethics.

Policy:

- Employees may not use their position for improper personal gain, or for the private gain of a member of the employee's immediate family/ close personal associate or for an organization with which the employee is associated if such gain is different from what is available to the general public.
- Employees have a duty to ensure that conflicts, or perceived conflicts, between their own private interests and public responsibilities, are avoided.

Disclosure of Personal Relationships: Employees are required to disclose personal relationships with applicants/employees/s/service contractors, and may not participate in discussions concerning purchasing services, hiring, promoting, retaining or salary/benefits of persons with whom the employee has a relationship that may pose a conflict of interest.

Gifts and Gratuities:

- Employees may not solicit or accept from any person directly, or indirectly, any gift, gratuity or anything of value that might reasonably be perceived as impairing his/her independence of action or judgment.
- For purposes of this policy, "anything of value" is defined as an object with a likely value in excess of \$25.00 and does not include coffee mugs, pens, paper supplies, calendars and other such items that are often provided at seminars and training sessions.
- When in doubt about the value of an item, the employee should discuss the matter with their supervisor or Department Manager.

- If an unsolicited item of value is received by an employee, the gift should be reported to his/her supervisor or Department Manager for proper disposition and documentation.

Resolution of Conflict of Interest:

- When a conflict of interest is identified by the County, the matter being reviewed may be reassigned to a different employee.
 - The County retains the right to take other or additional steps as may be deemed appropriate in order to resolve the matter.
 - Violations of the Code of Ethics policy will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and may result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge from employment.
- Nothing in this policy is intended to prohibit an employee from working with, or accepting employment with, a labor organization representing employees.

Nepotism:

- It is the policy of the County to prohibit supervisory personnel from hiring a person related to them to work under their direct supervision.
- For purposes of this policy, related persons shall mean spouse, mother, father, son, daughter, sister, brother, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, grandfather, grandmother, grandchild, mother-in-law, father-in-law, stepdaughter, stepson, stepfather, stepmother, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law or brother-in-law.
- Supervisors are expected to avoid and/or discuss with Department Manager and the County Administrative Coordinator any supervisor/employee relationships that may create, or be perceived to be, a conflict of interest.

Policy 501 - Effective May 31, 2015; Revised January 23, 2017

POLICY 503 - DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Purpose: The purpose of discipline is to correct job behavior and performance problems of employees.

- Disciplinary rules and regulations shall be applied in an equitable and consistent manner, commensurate with the employee infraction.
- Employees shall be informed of departmental standards of conduct and performance and shall have access to all disciplinary actions recorded in their personnel files.

Policy:

- Disciplinary action against employees may be taken for violations of standards of conduct, violations of policies and procedures, or for unsatisfactory work performance.
- Disciplinary action will typically be taken after an investigation and after giving the employee an opportunity to respond to any and all allegations.

Disciplinary Procedure:

- Whenever an employee commits an offense warranting disciplinary action, the Department Manager or designee, may take such action in accord with the following procedures, depending upon the seriousness of the offense committed, the surrounding circumstances and the employee's performance record:
 - For minor first offenses, the employee shall typically be given a verbal warning, advising that another offense may result in a written reprimand or suspension. If a verbal warning is issued and this does not correct the situation within a reasonable length of time, the

Department Manager or designee shall typically then utilize either the second or third procedure for further discipline.

- The employee may be given a written reprimand, informing them of the nature of the offense committed and advising them that failure to correct such defect will likely result in a suspension.
- For a subsequent related offense, after the employee has received a verbal or written warning, or in the event of an initial offense which justifies such action, the employee may be suspended from work without pay for a period of time to be determined upon the basis of the seriousness of the offense committed, the surrounding circumstances and the employee's performance record.
- The employee shall be informed that any additional infractions may result in discipline, up to and including discharge from employment.
- All demotion, suspension, and termination actions shall be discussed and approved by the County Administrative Coordinator. The County Administrative Coordinator will request input from the appropriate Home Committee Chair and the Human Resources Chair before such actions being taken.
- In cases involving serious or repetitive misconduct, as determined by the Department Manager and the County Administrative Coordinator, the procedures above, may be disregarded.
- If a Department Manager recommends to the County Administrative Coordinator that an employee be terminated, the County Administrative Coordinator will conduct a complete investigation of the situation. The employee may be allowed a meeting with the County Administrative Coordinator before a decision is reached.
- Employees suspended from work may not receive pay or accrue any employee benefits during the suspension.
- Employees who believe they have been disciplined too severely or without good reason may utilize the Buffalo County Grievance Policy and Procedure.
- The County Administrative Coordinator may initiate the discipline process, at his/her discretion, at any step of the process.

Level of Discipline:

- The level of discipline imposed will take into consideration the seriousness of the infraction as well as the employee's performance record.
- When appropriate, discipline should be corrective in nature.
- At the County's sole discretion, various types of employee discipline or corrective action may be imposed which include, but are not limited to, the following: verbal warning, written warning, suspension, or termination.
- Employee discipline for purposes of access to the grievance procedure is defined to include only termination, disciplinary suspensions and disciplinary demotions. None of these disciplinary measures are required to be used before termination from employment occurs nor are the listed disciplinary actions required to be used in any specific order.
- The County may repeat disciplinary action.
- Employees are expected to work in a competent and conscientious manner which reflects favorably upon the employee and the County.
- Each instance of employee performance and/or misconduct must be viewed based on its individual circumstances. Action by the County on an individual case does not establish a precedent in other circumstances. The County reserves the right to take any disciplinary action it deems appropriated under the circumstances of each individual case.

Grounds for Disciplinary Action:

- Grounds for disciplinary action include, but are not limited to the following:
 - Such actions will adversely affect ability to perform on behalf of the County, such as (but not limited to) fraud in securing employment, falsification of county records, theft or destruction of county equipment or property, negligence or dishonesty.
 - Being insubordinate, threatening, intimidating, disrespectful or assaulting a manager/supervisor, co-worker, customer or vendor.
 - Neglecting of duties, incompetence, inefficiency or discourteous treatment of the public.
 - Willful misconduct, or inclusive of, but not limited to, a willful refusal to obey lawful and reasonable directives, order, policies or work rules.
 - The possession or use of controlled substances or intoxicants while on duty, or while operating county owned or leased vehicles, or intoxication or incapacitation is strictly prohibited.
 - Fighting with or provoking a disturbance among fellow employees, general public or actions adversely and substantially affecting morale, production, or efficiency.
 - Immoral or otherwise improper conduct which adversely and substantially injures or brings the County into disrepute; conviction of a felony or misdemeanor which is substantially related to the job which the person was hired to perform, or unavailability for work due to incarceration or loss of driver's license, if required for the job.
 - Absences without leave, when the person in question was supposed to be on duty, or a leave of absence taken for other than the reason for which it was granted.
 - Repeated absence or tardiness or improper use of leave.
 - Harassment and discrimination against others because of political preference, race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, handicap, physical condition, developmental disability, arrest or conviction record, sexual orientation, marital status, military participation, or any other legally protected class status, and with proper regard to their rights as citizens.
 - Failure to comply with health or safety rules and regulations.
 - Violations of provisions of Personnel Policy or the Employee Handbook, state or federal law, administrative rules, or departmental rules promulgated pursuant to this section.
 - Dishonesty including failure to provide accurate and complete information when requested by an authorized person.
 - Negligence or willful damage to property.
 - Sexual or other unlawful harassment, discrimination or retaliation.
 - Workplace violence including using threatening or abusive language towards others.
 - Unlawful possession of weapons.
 - Unauthorized entry or use of facilities and property.
 - Failure to Maintain a professional or occupational license, certificate, permit, or driver's license if it is a requirement of the position.
- The offenses listed above are not intended to be all-inclusive, and discipline, including termination, may occur for any other reason depending upon the seriousness of the offense, the particular facts and circumstances surrounding the incident(s), and the employee's record of prior disciplinary actions.

Adverse Employment Action Due to Nonperformance

- Notice and documentation-If an employee's performance in one or more job duties becomes unacceptable, the Employee's Department Manager and/or supervisor are expected to place the employee on notice of the performance issue in a timely manner. Management shall document all performance deficiencies in an employee's personnel file. The documentations should include the date or dates the performance deficiency was observed, a detailed description of the performance

deficiency, future expectations and any action taken against the employee including, without limitation, any discipline or the implementation of a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP).

- **Disciplinary Action**-An employee's supervisor and/or Department Manager may impose discipline as necessary to address performance concerns. In addition to the disciplinary action levels noted above and depending upon the circumstances, the employee may be given an opportunity to improve performance by placing the employee on a PIP. Management is not obligated in any way to institute a PIP and may proceed with any disciplinary action, up to and including discharge, in the event that an employee is not meeting performance expectations.
- **Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)**-Any PIP should advise the employee of the performance standards of the position for which his or her performance is unsatisfactory and be given a reasonable opportunity to demonstrate improvement. The employee should also be advised of the consequences of failing to improve and the type of assistance to be provided by the supervisor during the PIP. If the employee fails to meet minimally acceptable standards by the end of the PIP, action should be taken to separate the employee from employment unless another less adverse employment action is deemed advisable at the discretion of the Department Manager and the Administrative Coordinator and/or designee.

Documentation:

- Persons administering discipline shall systematically document each incident in writing.
- The documentation shall include the employee's name, date, and type of infraction, names and statements of witnesses, description of action taken, and any other relevant details.
- Copies of all written disciplinary actions shall be maintained in departmental files, filed in the employee's personnel file in the County Administration Office, and shall be provided to the employee.

Department Manager: If a Department Manager commits an offense warranting disciplinary action, the County Administrative Coordinator in consultation with and approval from the oversight (Standing) Committee, shall follow the procedures outlined in the above policy.

Policy 503 - Effective May 31, 2015; Revised January 25, 2021

POLICY 504 - GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Purpose:

- This grievance policy and procedure is established pursuant to Wisconsin State Statute 66.0509 to address employee terminations, employee discipline and workplace safety as required by law. An employee shall use this grievance policy and procedure for resolving disputes regarding employee termination, employee discipline or workplace safety issues covered by this policy. This policy and procedure provides an employee with the individual opportunity to address concerns regarding discipline, termination or workplace safety matters, to have those matters reviewed by an Impartial Hearing Officer (IHO) and to appeal to the County Board of Supervisors where appropriate. The County expects employees and managers to exercise reasonable efforts to resolve any questions, problems or misunderstandings prior to utilizing the Grievance Procedure.
- The provisions of this policy may be modified or eliminated by the County at any time, with or without prior notice. If an employee is subject to a contractual grievance procedure, that contractual grievance procedure must be followed as applicable. This policy is not a guarantee of employment, a guarantee of any rights or benefits, a contract of employment, expressed or implied, and does not create tenure or a property interest in employment. Unless specifically required otherwise by statute or code, the County's employment relationship with employees

covered under this policy is at will and the employment relationship may be terminated at any time for any reason, with or without cause and with or without notice, at the option of the County or the employee.

