Georgia Department of Human Services

Employee Handbook

Revised: October 1, 2011

Welcome!

Employees of the Department of Human Services (DHS) perform a variety of services for Georgia citizens. Regardless of the position, each employee's unique skills and talents are essential to accomplishing the mission of the Department. By working together, we can provide vital services to those in need.

If you are a new employee, we welcome you to DHS. If you are a career DHS employee, we thank you for your many contributions.

Below are the vision, mission and core values of the Department of Human Services.

Vision

Stronger Families for a Stronger Georgia.

Mission

Strengthen Georgia by providing Individuals and Families access to services that promote self-sufficiency, independence, and protect Georgia's vulnerable children and adults.

Core Values

- Provide access to resources that offer support and empower Georgians and their families.
- Deliver services professionally and treat all clients with dignity and respect. Manage business operations effectively and efficiently by aligning resources across the agency.
- Promote accountability, transparency and quality in all services we deliver and programs we administer.
- Develop our employees at all levels of the agency.

Thanks!

INTRODUCTION

This EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK has been prepared to provide general guidance to you about some of the privileges you have as an employee and the duties and responsibilities that we all share. ***THIS HANDBOOK IS NOT INTENDED TO BE NOR IS IT TO BE CONSIDERED A CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT.***

Information provided is current as of October 2011. Changes in Federal laws, State laws, rules or policies will take precedence over information provided in the HANDBOOK. The Department has the right to change information in this HANDBOOK at any time or for any reason without prior notice.

You are encouraged to read this HANDBOOK and keep it for easy reference. Questions should be directed to your supervisor, Human Resource Representative or the Office of Human Resource Management and Development (OHRMD) – Employee Relations Section.

Although information in this HANDBOOK should address many of your questions, you should refer to the DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy Manual located at your facility for detailed policies and procedures regarding specific issues. These policies are also available on the Internet at the Office of Human Resource Management and Development's official website:

DHS-OHRMD

If you need this HANDBOOK in alternative format, please contact the Office of Human Resource Management and Development.

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I. EMPLOYMENT IN STATE GOVERNMENT

The Department of Human Services is an equal opportunity employer, and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, disability, age or religious or political opinions or affiliations. All forms of harassment prohibited by law, including sexual harassment, will not be tolerated by the Department.

As a DHS employee, your employment status will either be classified or unclassified.

Classified Employees

Employees who were hired in classified positions **before** July 1, 1996 will continue in the classified service unless they accept unclassified positions. Employees in the classified service are subject to the Rules of the State Personnel Board and may appeal some employment actions to the State Personnel Board.

Unclassified Employees

Employees who were hired **on or after** July 1, 1996 will be in the unclassified service. Employees hired into the unclassified service prior to that date remain unclassified. Georgia is an "employment-at-will" State and, as such, employees in the unclassified service serve at the discretion of the Department. Unclassified employees are not covered by the Rules of the State Personnel Board and cannot appeal employment actions to the State Personnel Board.

License, Certificate, Registration or Insurance

All employees in positions which require a license (including a driver's license), certificate or registration must maintain the appropriate valid documents. Failure to maintain such documents without justifiable cause will result in separation from employment.

Employees who are required to use personal vehicles to perform assigned duties are also responsible for ensuring that their vehicles are properly insured against loss. Employees are prohibited from transporting clients, patients, customers or other employees in uninsured personal vehicles while on duty.

Selective Service Registration

The Military Selective Service Act requires all selected male applicants between the ages of 18 and 26 to present proof of having registered with the Selective Service System or to present proof of being exempt from registration. If proof is not provided by specified deadlines, the offer of employment will be withdrawn from applicants or employees will be separated.

Employment Eligibility Verification

As mandated by the Immigration Reform and Control Act, the Department of Human Services is required to verify the identity and employment eligibility of new employees. In order to establish employment eligibility, all new employees must complete an I-9 form. It is a violation of Federal law to knowingly hire or recruit an alien unauthorized to work in the

United States or any individual without complying with the identity and employment eligibility verification requirements.

For more information, please refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #503, Verifying Identity and Employment Eligibility*.

Medical and Physical Examination Program

All selected applicants must be certified for medical and physical fitness for their positions. Some job categories require applicants to obtain a medical and physical examination after receiving a job offer. This ensures that employees are physically capable of carrying out the duties of the job. The program also protects the State from potential liability under Workers' Compensation laws for conditions arising after employment that are caused in whole or part by pre-existing physical conditions. The offer of employment is contingent upon satisfactory completion of the certification.

Criminal History Record Information

The Department will make all reasonable efforts to provide a safe environment for clients, patients, customers and staff. Based on this objective, a review of criminal history record information will be completed on all applicants selected for employment within DHS. Managers may also require a review of criminal history record information on employees who move to other positions within DHS, based on responsibilities, duties, security and safety.