Definitions:

- Administration- means the person or persons designated by the County to represent the interests of management in a Grievance matter. The Administration may be represented by counsel at any point in the procedure.
- Employee- for purposes of discipline or termination grievances, means a full-time or part-time employee of Buffalo County, as defined in applicable personnel policy and specifically excludes elected officials, individuals hired on a limited term, temporary, casual or seasonal basis, employees within their introductory employment timeframe, independent contractors, employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement containing a grievance procedure for discipline or termination and those employees, officials or officers that serve at the pleasure of an appointing authority as provided by State Statute.
- Employee- for purposes of a Grievance involving workplace safety means a full-time or part-time employee, and individuals hired on a limited term, casual or seasonal basis, as defined in applicable county personnel policy. The term “employee” excludes independent contractors.
- Discipline- means any of the following adverse employment actions: Suspension of employment for more than one (1) working day; disciplinary reduction in base pay; reduction in rank; or demotion. “Discipline” shall be narrowly construed and shall not include, without limitation by enumeration, the following: layoffs or workforce reduction activities; adverse employment actions resulting from misconduct or poor performance other than a suspension, disciplinary reduction in base pay, reduction in rank or demotion; plans of correction or performance improvement; performance evaluations or reviews; documentation of employee acts and/or omissions in an employment file; oral or written reprimands; administrative suspension pending investigation of misconduct or nonperformance; non-disciplinary wage, benefit or salary adjustments; or change in assignment location resulting from a bona fide personnel reorganization.
- Grievance- means a written complaint filed under this policy by an employee involving discipline taken against the employee, termination of the employee or an alleged workplace safety issue directly affecting the employee. All complaints must be filed on the form attached to this policy and procedure as Appendix D, Appendix E or Appendix F. An employee filing a Grievance may also be referred to as a “Grievant” in this policy.
- Termination- means a separation from employment initiated by the County for disciplinary or performance reasons. “Termination” does not include layoff, furlough or reduction in workforce, reduction in hours, job transfer, reassignment, loss or change or transfer or reduction of funding, or retirement.
- Working Day-as referenced in this policy, means a day when the County courthouse is open for business.
- Workplace Safety- means any standard established or adopted under Wisconsin Administrative Code Chapter COMM 32.

General Provisions:

- Impartial Hearing Officer (IHO): For purposes of this policy, the role of the “Impartial Hearing Officer” (IHO) will be to define the issues, identifying areas of agreement between the parties and identifying the issues in dispute, and to hear the parties’ respective arguments.
The Impartial Hearing Officer may require the parties to submit documents and witness lists in advance of the hearing in order to expedite the process. The Impartial Hearing Officer will have

the authority to administer oaths, issue subpoenas at the request of either party, and decide if a transcript is necessary. The Impartial Hearing Officer shall apply relaxed standards for the admission of evidence and may allow or request oral or written arguments and replies in order to render a decision on a timely basis. The Impartial Hearing Officer will make conclusions based on factual evidence only.

The Impartial Hearing Officer shall be selected by the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors Chairperson, or designee, based on the nature of the matter in dispute.

- **Costs:** Each party shall bear its own costs for witnesses and all other out-of-pocket expenses, including possible attorney fees, in investigating, preparing, presenting or defending a grievance. In the case of employee terminations and/or employee discipline, any fees charged by the Impartial Hearing Officer shall be divided and paid equally by the County and the Grievant. In the case of workplace safety, any fees charged by the Impartial Hearing Officer shall be paid by the County.
- **Scheduling:** Grievance meetings and hearings will be typically held during the Grievant's off-duty hours. Time spent in grievance meetings and/or hearings (outside of normal business hours) shall not be considered as compensable work time.
- **Representation:** The Grievant shall have the right to representation during the Grievance Procedure at the Grievant's expense. The representative shall not be a material witness to the dispute.

Grievance Procedure for Employee Terminations and Employee Discipline:

An earnest effort shall be made by both parties to settle the matter informally between the aggrieved employee and the employee's immediate supervisor. If the grievance is not resolved informally, the following procedure shall apply.

- *Initiation of a Grievance Related to Employee Termination or Employee Discipline.*
 - A Grievance relating to employee termination or employee discipline shall be initiated by presenting a written complaint on the form attached to this policy (identified as Appendix D) and submitted to the employee's applicable Department Manager with a copy to the Buffalo County Administrative Coordinator. The written grievance must contain all the detailed information concerning the subject of the grievance, the facts upon which the grievance is based and indicate the specific relief being sought.
 - A Grievance may only be filed by the employee who is the subject of the termination or discipline. The Grievant must sign and date the official Grievance form. A Grievance will not be considered filed until the Grievant signs the Grievance form, provides all of the required information and delivers the completed Grievance form to the appropriate Department Manager with a copy to the County Administrative Coordinator.
 - A properly completed Grievance form must be filed within fourteen (14) working days after the facts upon which the grievance is based first become known, or should have been known to the employee in order to be considered filed on a timely basis. If the completed form(s) are filed beyond the fourteen (14) working day period, the grievance will be deemed waived.
 - If a Grievance is untimely or incomplete, the appropriate Department Manager will issue a written notice to the Grievant indicating it is untimely or identifying the information needed to complete the Grievance. When additional information is required, the Grievant shall have five (5) working days from receipt of the written request to provide the Department Manager (and the County Administrative Coordinator) with the information requested. Upon receipt of the additional information provided by the Grievant, the Department Manager shall refer the response to the County Administrative Coordinator to

determine whether the response is sufficient. Failure of the Grievant to provide the requested additional material within five (5) working days of the Department Manager's request or a finding by the County Administrative Coordinator that the Grievant has failed to provide sufficient information to allow the Grievance to move forward shall constitute a waiver of the right to use this grievance procedure and an abandonment of the Grievance.

- By signing the Grievance, the Grievant is acknowledging and affirming that the statements contained in the Grievance are true and accurate to the best of the Grievant's knowledge.
- Throughout the grievance process, the Grievant may represent him or herself or the Grievant may be represented by counsel or another individual of the Grievant's choice.
- The appropriate Department Manager will respond in writing with a decision to the Grievant within fourteen (14) working days after receipt of a properly submitted written grievance. If a written response is not provided within fourteen (14) working days following the filing of the Grievance, the Grievance is considered denied.

- *Initial Decision Appeal Process*

If the Grievance is not settled during the initial steps of the process, and the employee wishes to appeal the initial decision, the Grievant shall submit the Grievance to the County Administrative Coordinator to request a meeting with the Human Resources Committee.

- If the employee does not submit a written request within fourteen (14) working days after receipt of the Department Manager's response to the Grievance, the Grievance shall be deemed to be waived.
- Upon receipt of a timely request, the Human Resources Committee will schedule a meeting to review the Grievance normally within twenty (20) working days of receipt of the written request for a meeting.
- Within ten (10) working days of the Human Resources Committee meeting date, the Human Resources Committee shall render a written decision indicating one (1) of four (4) decisions: 1) Sustaining the initial employee discipline or termination. 2) Modifying the initial employee discipline or termination. 3) Denying the initial employee discipline or termination. 4) Recommending additional investigation prior to making a final determination.
- In those cases where the Human Resources Committee recommends additional investigation, a second follow-up meeting shall be scheduled upon conclusion of the additional investigation.

- *Hearing Before an Impartial Hearing Officer*

If the Grievance is not resolved during discussions with the Human Resources Committee, and the employee wishes to appeal the decision, the employee shall submit the written grievance to the County Administrative Coordinator to request a hearing before an Impartial Hearing Officer.

- If the employee does not submit a written Grievance to the County Administrative Coordinator requesting a hearing before an Impartial Hearing Officer (IHO) within fourteen (14) working days after receipt of the Human Resources Committee's decision, the Grievance will be deemed waived.
- When the County Administrative Coordinator receives a properly filed Grievance, the County Administrative Coordinator will assign the Grievance a case number, contact the County Board Chairperson to select an Impartial Hearing Officer (IHO) and schedule the hearing date. The hearing will normally be scheduled within thirty (30) working days of receipt of the request for a hearing.
- The Impartial Hearing Officer may require the Grievant and Administration to provide a list of witnesses and exhibits that each intends to produce at the hearing no later than ten (10) working days before the scheduled hearing date. The Impartial Hearing Officer may preclude the Grievant or Administration from introducing exhibits or taking testimony

from witnesses who were not disclosed on the list provided the opposing party. Neither party may engage in discovery, submit arguments or otherwise engage in motion practice prior to the hearing.

- Prior to the beginning of the hearing, the Impartial Hearing Officer may attempt to mediate the dispute at the request of both parties.
- The Grievant may call witnesses and present testimony and exhibits that are relevant to the events at issue in the Grievance subject to the requirements related to exchange of witnesses and exhibits. The Grievant and Administration may cross-examine any witnesses presented by the opposing side subject to relevancy. The Impartial Hearing Officer may refuse to allow testimony or receive exhibits that the Impartial Hearing Officer deems irrelevant or repetitious.
- During the hearing, the Impartial Hearing Officer may ask questions and gather information the Impartial Hearing Officer deems necessary or helpful. The Impartial Hearing Officer may allow for opening or closing statements at his/her discretion, such statements not to exceed ten (10) minutes in length. The Impartial Hearing Officer shall maintain order and decorum at all times during the hearing, including refusing to take additional evidence until a disruption has ceased or terminating the hearing if the disruption does not cease after a warning is given.
- After the Grievant and the Administration have finished introducing evidence, the Impartial Hearing Officer shall close the record. The parties shall have no right to file briefs or position statements, unless permitted or requested to do so by the Impartial Hearing Officer. The Impartial Hearing Officer shall make a decision based solely on the evidence and arguments presented at the hearing.
- Except in a Grievance involving termination of an employee that is subject to Wisconsin Administrative Code Chapter DHS 5, the Grievant bears the burden of proof to persuade the Impartial Hearing Officer by clear, convincing and satisfactory evidence that the Administration abused its discretion in disciplining or terminating the Grievant. If the Grievant does not meet his or her burden of proof, the Impartial Hearing Officer shall deny the grievance. For a Grievance involving termination of an employee that is subject to Wisconsin Administrative Code Chapter DHS 5, the Administration bears the burden of proof to persuade the Impartial Hearing Officer by clear, convincing and satisfactory evidence that good cause exists to terminate the Grievant as provided in Wisconsin Administrative Code Chapter DHS 5.06(2)(b).
- Following the conclusion of the hearing, the Impartial Hearing Officer shall render a written decision indicating the reasons for one of the four (4) decisions: 1) Sustaining the employee discipline or termination, 2) Modifying the employee discipline or termination, 3) Denying the employee discipline or termination, or 4) Recommending additional investigation prior to making a final determination. In those cases where the Impartial Hearing Officer recommends additional investigation be completed, a second, follow-up hearing will be scheduled.
- If the Impartial Hearing Officer modifies or denies the employee discipline or termination, one of the following remedies may be awarded if reasonable under the totality of the circumstances:
 - If the Grievance involves employee termination, the Impartial Hearing Officer may award any of the following or combination of the following reinstatement; a lesser adverse employment action than termination such as suspension of employment, reduction in base pay, reduction in rank, demotion, or written reprimand; plans of correction or performance improvement; documentation of employee acts in an employment file; or that no adverse employment action be taken by the County. If

reinstatement is awarded, the Impartial Hearing Officer may or may not award back pay reduced by any unpaid suspension imposed by the Impartial Hearing Officer, less any interim earnings. The Impartial Hearing Officer shall not award any back pay greater than the equivalent of fifty (50) working days, less any interim earnings.

- If the Grievance involves employee discipline other than termination, the Impartial Hearing Officer may award any of the following or combination of the following: lesser adverse employment action than the discipline imposed by the County such as reduced period of suspension, reduction in base pay, reduction in rank, demotion, or a written reprimand; plans of correction or performance improvement; documentation of employee acts in employment file; or that no adverse employment action be taken by the County. If the Impartial Hearing Officer reduces an unpaid suspension, the Impartial Hearing Officer may award back pay to the Grievant for any period of unpaid suspension served by the Grievant that was reduced, less any interim earnings.
- The Impartial Hearing Officer shall deliver a written decision to the Grievant and the Administration no later than fifteen (15) working days from the date of the hearing. The written decision shall contain the case number and caption describing the parties, appearances made by the parties at the hearing, findings and conclusions, the final decision and reasoning; and if the County's decision is overturned, the remedy for the Grievant. If no written decision is received by the Grievant within fifteen (15) working days following completion of the hearing, the Grievance shall be considered to be sustained.
- The County or the employee may appeal the discipline or termination decision of the Impartial Hearing Officer to the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors. Such appeal shall proceed under Section VI.

Procedure for Grievances Concerning Employee Workplace Safety:

Buffalo County takes workplace safety very seriously and encourages each employee to immediately notify their immediate supervisor of any situation which poses a potential safety hazard.

- Any employee who personally identifies, or is given information about, a workplace safety issue or incident must notify his or her immediate supervisor of the issue or incident as soon as reasonably practical.
 - All safety issues, no matter how seemingly insignificant, must be reported on the Unsafe Condition or Hazard Report form (attached as Appendix E to this policy and procedure). In order for any workplace safety incident or issue to be addressed as part of this grievance policy and procedure, it must be properly reported by an employee within twenty-four (24) hours after the incident occurred or issue was raised.
 - The immediate supervisor shall document the workplace safety incident or issue, outlining the events that transpired with a proposed resolution, if any. The completed documentation shall be signed by all concerned parties and submitted to the appropriate Department Manager for review and consideration within seven (7) working days of the incident or issue. If the employee is satisfied with the proposed resolution, as presented by the immediate supervisor, and the Department Manager concurs with the proposed resolution offered by the immediate supervisor, the matter shall be closed once any necessary corrective action has been taken. If the employee is not satisfied with the proposed resolution, or the Department Manager does not concur with the proposed resolution, the following step shall be available to the employee.
 - Upon receipt of the completed documentation, the appropriate Department Manager will conduct a review of the documentation and the proposed resolution, if any. If the

employee is not satisfied with the response and or actions of the immediate supervisor, the Department Manager will schedule a meeting with the employee and the supervisor within seven (7) working days of receipt of the documentation detailing the incident or issue and the proposed resolution, if any. Upon completion of the meeting and within seven (7) working days of the meeting date, the Department Manager will issue a brief report of the incident, the content of the meeting, and a proposed resolution, if any. If the affected employee is satisfied with the proposed resolution, if any, as offered by the Department Manager, and the County Administrative Coordinator concurs with the proposed resolution, the matter shall be closed once any necessary corrective action has been taken. If the County Administrative Coordinator does not concur with the proposed resolution, or the employee is not satisfied with the proposed resolution, the following step shall be available to the employee.

- Upon receipt of the documentation completed to this point, the County Administrative Coordinator will conduct a review of the documentation and proposed resolution, if any. Within seven (7) days of receipt of the forwarded documentation, the County Administrative Coordinator will schedule a meeting with the employee, the immediate supervisor and the Department Manager to review the circumstances surrounding the workplace safety incident or issue. Following the discussions at this meeting, an investigation of the circumstances and a review of all the documentation, within seven (7) working days of the meeting date, the County Administrative Coordinator will issue a brief written report of the workplace safety incident or issue and offer a proposed resolution, if any.
- If the proposed resolution to the workplace safety incident or issue continues unresolved, the employee may appeal to the County Safety Committee.
 - The employee is responsible for filing a written appeal and requesting all the completed written documentation be forwarded to the County Safety Committee. The written appeal must be filed within five (5) working days of receipt of the report and proposed resolution, if any, from the County Administrative Coordinator. The County Administrative Coordinator shall then schedule a meeting of the County Safety Committee, normally to be held within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal.
 - Following receipt of the appeal and all written documentation, the County Safety Committee will conduct an additional investigation, as necessary, including meeting with the involved parties, and issue a final report on its findings and conclusions within fourteen (14) working days of receipt of the written appeal request. Copies of the written report will be given to the employee who signed the written appeal request, as well as the County Administrative Coordinator. If the Safety Committee determines that a safety concern does exist, the County Administrative Coordinator shall take corrective action on a timely basis.
- If the County Safety Committee does not find a safety issue or concern, or the employee does not concur with the findings and/or proposed resolution to the safety incident or issue raised, the employee may appeal the findings and conclusions of the Health and Safety Committee to an Impartial Hearing Officer.
 - Such appeal must be fully documented on the Buffalo County Workplace Safety Grievance Form (shown as Appendix F in this policy and procedure). The written grievance appeal must be filed with the County Administrative Coordinator within seven (7) working days after receipt of the written report from the Health and Safety Committee. By signing the Workplace Safety grievance Form, the employee is acknowledging and affirming that the statements contained in the Workplace Safety Grievance are true and accurate to the best

of the Grievant's knowledge. A Grievant shall not be allowed to amend a Workplace Safety Grievance once it is completed and filed.

- If the written grievance is not filed with the County Administrative Coordinator within the allotted seven (7) working day period, the safety grievance can no longer be pursued within the guidelines of this grievance policy and procedure.

- *Hearing Before an Impartial Hearing Officer*

If the grievance is not resolved during the Safety Committee review process, and the employee wishes to appeal the decision, the employee shall submit the written grievance to the County Administrative Coordinator to request a hearing before an Impartial Hearing Officer.

- If the employee does not submit a written Grievance to the County Administrative Coordinator requesting a hearing before an Impartial hearing Officer within seven (7) working days after receipt of the Safety committee's decision, the Grievance will be deemed waived.
- When the County Administrative Coordinator receives a properly filed Grievance, the County Administrative Coordinator will assign the Grievance a case number, contact the County Board of Supervisors Chairperson to select an Impartial Hearing Officer and schedule the hearing date. The hearing will normally be scheduled within twenty (20) working days of receipt of the request for hearing.
- The Impartial Hearing Officer may require the Grievant and Administration to provide a list of witnesses and exhibits that each intends to produce at the hearing no later than ten (10) working days before the scheduled hearing date.
- Prior to the beginning of the hearing, the Impartial Hearing Officer may attempt to mediate the dispute at the request of both parties.
- During the hearing, the Impartial Hearing Officer may ask questions and gather information the Impartial Hearing Officer deems necessary or helpful. After the Grievant and Administration have finished introducing evidence, the Impartial Hearing Officer shall close the record. The parties shall have no right to file briefs or position statements, unless permitted or requested to do so by the Impartial Hearing Officer. The Impartial Hearing Officer shall make a decision based solely on the evidence and arguments presented at the hearing.
- The County bears the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that the condition identified by the Grievant does not constitute a Workplace Safety violation and that no corrective action is required. If the County does not meet its burden of proof, the Grievance shall be sustained.

- *Impartial Hearing Officer Decision*

Following the conclusion of the hearing, the Impartial Hearing Officer shall render a decision indicating the reasons for the decision.

- If the Workplace Safety grievance is sustained, the Impartial Hearing Officer may issue an order which includes a statement as to the particular provisions of Wisconsin Administrative Code Chapter Comm 32 that are implicated by the Workplace Safety Grievance and order the County take corrective action in accordance with law to address the Workplace Safety violation. The Impartial Hearing Officer shall have no authority to require the County to take any specific corrective action or provide any specific remedy in response to the Workplace Safety violation.
- If the Workplace Safety Grievance is denied, the Impartial Hearing Officer shall issue a written report that identified the basis for denying the Grievance.
- The Impartial Hearing Officer may determine that additional investigation is required before a decision can be reached.

The Impartial Hearing Officer shall prepare a written report detailing the findings and conclusions as a result of the hearing within fifteen (15) working days of the close of the hearing. The report shall be issued to the Grievant with a copy to the County Administrative Coordinator.

- **Appeal of Impartial Hearing Officer's Decision**

The County or the employee may appeal the decision of the Impartial Hearing Officer to the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors. Such appeal shall proceed under Section VI.

Appeal to the County Board of Supervisors:

The employee (Grievant) or the County may appeal the decision of the Impartial Hearing Officer to the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors. The decision of the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors shall be final and binding upon the parties.

- *Requesting an Appeal to the County Board of Supervisors*

- Either party may appeal the Impartial Hearing Officer's decision to the County Board of Supervisors by filing a request for appeal with the County Board of Supervisor's Chairperson within fourteen (14) working days of receipt of the written decision by the Impartial Hearing Officer. The request must be filed on the form attached hereto as Appendix F and must set forth in detail the reasons for appeal. Failure to file a written appeal by the filing deadline will result in the waiver of the right to an appeal and the outcome of the proceedings before the Impartial Hearing officer shall be final. Upon filing of the request for an appeal, the non-appealing party shall have fourteen (14) working days to submit a reply to the detailed request. Once the request and reply have been received by the Administration, the review will be scheduled by the County Board of Supervisor's Chairperson.
- In the case of an employee termination or employee discipline grievance, the County Board of Supervisors members will receive a copy of the grievance as originally filed with the appropriate Department Manager, a copy of the response from the Department Manager, if any; a copy of the written decision from the Impartial Hearing Officer, if any; and a copy of the Grievance Appeal Form as filed by the Grievant.
- In the case of an employee workplace safety grievance, the County Board of Supervisors members will receive a copy of the Unsafe Condition or Hazard Report form as originally filed; any documentation assembled by the immediate supervisor or Department Manager or County Administrative Coordinator, along with their appropriate responses, if any; a copy of the written report from the Safety Committee, if any; a copy of the grievance as originally filed with the County Administrative Coordinator, a copy of the written decision from the Impartial Hearing Officer, if any; and a copy of the Grievance Appeal Form as filed by the Grievant.

- *County Board of Supervisors Appeal Process*

- When the Administration receives a properly filed request for appeal, the County Administrative Coordinator will forward the appeal to the County Board of Supervisor's Chairperson. The Chairperson will schedule a meeting of the County Board of Supervisors to review the hearing record and the Impartial Hearing Officer's decision. The County Board members will review the written decision of the Impartial Hearing Officer, the reasons for the appeal and the reply. The County Board will not overturn or otherwise modify the Impartial Hearing Officer's decision unless the decision of the Impartial Hearing Officer is found to be arbitrary or capricious, oppressive or unreasonable.
- The County Board of Supervisors will not take testimony, not accept additional evidence, not accept briefings, not accept oral arguments or otherwise conduct a hearing of any sort in relation to an appeal.

- *Decision of the County Board of Supervisors*

The County Board of Supervisors shall provide a written decision to the Grievant and the Administration normally within twenty (20) working days from the date of the County Board of Supervisors meeting. The written decision will contain the following: the case number and caption describing the parties; the final decision and conclusions; and if the County's decision is overturned, the remedy for the Grievant. If the Grievance is sustained, the County may award the Grievant one of the following remedies if reasonable under the totality of the circumstances:

- If the Grievance involves employee termination, the County Board of Supervisors may award remedies consistent with Section IV (3) (j) (1). If reinstatement is awarded, the County Board of Supervisors may award back pay to the employee reduced by any unpaid suspension imposed by the County Board of Supervisors, less any interim earnings. The County Board of Supervisors may not award back pay greater than the equivalent number of working days elapsed from the date of termination to the date of the County Board meeting, less any interim earnings.
- If the Grievance involves employee discipline other than termination, the County Board of Supervisors may award remedies consistent with Section IV (3) (j) (2). If the County Board of Supervisors reduces an unpaid suspension, the County Board of Supervisors may award back pay to the employee for any period of unpaid suspension served by the employee that was reduced, less any interim earnings.
- If the Grievance involves Workplace Safety, the County Board of Supervisors may order that corrective action be taken according to the law.

- *Finality of County Board of Supervisor's Decision*

The decision of the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors shall be final and may not be reconsidered.

Policy 504 - Effective May 31, 2015

POLICY 505 - JOB TRANSFERS & PROMOTIONS

Purpose: To establish a procedure for employee transfers and promotions.

Policy:

- The County Administrative Coordinator and Department Manager, in consultation with the Buffalo County Human Resources Committee, reserves the right to transfer or promote an employee with a corresponding adjustment in the employee's compensation.
- When an employee is transferred or promoted, any accumulated personal time (vacation/sick leave/PTO) benefits are carried forward.