Information Disclosure

All applicants/employees are to provide factually accurate information on **EVERY** *Application for Employment, State Security Questionnaire/Loyalty Oath* Form and on all other documents. Georgia Law prohibits any DHS employee who does not sign a *State Security Questionnaire/ Loyalty Oath* Form from receiving a paycheck.

Applicants/employees are **required** to disclose criminal history information on *Applications for Employment* and *State Security Questionnaire/Loyalty Oath* Forms each time these documents are completed.

Falsification or misrepresentation of criminal history is **prohibited** and **may** result in an offer of employment being withdrawn or separation.

Material falsification or misrepresentation of any information **shall** result in an offer of employment being withdrawn or separation.

NOTE: "Material" refers to information that directly influences and/or impacts the hiring decision based on records, credentials and/or qualifications.

Orientation

All employees of the Department of Human Services are to receive appropriate employee orientation. Employee orientation is intended to introduce new employees to the organization; provide a systematic approach for sharing general information, philosophy,

policies and procedures to enable a smooth integration into the workforce; and to communicate standards and expectations of employment to new employees.

For more information, please contact your Human Resource Representative or the Office of Human Resource Management and Development.

Promotion

It is the policy of DHS to provide promotional opportunities for current employees. A promotion is the advancement of an employee from a job on a lower pay grade to a job on a higher pay grade which generally results in an increase in pay. Employees must meet the required qualifications established for the position in order to be eligible for a promotion.

For additional information, please contact your Human Resource Representative, or refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1101, Promotions.*

Employees are encouraged to visit www.DHSjobs.com, for a current listing of job opportunities.

Transfer

A transfer is the movement between positions within the same job, or movement from a position in one job to a position in a different job on the same pay grade. Employees must meet the minimum qualifications for the job and any special qualifications for the position.

For additional information, please contact your Human Resource Representative, or refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1103, Transfer of Employees.*

Employment of Relatives

The Department prohibits or limits the employment or change in employment status of relatives when necessary or appropriate. Authorized officials have the responsibility to make appropriate decisions when relatives of current employees are being considered for employment, or when current employees may be working with relatives in violation of the Department's policy.

Relatives will not be employed or placed in positions or situations in which a superior-subordinate relationship will exist between the relatives in circumstances including, but not limited to, the following:

- when the relatives work for the same DHS organizational unit at the same location, or

- when there are fewer than two levels of management separating the relatives.

Relatives will not be employed or placed in circumstances in which fiscal checks and balances are a part of the assigned duties and responsibilities of the positions involved.

Relatives will not be employed in a working relationship in which the nature of the responsibilities may contribute to personal or financial gain, fraud, collusion, other abuses of the positions or conflict of interest. Relatives should not be placed in direct co-worker relationship within the same organizational unit.

For further information on employment of relatives, including the definition of "relatives", please refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1204, Employment Status of Relatives.*

II. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Compensation

DHS offers its employees a wide range of tangible and intangible employee benefits that form a part of a total compensation package. In addition to monetary compensation, there are many other types of indirect compensation and non-monetary benefits. Examples include, but are not limited to, health insurance, retirement benefits, leave and holidays, learning opportunities, the potential for flexible scheduling when job demands allow and the intangible rewards of providing services that can make a difference in DHS customers' lives.

Pay Periods

Salary payments are made on a semi-monthly pay period basis. The first pay period is from the first through the fifteenth of the month, and the second pay period is from the sixteenth through the last day of the month. Paydays are generally the last day of the pay period unless the last day of the pay period falls on a weekend or holiday, in which case payday is the last workday of the pay period.

Payroll Deductions

There are a number of payroll deductions which are applicable to most employees, such as Federal and State income taxes, Social Security and Medicare taxes, and retirement. Voluntary deductions such as health insurance, other insurance options, credit unions and charitable contributions, may also be authorized.

Direct Deposit/Debit Master Card

DHS encourages employees to use direct payroll deposit, if it is available. If not, employees are required to sign up for the DHS Debit Master Card which electronically transfers net pay onto a debit card.

For additional information, please contact your Human Resource Representative or the Office of Financial Services – Payroll.

Holidays

Georgia law provides for 12 holidays each year. The Governor declares the actual days on which holidays will be observed.

Holidays cannot be observed prior to the dates declared by the Governor. Two (2) State holidays that occur during the General Assembly (marked by an * on the holiday list) are observed later in the calendar year. Employees who leave State government after the actual dates of these holidays, but prior to the dates they are observed, as declared by the Governor, are not eligible to be paid for the holidays.

Employees required to work on a holiday will be allowed equivalent time off (8 hours for full-time employees and pro-rata time off for part-time employees). Employees unable to take equivalent time off within 120 days will be paid for the holiday in accordance with DHS policy.

To be eligible for the holiday, employees must be in pay status for the full workday either before or after the holiday.

The following holidays are observed:

- New Year's Day,
- Robert E. Lee's Birthday*,
- Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday,
- George Washington's Birthday*,
- Confederate Memorial Day,
- National Memorial Day,
- Independence Day,
- Labor Day,
- Columbus Day,
- Veterans' Day,
- Thanksgiving Day, and
- Christmas Day.

For more information, please refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1004, Observance of Holidays.*

Annual and Sick Leave

Eligible employees accrue annual leave at the **end of each pay period** provided they are in pay status for the required amount of time. Accrued annual leave will be available for use at the beginning of the pay period **after** it is earned. Full-time employees must be in pay status for at least 40 hours during a pay period to accrue leave. This minimum period is pro-rated for part-time employees by the percentage of time worked.

Eligible full-time employees earn annual leave depending on the length of continuous service at the following rates:

5 hours per pay period	0-60 months (inclusive) – semi-monthly
6 hours per pay period	60 ½ - 120 months (inclusive) – semi-monthly
7 hours per pay period	120 ½ months and greater – semi-monthly

Accrual at the appropriate higher rate begins on the first day of the pay period after the employee completes the required months of continuous service.

Eligible part-time employees accrue annual leave at these rates prorated by the percentage of time worked.

Employees may accumulate up to 360 hours of annual leave. Any annual leave over 360 hours is placed in a forfeited status, but may be restored in cases of illness or disability. In some cases, forfeited annual leave may be counted toward retirement.

Employees may use annual leave for vacations or any other time needed to attend to personal business. Employees must request to use accrued annual leave and receive prior approval from their supervisor, unless an emergency situation exists.

Eligible full-time employees accrue five (5) hours of sick leave **at the end of each pay period.** The amount of sick leave earned is also prorated for eligible part-time employees by the percentage of time worked.

Sick leave may be accumulated up to a total of 720 hours. Any sick leave over 720 hours is placed in a forfeited status, but may be restored in case of illness or disability. In some cases, forfeited sick leave and unused sick leave may be counted toward retirement.

Upon receiving approval, an employee may use accrued sick leave for the following:

- absence due to personal illness or disability;
- absence needed because of exposure to contagious disease when attendance on duty would endanger the health of others;
- absence for dental or medical care; and
- absence due to dental or medical care, illness, accident or death in the immediate family which requires the employee's presence.

"Immediate family" means the employee's spouse, child, parent, brother and sister. Immediate family also includes any other person who resides in the employee's household and is recognized **by law** as a dependent of the employee.

For further information on annual and sick leave, please refer to *DHS Human Services/ Personnel Policy #1006, Annual, Sick and Personal Leave.*

Personal Leave

Employees eligible for leave benefits who have accumulated more than 120 hours of sick leave as of November 30 of any year may convert up to 24 hours of the accumulation in excess of the 120 hours to personal leave. This conversion must be made no later than December 31 of that year for use in the following year.

For detailed information on personal leave, please refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1006, Annual, Sick and Personal Leave.*

Leave Of Absence Without Pay

Authorized officials may grant leaves of absence without pay (LWOP) when deemed appropriate. Leaves of absence without pay are generally approved only for medical reasons when employees are reasonably expected to be able to return to work. Leaves of absence without pay should be approved only for short periods of time, unless there are extraordinary circumstances that support an extended period of time.

For more information, please contact your Human Resource Representative or refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1007, Leave of Absence without Pay*.

Family and Medical Leave

Federal law provides job-protected family and medical leave without pay from work for certain family and medical reasons. DHS permits employees to use available annual, sick and/or personal leave, if appropriate, while on family and medical leave in order to remain in pay status. While on family and medical leave, eligible employees who have health insurance through the State Health Benefit Plan are entitled to maintain this health insurance coverage.

To be eligible for family and medical leave, employees must have been employed with State government for a minimum of 12 months, and have been **present at work** for a minimum of 1,250 hours during the 12 months immediately before the beginning of family and medical leave. Up to 12 work weeks of family and medical leave is available each calendar year. Employees may choose to use accrued leave to continue to receive a pay check during a period of family and medical leave, take leave without pay or use a combination of both to cover the absence from work with supervisory approval. Any period of family and medical leave not covered by accrued leave will be without pay.

For detailed information, please contact your supervisor, Human Resource Representative or the Office of Human Resource Management and Development – Employee Relations Section, or refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1005, Family and Medical Leave*.

Leave Donation

Eligible DHS employees (recipients) may under certain circumstances request leave donations from other DHS employees (donors). Donors may donate accrued annual, sick or personal leave directly to recipients. All donated leave is credited to recipients' **sick** leave balances. Leave donations can only be used for sick leave related reasons as described in *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1006*.