Promotion:

- Promotion is the movement of an employee from one position to another having a higher salary range or position responsibilities.
- Salary shall be adjusted from the first date of promotion to a rate in the higher salary range that grants the employee an increase in total salary for the year from the date of promotion above the total annual salary for the same period had the employee not received the promotion.

Transfer:

- Transfer is the movement of an employee from one position to another in the same or different department having the same salary range or position responsibilities.
- When an employee transfers, there shall be no change in the salary range.

- When an employee transfers, any accumulated overtime or compensatory time shall be transferred with the employee.
- Transfer from Part-Time to Full-Time Status:
 - Current employees working on either a regularly scheduled or casual part-time basis may, from time to time, become full-time employees of Buffalo County
 - Whenever this occurs, this procedure will be followed for the determination and calculation of an adjusted employment date for purposes of determining a beginning rate of pay.
 - All part-time hours previously worked for Buffalo County by the employee will be converted to an equivalent number of “full time” workdays. The computed number of equivalent converted (“full-time”) workdays will be subtracted from the actual start date of full-time employment in order to arrive at an adjusted (calculated) date of employment. This calculated date of employment is then used to determine a beginning rate of pay based on existing wage, as applicable.
 - The employee will be given normal full credit for the pro-rated benefits accumulated during the period of part-time employment (in accordance with current policy) and while these pro-rated benefits will cease to accrue at the time of full-time employment, they will be available to the employee for future use. However, the actual start date of full-time employment will be the date used for the determination and calculation of all benefit accruals, all of which will commence at the beginning point of that particular employee group(s) schedule.

Temporary Assignments:

- An employee who is temporarily assigned to a position in a higher salary range than the employee’s current rate shall be compensated at one-half the difference between the assigned position and the employee’s current rate of pay.
- Any temporary assignment shall not exceed six (6) months.

Emergency Appointments:

- The County Board Chair may authorize the appointment of current county employees to fill positions under emergency conditions for a period of time not to exceed thirty (30) days.
- Any salary adjustment shall be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Policy 505 - Effective May 31, 2015

POLICY 506 - JOB VACANCIES & POSTING

Purpose: To provide a recruitment and selection process for all regular and temporary positions. The County observes all equal employment opportunity laws and regulations and the Buffalo County Affirmative Action Plan in all its recruitment and selection efforts. The selection process will include an evaluation of the applicant’s relative abilities, skills, knowledge, and experience.

Policy:

- It shall be the policy of Buffalo County to recruit, select and hire the most qualified persons for positions within the County as spelled out in the position description. Recruitment and selection shall be conducted in an affirmative manner to ensure open competition and provide equal employment opportunities.

- All applications shall be on forms adopted by the Buffalo County Human Resources Committee which comply with State and federal laws. The application form shall contain a statement to be signed by the applicant that all information provided is truthful and accurate.
- Department Managers will follow procedures to obtain approval to fill open positions available within the County.
- Recruitment shall be tailored to the position to be filled and directed to sources most likely to yield qualified applicants.

Administration: The County Administrative Coordinator shall be responsible for the administration of all positions authorized by the County Board of Supervisors, ensuring that employees receive an appropriate level of pay and benefits after reviewing the position and relevant budgetary and administrative guidelines.

Position Establishment:

- Authorization for all new, unbudgeted full-time or part-time positions, are subject to the recommendation of the Standing Committee, Buffalo County Human Resources Committee, Buffalo County Finance Committee and approval by the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors by resolution. If the County enacts a hiring freeze on any new positions, no department shall submit any new position requests for review for the period of time covered under the hiring freeze.
- Authorization for all unbudgeted limited-term, temporary, part-time or seasonal positions, shall be approved by the Standing Committee and forwarded to the Buffalo County Human Resources Committee and the Buffalo County Finance Committee for review by resolution subject to the departmental budgetary constraints.
- The County Administrative Coordinator has the authority to approve an emergency appointment to a limited-term temporary position not to exceed thirty (30) days for the purposes to cover workload due extenuating circumstances. Any extension shall be approved by the County Board Chair or designee.
- Authorization to fill any vacancy in a budgeted position shall be subject to approval by the Standing Committee subject to departmental budgetary constraints.

Position Descriptions:

- Position descriptions are necessary to establish a distribution of duties and responsibilities that employees are expected to perform, to classify positions correctly, to fix the appropriate pay for such positions, and to develop employee selection procedures.
- Position descriptions generally contain the following information: position title; reporting relationships; FLSA exemption status; purpose of the position; essential duties and responsibilities; minimum training, experience, and qualifications; physical demands; and work environment.
- Current position descriptions are the responsibility of the Department Manager in coordination with the County Administrative Coordinator and/or Human Resource Manager.
- Position descriptions are to be kept current and up to date through periodic reviews by the Department Managers and employees.
- All job description creations and changes need to be approved by the appropriate Standing Committee and the Buffalo County Human Resources Committee.
- The County Administration Office is responsible for ensuring the consistency and accuracy of the information and keeping formal copies and background information on file for all jobs.
- A copy of the approved formal job description is available for each employee through the Department Manager or designee or the County Administration Office.

- A signed copy of each position description shall be maintained in the individual's personnel file with written acknowledgment of employee's receipt and review of the position description.

Position Description Process:

- New Position:
 - If a Department Manager wants to create and fill a new job, a position description will be developed by the Department Manager with the assistance of the Human Resource Manager.
 - Any new position description shall be submitted to the appropriate Standing Committee for review prior to submission to the Buffalo County Human Resources Committee for approval.
 - The Department Manager will be provided a final approved job description by the Human Resource Committee from the County Administration Office.
 - The Human Resource Committee will assign the new position a wage range upon the recommendation of the County Administrative Coordinator.
- Revised Position Descriptions:
 - As a job changes, a revised job description may be needed. Department Managers should review job descriptions with their employees on an annual basis in conjunction with the performance evaluation process.
 - If changes are needed, the Department Manager and employee should note the changes on the current job description and forward it to the County Administration Office.
 - The County Administration Office will make the changes and prepare a draft for the appropriate Standing Committee to review and approve.
 - Once approved by the Standing Committee, the job description will go to the Buffalo County Human Resources Committee for review and approval. The Buffalo County Human Resources Committee has the authority to adjust and review portions of any county position descriptions.
 - The County Administration Office will make any changes and prepare and distribute an official revised description to the Department Manager after approval by the Buffalo County Human Resources Committee.

Vacant Positions:

- If a job becomes vacant, the Department Manager should review the current job description to determine if there should be any changes prior to an individual being hired to fill the position.
- Revisions should be made before any action is taken to fill the position.
- If the vacant position is one covered by union contract, it shall be posted pursuant to the union contract. Union employees may apply according to their respective contracts.

Position Announcement:

- All position announcements shall include the following information:
 - Position title and department of employment.
 - Salary range may be included at the option of the Standing Committee.
 - Minimum requirements.
 - Closing date for filing applications.
 - Listing the County Administration Office, or designee, as the designated place to receive and file application forms and to receive further information regarding the position.
 - A statement that the County is an affirmative action equal opportunity employer, and other pertinent information.

- Position openings shall be publicly announced at least five (5) working days prior to the closing date for filing applications, except in cases of immediate need or unusual circumstances as determined by the County Administrative Coordinator.
- The County Administrative Coordinator shall direct recruitment efforts to outside sources with assistance from the Department Manager or designee. This may include, but is not limited to:
 - Review of former employees on lay-off status receiving unemployment compensation, or employees eligible for reinstatement
 - Listing with nearby job information and placement centers, including State Job Services
 - Advertising on the internet
 - Advertising on the County web site
 - Advertising in the official county newspaper and in other area publications
 - Advertising in nationwide newspapers or professional journals when
 - Area coverage cannot provide a reasonable number of qualified applicants; or
 - Recruiting for any key managers or professional positions.
 - All position opening notices must be approved by the County Administrative Coordinator or designee prior to being published

Selection Process:

- The County Administrative Coordinator or designee will screen employment applications and may consider an application unacceptable if it does not meet the minimum requirements of the position.
- The Department Manager and/or Standing Committee or designee will screen employment applications to be selected for an interview. If the position being filled is a Department Manager position, the County Board Chair, Standing Committee Chair and/or designees and the County Administrative Coordinator will be responsible for screening applications.
- Selection of eligible applicants shall be based upon an evaluation and ranking of each applicant meeting screening criteria including review of education, training, and experience listed on the application, or resume, indicating suitability to the position.
- Determination of the most qualified applicant shall be based on the evaluation of the following job-related selection criteria, but is not limited to:
 - Characteristics clearly needed for successful performance.
 - Investigation of criminal conviction records when job related.
 - Pre-employment inquiries from former employers.
- The Selection Committee shall select an applicant for the position or place the selection process “on hold” pending further information and direction from the appropriate Standing Committee.

Interview Process:

- The County Administrative Coordinator or designee, Department Manager and related committee chairperson, which may also include the County Board Chair, shall comprise, at a minimum, the interviewing panel to interview qualified applicants for positions. If the position being filled is a Department Manager position, representatives of the Standing Committee as selected by the Standing Committee and County Administrative Coordinator shall jointly interview applicants selected for the interviews.
- The panel should include at least one (1) member of the responsible Standing Committee, or designee.
- The Standing Committee shall designate the member(s) to serve on the interview panel at the time that action is taken to approve the position.
- The administration of the application and interview process will be in accordance with applicable law, including public records statutes.

- The County Administrative Coordinator, or designee, shall give each interviewed applicant not selected written or oral notice of such non-selection.
- The Department Manager or the County Administrative Coordinator (when filling a Department Manager position) shall prepare a list of questions which shall be asked of each applicant. These questions will include, but not be limited to, education, training and experience.
- Each interviewer shall evaluate each candidate based upon responses to the questions.
- Following the interview, the completed evaluations and application forms shall be given to the County Administration Office. These documents shall become the property of the County and destroyed after one (1) year.

Recruitment Reimbursement: Unless otherwise approved by the County Administrative Coordinator, County Board Chairperson, and the County Buffalo County Finance Committee, applicants selected for personal interviews shall bear the responsibility for all travel and lodging expenses related to the interview.

Confidentiality:

- The County Administrative Coordinator and all other persons participating in the selection process shall exercise every precaution to ensure the highest level of integrity and security.
- Only the County Administration Office, or designee, shall handle confidential recruitment, selection and interview materials and records.
- Applications and resumes will be released in accordance with public records law.

Eligibility Lists: The County follows the principle of open competition, Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity in recruiting and selecting for each vacancy and does not establish eligibility lists.

Introductory Period:

- A person employed in a non-temporary position shall, immediately following the date of employment serve an introductory period of twelve (12) months. Department heads and supervisors should monitor and review the performance of the employee during this time.
- Employees disciplined or terminated during the introductory period have no rights to the grievance procedure.

Policy 506 - Effective May 31, 2015; Revised November 1, 2024

POLICY 507 - LAYOFF & RECALL

Purpose: To provide a procedure for reducing the workforce and recalling employees due to layoffs.

Policy: The County retains the right to lay off employees, in whole or in part, and to retain those employees who are most qualified to perform the available work, regardless of their previous length of employment.

Procedure: The needs of the County shall be the prime consideration used in the County's determination of which employees shall be laid off. The rehiring of employees that have been laid off shall be determined by the County based on its need for the most qualified person to perform the available work.

Layoffs:

- The County may lay off employees on a temporary basis in the event of a lack of work or funds, or under conditions where continuation would be inefficient as determined by the County.
- No Non-Temporary employee shall be laid off while there are temporary employees serving in comparable positions within the same department.
- All layoffs shall be at the discretion of the Department Manager and the County Administrative Coordinator. Length of service may be considered.
The County Administrative Coordinator shall give one (1) week's written notice, except under emergency conditions, to employees laid off for one (1) week or more.

Recalls:

- Recall from layoff to the position occupied by the employee pre-layoff must occur within one (1) year or the layoff shall be considered a non-temporary separation.
- When a vacancy for which the employee is qualified occurs in the same department within one (1) year of layoff, the employee may be reinstated at the discretion of the Department Manager and the County Administrative Coordinator and may be required to serve an introductory period of up to twelve (12) months.
- The wage of an employee who is recalled shall be at the closest to the same pay range level from which the employee left. The employee shall receive credit for prior years of service for reinstatement of PTO benefits.

Workplace Accommodations:

- Permanent Disability:
 - An employee determined by the County Administrative Coordinator, or designee, to be unable to perform the duties of the position to which assigned due to a mental or physical disability, despite reasonable accommodation, may be separated from service.
 - Available positions for which the employee is qualified shall be offered in writing to the employee. If the employee refuses a suitable position, it shall be so noted in that employee's personnel file, and they shall be considered to have resigned.
 - If suitable positions are not available, the employee shall be terminated, but shall be offered the opportunity to apply for any future vacant positions for which qualified.
- Temporary Disability:
 - An employee determined by the County Administrative Coordinator and/or Department Manager to be temporarily unable to perform the duties of the position to which assigned, due to a mental or physical disability, despite reasonable accommodation, shall be subject to the following provisions for a period of time that normally does not exceed one (1) year.
 - An employee medically certified for restricted duties will be provided suitable work on a temporary basis during the healing period, if available, and if so doing would not be detrimental to the efficient operations or safety of the department.
 - Employees temporarily assigned to restricted duties shall not receive a reduction in the base salary for periods up to sixty (60) days, but thereafter shall be placed at the appropriate rate for the work performed.
 - If suitable restricted duty work is not available, the employee shall be advised of available leave provisions and if not requested, the employee shall be laid off.
 - Employees absent due to temporary disability shall provide a medical release to the County Administrative Coordinator upon return to service.
 - Employees unable to return to service within one (1) year of the temporary disability absence shall normally be considered by the County as permanently disabled.

- Right of Appeal: All employees separated under this section shall have the right to appeal through the Buffalo County Grievance Policy & Procedure.

Policy 507 - Effective May 31, 2015

POLICY 508 - PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Purpose: To provide for periodic review of work performance and to set clear goals.

- The purpose of the performance evaluation is to improve individual performance, strengthen supervisor-employee relationships and recognize employee accomplishments and good work.
- Performance evaluation reports may be considered in personnel decisions affecting promotion, demotion, removal, re-employment, and training for exempt and non-exempt personnel.

Procedure:

- Each new employee shall have individual goals set by the end of their first month of employment. They will then be evaluated in accordance with the normal evaluation timeline. The County may at its discretion, conduct additional performance evaluations if the employee believes that a performance review is needed.
- Department Managers or their designee shall evaluate all department employees three times a year on forms provided by the County Administration Office.
- If an employee believes that a performance review is needed and/or is past due, the employee should discuss the matter with their immediate supervisor or Department Manager.
- The County Administration Office will supply the necessary forms, and it will be the Department Manager or designee's responsibility to complete the evaluation form and submit the originals to the County Administrative Coordinator to be retained in the employee's personnel file. No copy will be returned to the Department.
- The County Administrative Coordinator and Human Resource Manager will review the evaluations and discuss any concerns with the Department Manager. If there are concerns with an employee's final evaluation as identified during this review, the direct supervisor that completed the review will be contacted for further discussion. At times, a supervisor may need to adjust an evaluation and meet with the employee again to discuss the updated evaluation. Administration will communicate new wages for those getting step increases the following year by December 31st.

Department Manager Evaluations:

- The Home Committee shall review goals and objectives of the department and discuss expectation for the upcoming year with the Department Manager
- The County Administrative Coordinator will conduct two check-in evaluations with the Department Manager throughout the year and complete the performance evaluations.
- The County Administrative Coordinator shall coordinate with the Committee Chair to conduct the final performance evaluations on all Department Managers on an annual basis at their November Home Committee Meeting of each year.
- The Committee Chair and the Administrative Coordinator shall then meet with the Department Manager to issue the final performance evaluation and discuss any issues raised by the Home Committee and the County Administrative Coordinator and sign the evaluation form.

County Administrative Coordinator Evaluations: All of the evaluations for the County Administrative Coordinator will be completed by the Executive Committee. The Committee of the Board will provide input on the final evaluation to the Executive Committee.

Review with Employee:

- All employee performance evaluation ratings shall be shared with the employee.
- The evaluator and the employee must sign the evaluation forms. If the employee disagrees as to the validity or merit of the evaluation, the employee may request a meeting with the County Administrative Coordinator to attempt to resolve the problem.
- The employee may also prepare a written response to the performance evaluation to be placed in his/her personnel file.

Filing and Deadline:

- New goals set are to be provided to Administration by January 1st of the new year.
- Check-In Evaluations completed are to be provided to Administration by each March 31st and July 31st as they apply.
- The final performance evaluations must be provided to Administration by November 30th. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action against the responsible manager.
- The County Administrative Coordinator's final performance evaluation must be turned in to the Human Resource Manager by December 31st.
- The final performance evaluation due date may be extended by the County Administrative Coordinator but may not be extended beyond December 31st of each year without the authorization of the HR Committee.

Policy 508 - Effective May 31, 2015; Revised September 24, 2024

POLICY 509 - PERSONAL APPEARANCE

Purpose: County employees are in the forefront of providing service to the general public. Personal appearance is essential elements of good public relations. Buffalo County expects its employees to be well groomed and neatly dressed. Employees should dress in a manner consistent with a professional business atmosphere and should practice good personal hygiene.

Policy:

- Buffalo County takes pride in its employees. Physical appearance, dress, and personal cleanliness contribute to the morale of all employees and affect the image Buffalo County presents to its clients and visitors.
- During business hours, employees are expected to present a neat and clean appearance and to dress according to the requirements and expectations of their positions.
- Employees who appear for work inappropriately dressed will be sent home by their immediate supervisor after consulting with the County Administrative Coordinator and directed to return to work in appropriate attire. Under such a circumstance, employees will not be able to claim paid county time.
- Appropriate dress for courthouse employees is business casual. Shorts, cut-off pants and short skirts/dresses will not be allowed at any time or any season. Jeans (denim) generally are not permitted. Maintenance staff is exempt, but attire is to be presentable.
- County departments/employees may be exempt from this rule: If an employee has "field work" or "on call field work" outside the courthouse, such a circumstance or office situation would and will be considered an exception to the rule.
- Footwear must provide adequate protection. Material shall be leather or heavy canvas with hard soles. No sandals, open toed or heeled shoes are acceptable for "field work".

POLICY 510 - PERSONNEL FILES

Purpose: To provide reasonable access to personnel accordance with public records laws and regulations.

Policy:

- Personnel records are essential to provide factual data about an individual's employment with the County. They serve as a basis to evaluate qualifications for promotion or transfer and determine the status, eligibility, rights, and benefits of employees.
The documents in the employee's personnel file vitally affect the rights and benefits of employees and serve to support management decisions.

Responsibility and Authority:

- The County Administrative Coordinator shall:
 - Establish, maintain, and coordinate personnel transactions and records for all county employees.
 - Maintain a central personnel file for each county employee showing name, address, birth date, title, and other pertinent information necessary for effective personnel administration and compliance with federal and state laws.
 - Advise and assist Department Managers on all county personnel transactions, records, and procedures.
- Department Managers shall promptly notify the County Administration Office of all changes in personnel information affecting records and payroll.

Inspection and Confidentiality of Records:

- Information as to the name and dates of employment, classification title, and salary is available for public inspection at times in accordance with the procedures prescribed by the County Administrative Coordinator and provisions of the Wisconsin Public Records law.
- Unless access is specifically authorized or required by statute, all other employee information not designated above, shall be considered confidential and shall be available to the County Administrative Coordinator, the employee's supervisor and/or Department Manager, and appropriate Standing Committee only if such information is job-related or is necessary in order to perform official duties.
- An employee or their representative shall, upon written request, be allowed to inspect any of their personnel documents.
- The inspection shall take place during working hours and in the office of County Administration or a place designated by the County Administrative Coordinator.
- Such requests shall be limited to two (2) requests by an employee each year.

Retention of Records:

- Retention of records will be in accordance with established County Ordinance.
- Records not defined by this ordinance or State or Federal Statute may be destroyed by the authorization and/or approval of the County Administrative Coordinator.

POLICY 511 -SEPARATION FROM EMPLOYMENT

Policy: Separation from employment includes but is not limited to resignation, retirement, reduction in workforce, failure to return from approved leave, discharge from employment, or disability. Such employment separations may be voluntary or involuntary.

Resignations:

- Resignations shall be considered voluntary acts on behalf of employees.
- All resignations shall be by written notice at least two (2) weeks in advance, except in the case of Department Managers who shall give at least thirty (30) days advance notice.
- When an employee resigns, a notice of resignation must be provided to their supervisor or Department Manager, which will be forwarded within two (2) working days to the County Administration Office. The notice of resignation will contain the following:
 - The employee's full name
 - The accurate position title and department
 - The current date of the letter
 - The effective date of the resignation
 - The date of the last day to be worked
- If an employee fails to give the required notice, the employee may be considered to have resigned not in good standing, unless the County Administrative Coordinator determines that acceptable reasons for a shorter notice period exist.
- The County Administrative Coordinator shall maintain the right to negotiate compensation settlements in regard to employee/employer separation, with approval of the Buffalo County Human Resources Committee.
- Any employee on an unauthorized absence for one (1) business day or who fails to report for duty within three (3) consecutive business days after the expiration of leave or upon recall from layoff, shall normally be held to have resigned not in good standing.
- The County Administrative Coordinator or designee shall notify the employee of such action by personal service or by certified mail.
- Upon resignation or termination, the last day worked will be used as a basis for cessation of benefits.
- Employees are to contact the County Administration Office prior to the last week of employment to make arrangements for final payroll deductions and discuss cessation of benefits.

Reduction in Work Force:

- Due to economic or efficiency measures, changes in organizational structure, or other business reasons, the County Board of Supervisors may eliminate Non-temporary positions.
- Non-temporary employees separated as a result of such action shall:
 - Be given two (2) weeks' written notice of Non-temporary separation by the County Administrative Coordinator or designee.
 - Be eligible for reinstatement to the position occupied by the employee pre-layoff for one (1) year.

Exit Interview:

- When deemed necessary by the County Administrative Coordinator, an exit interview shall be conducted with a terminating employee regardless of length of service, position, status, or circumstance of separation.
- The exit interview shall be conducted no later than the employee's last working day.

- The County Administrative Coordinator, or designee, will conduct all exit interviews and a review of said interview shall be made available to appropriate Department Manager.

Return of County Equipment:

- Employees leaving county service shall return all county property on or before their last day worked. Such equipment includes, but is not limited to key(s), laptop computers, calculators, and cell phones.
- It shall be the responsibility of the Department Manager to verify in writing to the County Administration Office that this has been accomplished.
- It shall be the responsibility of the County Administrative Coordinator to verify in writing that all county property has been returned for Department Managers.

Last Day of Employment: Last day worked will in most cases be considered the last day of employment. The County reserves the right to determine the last day of employment.

Policy 511 - Effective May 31, 2015

POLICY 512 - TELEWORK

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to Buffalo County management and employees with a work policy that outlines our guidelines for employees who work from a location other than our offices.

- Buffalo County considers telework to be a viable, flexible work option when both the employee and the job are suited to such an arrangement. Telework may be appropriate for some employees and jobs but not for others. Telework is not an entitlement, it is not a county wide benefit, and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment with Buffalo County. This policy provides a general overview and does not attempt to address each unique situation or technology need.
- Telework is not designed to be a replacement for appropriate dependent care during work hours or intended to permit staff to work at other jobs or run their own business. The focus of the arrangement must remain on job performance and meeting business demands.

Requesting Telework: An employee must fill out the Telework Agreement form and submit it to their supervisor. This should be done with as much advance notice as possible. Upon approval from the supervisor, it must be submitted to the Administrative Coordinator for final approval. The final decision will be provided to the employee and supervisor. An employee's approved request is good for the duration of the request, until updated by the employee, or until the decision has been made by the supervisor and/or Administrative Coordinator to revoke for various reasons.

Eligibility:

Employees requesting formal teleworking arrangements must be employed with Buffalo County for a minimum of 6 months of continuous, regular employment in current position unless an exception is recommended by the Supervisor and granted by the Administrative Coordinator.

The employee must have demonstrated sustained high performance and the supervisor believes the employee can maintain the expected quantity and quality of work while teleworking. The following will be reviewed:

- No pending personnel disciplinary action, performance concerns, or attendance concerns.

- The employee has demonstrated good communication suitability, good time management skills, and the ability to complete work projects with minimal supervision.
- Direct supervisor can provide adequate supervision of the employee remotely and shall evaluate the position to assure the teleworking request does not have a negative impact on customer services.

Policies:

The employee agrees to abide by all applicable rules, guidelines, and policies, including the department named above policies and the Buffalo County Personnel policies including but not limited to applicable Time Reporting, Network, Computer Usage, VPN, and Confidentiality policies. The employee understands that the alternate worksite is considered an extension of the department named above and that during the hours that the employee is performing work functions all agency policies and procedures are still applicable.

Requirements:

The employee is required to participate in a telework orientation meeting with the department named above before beginning to telework which shall include reviewing work requirements and expectations, tips for telework success, confidentiality, and security/technology issues.

Work Schedule and Location:

An employee can either telework occasionally or intermittently or they can telework full time. An employee may not work more than 24 days of occasional or intermittent telework in a calendar year and generally not more than 2 days a week. A supervisor can approve an exception exceeding 2 days a week upon receiving a written justification documenting an exceptional circumstance such as a medical situation. An employee working occasionally or intermittently is expected to notate this on their timecard for the days that they teleworked.

If it is in the best interest (i.e. there is an efficiency gained and/or cost reduced) of Buffalo County for an employee to start or finish the workday teleworking, such partial day teleworking (i.e. less than 4 hours of the workday) will not count towards the 24-day annual allotment. Such partial day teleworking requests are to be made in writing to the supervisor for approval if meeting criteria and are to be available for review.

The employee must also work from their primary home residence within the state of Wisconsin. No out of state telework will be authorized. Exceptions to the home location will be allowed under exigent circumstances, upon approval from the County Administrative Coordinator.

Communication:

To maintain close communication and standards of professionalism while working from a remote location, the employee shall:

- Notify their supervisor, coworkers, and receptionist of any change in the posted telework schedule by utilizing email, a shared Outlook calendar, and/or the sign in/sign out system.
- Be available to supervisor and coworkers by telephone, virtual means, and email during core hours.
- Return calls and emails in a timely manner.
- Maintain any other required communication with supervisor as directed – such as daily contact.
- Have office calls forwarded to his or her work cell phone.
- Answer the telephone professionally during core hours.

- For those who do not have company cell phones, no use of a personal cell phone shall be authorized to complete Buffalo County work or communication. Accommodations will be made by supervisor to address calls that may come into the office while staff is Teleworking.
- Follow the plan outlined by their supervisor for receiving assignments, returning assignments, and reporting in on telework days.

Compensation & Benefits:

- Employee compensation and benefits, including vacation, sick leave, other forms of leave, and travel benefits shall not be affected by this Agreement.
- Employees may not earn comp time from the telework location without prior approval from their supervisor.
- Employees are not expected to work beyond their normal scheduled hours and should avoid instances where overtime hours would be needed without proper authorization from their supervisor.
- Employee is responsible for potential tax consequences related to telework, if any.

Equipment:

Any equipment provided shall be properly inventoried with Buffalo County and shall be kept updated if equipment is returned or if new equipment is assigned. The employee is required to return any Buffalo County property upon request. Buffalo County shall maintain all equipment owned by the County. The employee shall not perform maintenance or repairs on Buffalo County-owned equipment without prior approval. The employee is responsible for all maintenance and repairs of employee-owned equipment. Employees must take appropriate care to protect equipment from damage or theft.

Only Buffalo County-owned software may be installed on Buffalo County-owned equipment unless otherwise approved. The employee may not install or download any other software. If new software is required for teleworking, it shall be provided by the Buffalo County Information Technology Department.

Expenses:

If telework is conducted in the employee's home, they are responsible for ongoing operating costs, such as telephone service fees, internet fees, utility costs, homeowner's or renter's insurance and furniture or equipment rental fees unless the Buffalo County agrees in writing to pay for or reimburse such costs.

Buffalo County shall normally reimburse travel and other work-related expenses as per the standard employee expenses policy. If the travel begins or ends at the employee's home, travel time and mileage shall be calculated from the work site or home, whichever is less.

Office supplies necessary to complete work assignments must be obtained during the employee's in-office days. Employees shall not be reimbursed for supplies normally available in the office. The employee should never purchase or rent equipment, services, or supplies on the assumption that Buffalo County will reimburse the cost. Prior supervisor approval must be obtained.

Information Security:

Security of client confidential information and documents is an issue whether an employee works at home or at the office. When the employee possesses confidential client information off site, however, there is an even higher level of risk of an unintended or unauthorized breach. The employee must consider other people who may be coming into the home to ensure that sensitive information is not disclosed to outsiders in some inadvertent way. Employees working from an alternate work location shall follow all policies

and procedures including the department named above policies and the Buffalo County Personnel policies including any applicable Network, Computer Usage, VPN, and Confidentiality policies. In addition, employees must ensure the following:

- The protection of organization data on disk, hardcopy, or on portable devices from theft, loss, or unauthorized access during transit and at the alternate worksite
- That approved firewalls and anti-virus software are on all remote site computers and are updated daily with current definitions.
- Flash drives or other portable drives are scanned for viruses before being used for uploading or downloading data.
- Sensitive information in hardcopy form is returned to the office or shredded.
- All work is backed-up according to Buffalo County procedures.
- The Buffalo County network is only accessed from the remote worksite or other locations as authorized and for approved purposes.
- The employee agrees to follow the Buffalo County and the Department named above guidelines pertaining to confidentiality and data security policies including handling of Protected Health Information. This includes the security of confidential files/records/information that the employee may be transporting while at a telework location.
- Close the VPN and logoff anytime you are not actively working.
- Send email using encryption feature available.
- Do not use public Wi-Fi access.

Open Records Notice:

If an employee is using their own equipment, records created for the purpose of Buffalo County work are subject to open records requests when related to employment just the same as while using Buffalo County issued equipment.

Safety:

The employee agrees to maintain a safe and ergonomically sound work environment, to report work-related injuries to their supervisor at the earliest opportunity, and to hold Buffalo County harmless for injury to others at the teleworking location. In signing this Agreement, the employee verifies that the home office provides workspace that is free of safety and fire hazards.

Limitations:

Teleworkers must observe the following limitations when working from the telework site:

- Employees cannot meet with clients at the telework site.
- Employees cannot operate a business or work for another employer during telework hours.
- Employees cannot use Buffalo County equipment for personal use.
- Employees cannot allow others to use Buffalo County equipment or access the organization network.
- Employees cannot have sole responsibility for providing dependent care during work hours except under special conditions approved by the County Administrative Coordinator.

Liability:

Buffalo County shall not be liable for damages to the employee's property resulting from participation in the teleworking program. In signing this document, the employee agrees to hold Buffalo County harmless against any and all claims, excluding workers' compensation claims.

Workers' Compensation:

The alternate work location is considered an official worksite for purposes of worker's compensation. The employee shall report any injury to their supervisor immediately. Worker's compensation does not cover accidents to family members or other third parties at the telework site.

Tax and/or Insurance Consequences:

The employee understands that they are responsible for tax and insurance consequences of this arrangement, if any; and for conforming to any local zoning regulations.

Travel Time and Mileage Reimbursement:

An approved teleworker is entitled to mileage reimbursement as indicated by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS Reg. Sec. 1.262-1(b)I5)).

- Employees may be required to work or commute to their onsite location for meetings, events, and other situations deemed necessary by their supervisor. Whenever possible, when teleworking employees are requested to report to their onsite work location, they should be notified by the end of the workday prior to the day they are requested to report to the onsite work location.
- The first one-way trip of the day from home (approved telework location) to another location for the purpose of paid employment is not reimbursable as work expense and is considered the responsibility of the teleworker. This rule applies to the last trip of the day from another location for the purpose of work to the home (approved telework location).
- In the event the first trip and/or the last trip of the day is longer than the mileage between the employee's onsite work location and the employee's approved telework location, the employee will be reimbursed for the difference. If the first trip of the day is shorter than the normal distance from the onsite work location to the employee's approved telework location, this mileage would not be reimbursable.
- All other travel time and mileage reimbursement shall adhere to other Buffalo County policies.

Termination:

This Agreement may be terminated or suspended at any time by either Buffalo County or the employee which will result in the employee returning to the office worksite arrangement. A telework arrangement may not be allowed to continue if it is detrimental to work quality, client service, the work unit, or the organization. In such situations, the supervisor shall make a good faith effort to work with the employee to resolve the situation, but if the problem cannot be resolved, the supervisor has a responsibility to terminate this Agreement. In the event this Agreement is terminated, each party will attempt to give as much advance notice of change as practicable and whenever possible, at least a 30-day notice.

Telework Agreement:

This Telework Agreement shall be maintained by the Buffalo County Administrative Coordinator and may be amended at any time. A copy of this Agreement and any addendums or amendments shall be provided to the employee.

Policy 512 - Effective June 1, 2020; Revised May 21, 2024

POLICY 513 – EMPLOYEE REFERRAL PROGRAM

Purpose: The County would like to encourage employees to seek out and refer people they know to apply for open positions with Buffalo County. Open positions are posted on the County website. Current employees are well equipped to know who will connect with county government and our mission to serve the public. We trust that employees know who may fit our culture best and for this reason, the County will

offer a referral reward in the form of a compensatory bonus (less taxes) to employees who refers a candidate who is subsequently hired for a posted position.

Eligibility: This policy shall apply to all active Buffalo County employees.

Referral Process:

- The referring employee shall complete an Employee Referral Form located on the Employee Self-Service Portal and submit it to the Human Resources Manager.
- The Employee Referral Form shall be submitted no later than the last day of the closing of the recruitment/advertisement on the County website. Open positions are posted for a minimum of five (5) working days prior to closing.
- If two or more employees refer the same applicant, only the first employee submitting the Referral Form to the Human Resources Manager will receive the referral reward.

Referral Reward Amount:

- To thank employees for recommending and referring Buffalo County as an employer to people you know, we will pay a referral reward in two payment installments once the applicant / referred employee completes three (3) months of employment and then twelve (12) months of employment with Buffalo County.
- The County employee making the referral is eligible for up to a \$500 referral reward (less taxes).
 - After the referred employee successfully completes three (3) months of employment, \$250 (less taxes) will be paid to the County employee who made the referral on the next pay period following eligibility.
 - After the referred employee successfully completes twelve (12) months of employment, \$250 (less taxes) will be paid to the County employee who made the referral on the next pay period following eligibility.

Other Requirements:

- Department Heads, managers, supervisors or employees directly or indirectly involved in the hiring decision are not eligible for a referral reward.
- The referring employee must be an active Buffalo County employee at the time the referral reward is paid.
- Existing employees cannot be referred to or qualify an employee for a referral reward.
- The applicant shall not have applied previously for any County position within the last 12 months.
- Applicant shall not have been a previous employee, intern or independent contractor of Buffalo County in the previous 24 months.
- A referral reward shall not be paid to an employee for referring applicants accepting any positions that are considered LTE, temporary, seasonal, or casual part-time positions.
- The department receiving the new employee will be charged the referral reward. A referral reward shall not result in the Department going over budget. It is recommended to adjust the start date accordingly if needed for budgetary reasons.
- All individuals referred by employees will receive the same employment consideration as applicants from other sources.
- All information regarding the hiring decision will remain strictly confidential. The referring employee will be notified by the Human Resources Manager once eligibility for the reward has been determined.

- Buffalo County reserves the right to deny referral reward payments to any employee who improperly makes promises or assurances of employment to prospective or actual applicants or otherwise engages in improper or inappropriate conduct related to this policy.

Policy 513 - Effective June 23, 2025

POLICY 601 - WORKPLACE SAFETY

Purpose: To provide a safe work environment for employees.

Policy:

- Any unsafe practice or condition, affecting persons, property or equipment, must be reported immediately to a supervisor or Department Manager.
- Should a hazardous situation exist at the workplace, safety concerns always take precedence over continuing operations.
- Any employee who identifies ways to increase workplace safety should make these recommendations known to their supervisor or Department Manager.
- The Department Manager shall report immediately to the County Safety Director any unsafe practice or conditions, as well as, any recommendations for improvement for workplace safety.
- The County Safety Director will work with the Buffalo County Finance Committee to address unsafe practices or conditions and consider recommendation for workplace safety improvement.

Safety Equipment:

- The County shall furnish proper safety devices for all work and employees shall wear and/or use all safety equipment furnished by the County as required and approved by the Department Manager.
- Employees must observe all safety laws, codes and regulations that apply to their specific department.
- The County shall pay up to \$100.00 (one hundred dollars) toward prescription safety glasses (with permanently attached, non-removable, side safety shields) every two (2) years, after verification of purchase.

Violations: Direct violations of safety policies may be subject to disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

Policy 601 – Effective May 31, 2015; Revised May 21, 2024

POLICY 602 - WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Purpose: To provide a preventative plan to address violent or aggressive behavior in the workplace and to establish procedures to respond to acts of violence by or against county employees.

Policy:

- The safety and security of Buffalo County's employees is of vital importance. Therefore, acts or threats of physical violence, including intimidation, harassment and/or coercion which involve or affect the County, or which occur on county property are considered misconduct and will not be tolerated.

- The prohibition against threats and acts of violence as described above applies to all persons involved in the operation of the County, including (but not limited to) our own personnel, contract and temporary workers, and non-employees on county property.
- Any confirmed act or threat will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment even on the first offense.
- No provision of this policy statement or any other provision in this plan alters the “at-will” nature of employment with the County.
- The Department Manager, if necessary, with the County Administrative Coordinator in consultation with the Human Resource Committee shall make the determination of whether, and to what extent, threats or acts of violence are acted upon by the County.
- In making this determination, a case-by-case analysis may be undertaken in order to ascertain whether there is a reasonable basis to believe that workplace violence has occurred.
- Any employee who has been a recipient of a threat of violence or a victim of an act of violence is to report it to the County Administrative Coordinator.
- Such reports will be kept confidential to the maximum extent possible and may be used in the County’s investigation. Because the threat may come from a source external to the County, we will assess the need for special safeguards and cooperate with local authorities.

Policy 602 - Effective May 31, 2015

POLICY 603 - HARRASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

Purpose: The fundamental policy of Buffalo County is that the workplace is for performing duties to serve and provide the highest quality of service to the public. The purpose of this policy and goal of the County is to maintain a healthy work environment free from sexual harassment and other unlawful harassment and discrimination.

Policy:

- Harassment and other acts of illegal discriminatory conduct—in any form—is unacceptable, will not be condoned, and will subject the employee to disciplinary action or discharge from employment.
- It is the responsibility of each and every employee to immediately report any and all discriminatory, harassing or retaliatory conduct which may relate to the work environment whether it occurs on or off the job.
- Such conduct includes conduct by employees toward other employees, by employees toward members of the public, and by members of the public toward employees which relates to their work.
- Under federal and state fair employment laws, members of protected classes are shielded from unlawful discrimination in employment. Such discrimination can include:
 - Unsolicited and repeated derogatory epithets, derogatory statements or gestures made to a person because of his/her protected status.
 - Any attempt to penalize or punish a person because of his/her protected status.
 - Creating an offensive and hostile work environment for a person because of his/her protected status, including sexual harassment.
- Allegations of workplace harassment will be subject to an immediate and confidential (to the extent possible) investigation by the Department Manager and/or County Administrative Coordinator.
- If an employee is responsible for the harassment, he/she will be subject to disciplinary action or termination from employment.

- Acts of sexual harassment and other forms of discriminatory conduct at the workplace by employees against other employees, customers or other members of the public will not be tolerated and are strictly prohibited.
- Accordingly, the County adopts and establishes the following work rules:
 - It is unlawful and against policy for any employee, male or female, to harass another by: making unwelcome sexual advances or making favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature a condition of any employee's work; using an employee's submission to or rejection of such conduct as the basis for or as a factor in any employment decision affecting the individual; or otherwise creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment by such conduct.
 - The creation of any intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment may include (but is not limited to) such actions as persistent comments on an employee's sexual preference or the display of obscene or sexually oriented photographs or drawings. Conduct or actions that arise out of a personal or social relationship that are not intended to have a discriminatory employment effect may not be viewed as harassment. The County will determine whether such conduct constitutes sexual harassment, based on a review of the facts and circumstances of each situation.
 - The County will not condone any form of sexual harassment toward others. All employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action or discharge from employment.
 - Employees who believe they are being sexually harassed or being subjected to other forms of illegal discriminatory conduct, should report the conduct to their immediate supervisor at once. If the employee's supervisor or Department Manager is the source of the alleged harassment or other forms of discriminatory conduct, the employee should report to the County Administrative Coordinator. All allegations should be made in writing and will be investigated.
 - Supervisors and Department Managers who receive a complaint should carefully investigate the matter, keeping in mind that privacy considerations should be applied in handling this type of complaint. The County Administrative Coordinator, Department Manager or supervisor should question all employees who knowledge of may have either the specific incident complained of or similar problems. The complaint, the investigative steps and the findings should all be documented as thoroughly as possible.
 - Employees who are dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may file a complaint with the Human Resource Committee. No employee will be subjected to any form of retaliation or discipline for pursuing a sexual harassment or discrimination complaint in good faith.
 - If an employee believes that he or she is being retaliated against for pursuing a claim of harassment and/or discrimination, that employee should immediately file a written complaint.

Policy 603 - Effective May 31, 2015; Revised January 23, 2017

POLICY 604 - DRUG & ALCOHOL-FREE WORKPLACE

Purpose: Maintaining a workplace free from the effects of alcohol and drugs and enduring the public that their safety and trust in us is protected.

Drug and Alcohol Policy: The County is committed to providing a safe, efficient and productive work environment for all employees. In keeping with this commitment, employees and job applicants may be

asked to provide body substance samples (e.g., blood, urine) to determine the illicit use of drugs or alcohol. Tests may be conducted in any of the following situations:

- **Pre-employment**: As a pre-qualification requirement before assuming any employment position, prospective employees may be required to provide a body sample for drug and/or alcohol testing. This may occur in connection with a pre-employment medical examination.
- **Random**: Employees who are required to maintain a CDL license may be randomly selected without prior notice to provide a body sample for testing.
- **Reasonable Cause**: The County may require testing when workplace behavior indicates that an employee is under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.
- **Post-Accident**: An employee who is involved in an accident while on county time may be asked to provide a body substance for testing.

No Smoking/Tobacco Use Policy:

- As provided in Wisconsin State Statutes 101 (Smoking Prohibited) smoking or the use of any form of tobacco products or electronic smoking device in Buffalo County owned, rented or leased buildings, grounds and vehicles or other properties is expressly prohibited.
- Policies and penalties will be enforced.
- Any exceptions to the Policy will be managed and controlled by the County Administrative Coordinator with enforcement provided by the Law Enforcement agencies within their jurisdiction.

Medical Examinations:

- Employees may be required by the County to pass a physical examination prior to beginning their employment, prior to returning to employment after an extended absence due to health conditions, or as a condition of continued employment when the County has reason to believe based on objective evidence that the employee is not able to perform the requirements of the job or poses a direct threat to themselves or others. Such exams shall measure an individual's physical capabilities in terms of the job to be performed.
- Employees normally shall receive such physical examinations with their health care provider.
- The County will pay any costs not covered by insurance for the required examination.
- The County Administrative Coordinator may waive the required examination if the employee provides recent and appropriate satisfactory physical examination results from their health care provider.

Policy 604 – Effective May 31, 2015

POLICY 605 - IDENTIFICATION KEY CARDS

Purpose: To provide a safe and secure workplace for the public and all County staff, photo identification key cards are issued to all Buffalo County employees. The card serves to identify those who work for the County and other agency and tenants working in County buildings and to allow authorized access to designated areas.

Policy/Procedure:

- **Buffalo County Employees**: The Department manager or Elected Official must complete an Employee Identification Badge Request Form and submit to the Administration Office prior to the employee's start or transfer date.

- Non-Buffalo County Employees: Cards may also be issued to non-employee persons participating in special programs sponsored by the County and will be issued to all elected officials serving Buffalo County. An Employee Identification Badge Request Form must be submitted.
- In order to issue the County Identification Badge, anyone receiving a card must verify his/her identification by means of a valid driver's license or other valid document that includes photo identification.
- Administration staff (or designated authority) will photograph each new employee and issue an ID or key card.
- Employees and non-employees must sign the Identification/Key Card Policy Acknowledgement Form prior to receiving their ID or key cards which will be kept in their personnel file.
- The ID or key card must be carried at all times and be visibly displayed at waist height or above unless doing so risks personal safety.
- Department managers may temporarily suspend the requirement for an employee to display the ID or key card if there is a significant chance of loss due to the nature of the work being done.
- Any misuse, alteration, or fabrication of the card will subject the holder to disciplinary action by the County.
- Employees may not attach any foreign object to the identification badge. Doing so will result in the required issuance of a new identification badge at the cost of \$10.00 to the employee.
- Employees will not give or lend their ID or key card to another individual.

Key Cards:

- All regular employees will be issued a key card through the Administration Office. Even if not a Buffalo County employee, paid employees of the following agencies, who are assigned to the Buffalo County courthouse as primary worksite will be issued a key card through the Administration Office:
 - Federal, State, and employees from other County's assigned working in the Courthouse (including, but not limited to UW Extension Office, Pepin County ADRC, District Attorney's Office, Circuit Court, DOJ Probation Agents, etc.)
 - Courthouse Tenants (i.e., Buffalo County Historical Society)
 - City of Alma Police Department
 - City of Mondovi Police Department
 - Wisconsin State Patrol personnel
- Key cards will be programmed to allow employees into areas within the control of their respective department heads and/or work requirements. Requests for access to areas outside the control of the areas of their respective department managers will require a "Request for Courthouse Building Access" form to be completed with appropriate authorizations and submitted to Administration Office review and approval.
- No one outside of those listed above will be provided key cards or access to locations secured throughout the courthouse by the Key Card Security System. Very few exceptions will be made.

Replacing Lost or Damaged Cards:

- Employees will contact Administration immediately to replace lost, stolen or damaged ID or key cards. Administration will issue a replacement ID or key card only with approval of the employee's department manager/elected official.
- If the ID or key card should become damaged or lost, one new ID or key card will be issued by Administration per calendar year at no charge.

- If the second ID or key card issued is damaged or lost within the calendar year, the employee will be charged \$10 for a replacement ID or key card.
- If, at no fault of the employee, a key card should stop working, Administration will issue a new card to the employee at no charge. The old key card must be returned before a new one will be issued.

Separation from County Employment:

- Employees leaving employment with Buffalo County must return their key card to Administration upon separation.
- Cards issued to persons participating in special programs sponsored by the County or having completed seasonal or temporary employment must be returned to Administration upon completion of the program.
- Anyone issued keys to any County building, office, etc. by Administration must return all issued keys directly to Administration, or if after business hours, keys are returned to supervisor or department head. Upon receipt, the supervisor or department head must return all keys to Administration within 48 hours of separation.

Policy 605 - Effective September 1, 2021

APPENDIX A



Buffalo County Alternate Work Schedule Request and Authorization

<u>Employee Request</u>	
<u>Employee Name:</u>	
<u>Effective Date to Begin:</u>	<u>Conclusion Date (cannot exceed 3 months):</u>
<u>Requested Daily Schedule:</u>	<u>Work Hours/Week:</u>
<u>Detailed Explanation of Request (include hours of work requested):</u>	
<u>Employee Signature:</u>	<u>Date:</u>
<u>Supervisor Response</u>	
<u>Discussion with Bargaining Unit Officer (as necessary) and outcome:</u>	
<u>Recommendation:</u> ☐ Approved as requested ☐ Approved with changes noted ☐ Denied	
<u>Supervisor Comments:</u>	
<u>Supervisor Signature:</u>	<u>Date:</u>
<u>Department Head Response</u>	
<u>Recommendation:</u> ☐ Approved as requested ☐ Approved with changes noted ☐ Denied	
<u>Department Head Comments:</u>	
<u>Department Head Signature:</u>	<u>Date:</u>
<u>Administrative Coordinator Response</u>	
<u>Recommendation:</u> ☐ Approved as requested ☐ Approved with changes noted ☐ Denied	
<u>Administrative Coordinator Comments:</u>	
<u>Administrative Coordinator Signature:</u>	<u>Date:</u>

APPENDIX B



Position Exemption Status

Status

EXEMPT ADMINISTRATIVE
EXEMPT EXECUTIVE
EXEMPT PROFESSIONAL
EXEMPT PROFESSIONAL
EXEMPT PROFESSIONAL
EXEMPT EXECUTIVE
EXEMPT ADMINISTRATIVE
EXEMPT EXECUTIVE
EXEMPT EXECUTIVE
EXEMPT PROFESSIONAL
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EXEMPT PROFESSIONAL
EXEMPT PROFESSIONAL
EXEMPT EXECUTIVE
EXEMPT ADMINISTRATIVE
EXEMPT ADMINISTRATIVE
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EXEMPT PROFESSIONAL
EXEMPT PROFESSIONAL
EXEMPT PROFESSIONAL
EXEMPT PROFESSIONAL
EXEMPT EXECUTIVE
EXEMPT EXECUTIVE

Position

Accounting Manager
Administrative Coordinator
Chief Deputy Sheriff
Community Justice Services Director
Community Justice Services Diversion Specialist
County Conservationist/Land Management Director
DHHS Accounting Supervisor
DHHS Director
Emergency/Risk Management & Safety Director
Environmental Health Specialist
GIS Land Records Coordinator/Land Information Officer
Highway /County Patrol Superintendent
Highway Commissioner
Highway Office Manager
Human Resource Manager
Jail Administrator
Public Health Educator
Public Health Nurse
Public Health Supervisor/Health Officer
Register in Probate
Social Services Manager
Social Worker/Senior Social Worker
Transportation & Adult Protective Services Manager
Veterans Service Officer
Zoning-Assistant Administrator

<u>Status</u>	<u>Position</u>
Non-Exempt	Account Clerk/Economic Support Specialist
Non-Exempt	Accounting & Payroll Technician
Non-Exempt	Account Technician
Non-Exempt	Administrative Assistant
Non-Exempt	Administrative Specialist
Non-Exempt	Case Manager
Non-Exempt	Chief Deputy County Clerk
Non-Exempt	Chief Deputy Register of Deeds
Non-Exempt	Child Support Specialist
Non-Exempt	Communications/Corrections Officer
Non-Exempt	Custodian
Non-Exempt	Deputy Clerk of Court
Non-Exempt	Deputy Register in Probate
Non-Exempt	E-911 Coordinator PT
Non-Exempt	Economic Support Specialist
Non-Exempt	Economic Support/Account Clerk
Non-Exempt	Family & Community Specialist
Non-Exempt	Highway Account Clerk
Non-Exempt	Highway Foreman
Non-Exempt	Highway Heavy Equipment Operator
Non-Exempt	Highway Maintenance Worker/Equipment Operator
Non-Exempt	Highway Mechanic
Non-Exempt	Highway Shop Foreman
Non-Exempt	Highway Signman
Non-Exempt	Land Conservation Technician
Non-Exempt	Legal Secretary
Non-Exempt	Maintenance Technician
Non-Exempt	Map Coordinator/Deputy Treasurer
Non-Exempt	Parts & Inventory Specialist
Non-Exempt	Public Health/Social Services Support Staff
Non-Exempt	Real Property Lister/Deputy Treasurer
Non-Exempt	Recycling Coordinator
Non-Exempt	Resource Management & Planning Specialist
Non-Exempt	Senior Dining Center Manager
Non-Exempt	Support Staff Specialist (DHHS)
Non-Exempt	Veterans Services Benefit Specialist
Non-Exempt	Victim Witness Coordinator
Non-Exempt	Zoning Specialist
Non-Exempt	Zoning Technician

APPENDIX C



Wage Schedule Placement and Classification Appeal Form

<u>Employee Name:</u>	<u>Position Start Date:</u>
<u>Position Title:</u>	<u>Department:</u>
<u>Department Head Name (if applicable):</u>	
<u>Please state reason(s) why you believe you have not been placed correctly on the salary schedule. Please state whether this disagreement relates to the salary grade or the step placement. You may attach additional pages.</u>	
<u>Please state what action you are requesting:</u>	
<u>Department Head's Comments (if applicable):</u>	
Please attach copy of current job description.	
<u>Employee Signature:</u>	<u>Date:</u>
<u>Department Head's Signature:</u>	<u>Date:</u>
<u>Date Received by Administration Office:</u>	

<u>Administrative Coordinator's Comments:</u>	
<u>Date Received by HR Committee:</u>	
<u>Action Taken:</u>	
<u>Date Decision Returned to Employee:</u>	
<u>Date Notification to Department Head:</u>	
<u>Date Notification to HR Manager:</u>	

APPENDIX D



Employee Grievance Form

The County expects employees and Department Managers to exercise reasonable efforts to resolve any questions, problems, or misunderstandings prior to utilizing the grievance procedure. If an employee is subject to a contractual grievance procedure, the contractual grievance procedure must be followed as applicable.

<u>Grievant</u>	
<u>Grievant Name:</u>	<u>Position Title:</u>
<u>Department:</u>	<u>Immediate Supervisor:</u>
<u>Department Head:</u>	
Detailed statement concerning the subject of the grievance, the facts upon which the grievance is based, and the specific relief sought.	
<u>Employee Signature:</u>	<u>Date:</u>
<u>Supervisor or Department Head</u>	
Were you aware of this situation? ☐ Yes ☐ No	
What action if any have you taken before receiving this grievance?	
What action do you recommend?	
<u>Supervisor/Dept Head Signature:</u>	<u>Date:</u>

APPENDIX E



Unsafe Conditions Hazard Report Form

Employee	
<u>Employee Name:</u>	<u>Department:</u>
<u>Concern:</u>	
<u>Suggested Solution/Recommendation:</u>	
<u>Date issue/concern was recognized:</u>	
<u>Employee Signature:</u>	<u>Date:</u>
Administrative Coordinator	
<u>Referred to for action/follow up:</u>	
<u>Meeting/s with parties conducted:</u>	
<u>Action/follow-up taken:</u>	
<u>Administrative Coordinator Signature:</u>	<u>Date:</u>

APPENDIX F



Buffalo County Workplace Safety Grievance Form

<u>Employee</u>	
<u>Employee Name:</u>	<u>Department:</u>
<u>Concern:</u>	
<u>Suggested Solution/Recommendation:</u>	
<u>Date issue/concern was recognized:</u>	
<u>Employee Signature:</u>	<u>Date:</u>
<u>Administrative Coordinator</u>	
<u>Referred to for action/follow up:</u>	
<u>Meeting/s with parties conducted:</u>	
<u>Action/follow-up taken:</u>	
<u>Administrative Coordinator Signature:</u>	<u>Date:</u>

APPENDIX G



Employee Referral Form

Instructions: This form shall be completed by the referring employee and submitted to the Human Resource Manager no later than the last day of the close of the recruitment/advertisement on the County website. Open positions are advertised for a minimum five (5) day period. In rare cases, if a position is not advertised on the County website, the Employee Referral Form is due at least two days before the interview by the applicant and supervisor.

Please scan the form and send it to jobs@buffalocountywi.gov or drop the form off to the Administration Office. Incomplete or illegible forms will not be accepted.

APPLICANT INFORMATION – PERSON BEING REFERRED			
Applicant Name		Applicant Email	
Department Applying		Job Title / Position Applying	

EMPLOYEE INFORMATION – REFERRED BY			
Employee Name		Department	
Job Title / Position		Direct Supervisor	

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Have you ever worked with the applicant before? ☐ YES ☐ NO If yes, where? _____ If no, how do you know the applicant? How long have you known the applicant? Why are you recommending the applicant for this position with Buffalo County?

SIGNATURE
I have read and understand the Employee Referral Program Policy (Policy 513). Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

FOR ADMINISTRATION USE ONLY

Date HR received form: _____	HR Signature: _____
Applicant Hired: ☐ Yes ☐ No	Start Date: _____ Dept/Position: _____
Estimated Date of 1 st Payment: _____	Estimated Date of 2 nd Payment: _____
(must work 3 months)	(must work 12 months)
To be completed by payroll:	
Date of 1 st Payment: _____	Date of 2 nd Payment: _____



Handbook Acknowledgement

I, _____, acknowledge receipt of this Buffalo County Employee Handbook.

I understand that while the County believes wholeheartedly in its policies, many of which are set out in the Employee Handbook, they are not conditions of employment. Rather, the Employee Handbook is simply a means to acquaint me with the County and its operations, and provide guidelines in regard to its policies and my employment.

I understand that by accepting employment with the County, I am not being asked or required to provide anything in return beyond my services. I further understand that the Employee Handbook does not constitute a contract of employment, express or implied, between the County and myself and that no oral statements by supervisor, Department Managers or the County Administrative Coordinator can alter this disclaimer or create a contract. Only the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors has the authority to create an employment contract, and such contract must be in writing and signed by the County Board Chairperson to be valid. I understand that unless my employment is covered by an applicable collective bargaining agreement or statutory provision, my employment with the County is “at-will,” not for any definite period of time, and may be terminated by myself or the County at any time and for any reason not prohibited by law.

I understand that the County reserves the right to modify, amend, or delete any provisions of this Employee Handbook at any time. I will receive copies of any such modifications, amendments, or deletions.

I understand that this Employee Handbook supersedes all previous manuals, handbooks, and personnel policies that I have received or have been advised of by the County. I also understand that any subsequent revisions to the provisions of this Employee Handbook after I commence my employment will supersede those contained herein.

Employee:

Witness:

Signature

Signature

Printed Name

Printed Name

Date

Date