Recipients may be eligible to receive donated leave after using all accrued and forfeited leave, all available compensatory time and after being on authorized leave without pay for at least 80 consecutive hours.

Please contact your supervisor, Human Resource Representative or the Office of Human Resource Management and Development – Operations and Benefits Section, or refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1010, Leave Donation*, for additional information and restrictions.

Court Leave

Court leave may be used by employees on all days summoned for jury duty, subpoenaed or otherwise ordered to attend a judicial proceeding. Employees are required to provide a copy of the summons, subpoena or other judicial order as soon as possible. Court leave is with pay and includes the time actually required by the judicial proceeding and any reasonable time needed to prepare for or recuperate from the ordered duty. Employees are expected to report for work whenever the judicial proceeding schedule permits.

Court leave is not available to employees when they are litigants, defendants or other principal parties or have any other personal or familial interest in the proceedings. Employees may, however, request to use accrued leave to cover these absences from work.

For further information, please refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1008, Court Leave.*

Military Leave

Military leave is a leave of absence from work while engaged in the performance of ordered military duty and while going to and returning from such duty. Military leave may also be used by members of the U.S. Armed Forces, any reserve force or reserve component of the U.S. Armed Forces or any force of the organized militia to attend service schools, for active duty, active duty for training, inactive duty training and examination purposes. DHS employees who are not employed on a temporary basis are eligible for military leave, either with or without pay.

Please refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1009, Military Leave,* for specific information.

Disaster Volunteer Leave

Employees who are certified disaster service volunteers of the American Red Cross may be eligible for disaster volunteer leave with pay to participate in specialized disaster relief under certain conditions. For specific information, please refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1013, Miscellaneous Leave/Time.*

Organ Donation Leave

Employees who donate an organ for transplant will be granted 30 calendar days of leave with pay. For specific information, please refer *to DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1013, Miscellaneous Leave/Time.*

Bone Marrow Donation Leave

Employees who donate bone marrow for transplant will be granted seven (7) calendar days of leave with pay. For specific information, please refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1013, Miscellaneous Leave/Time.*

Blood Donation

Employees may be granted time off during work hours (with pay) to donate blood, blood platelets, or granulocytes. For specific information, please refer to *DHS Human Services/ Personnel Policy #1013, Miscellaneous Time/Leave.*

Voting Time

Employees may be granted leave with pay for up to two hours for voting **only** if the polls are not open two hours before or two hours after scheduled work hours. Employees who do not qualify for voting time with pay may be permitted to take annual or personal leave, compensatory time or leave without pay for voting purposes. For further information, please refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1013, Miscellaneous Time/Leave.*

Retirement

The Employees' Retirement System (ERS) administers retirement benefits for State of Georgia employees, as provided by laws enacted through the General Assembly. The ERS is a defined benefit plan and is qualified under the Internal Revenue Code Section 401(a). Laws governing ERS provide service retirements, death and disability benefits, group term life insurance and permit a refund of contributions and interest to members who leave State Government.

Generally, employees who are scheduled to work at least 35 hours per week on positions with duties that are expected to continue for at least nine months are required to be members of the ERS. Employee and employer contributions are paid into the retirement fund for the welfare of members and their beneficiaries. All benefits are paid from the fund.

Employees become vested in the Employees' Retirement System for service retirement after ten years of creditable service.

Employees hired on or after January 1, 2009 must be enrolled into the Georgia State Employees' Pension and Savings Plan (GSEPS). The GSEPS provides an optional 401K employee contribution, with an employer's match of 100% for the first one percent. Employee's contributions from 2% to 5% are matched by the employer at 50%.

For further information, please refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1902, Retirement*. You may also contact the Office of Human Resource Management and Development – Operations and Benefits Section, or the Employees' Retirement System.

III. OTHER AVAILABLE BENEFITS

Flexible Benefits Program

The Flexible Benefits Program provides a variety of benefits options. Many benefits can be purchased with pre-tax dollars. Since the cost of many of the flexible benefits is deducted prior to determining taxable pay, income taxes may be reduced.

Once enrolled in the Flexible Benefits Program, employees are given an opportunity to change coverage or change options during the open enrollment period in mid October and November of each year. Changes that are made during this time are effective January 1. Employees may be eligible to make changes to coverage at times other than open enrollment for events such as marriage, childbirth or divorce. Open Enrollment dates are set by the State Personnel Administration and the Department of Community Health.

The following options are offered through the Flexible Benefits Program:

- ***Health Insurance,***
- ***Dental Insurance,***
- ***Vision Plan,***
- ***Employee and Dependent Life Insurance,***
- ***Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance,***
- ***Short-term and Long-term Disability Insurance,***
- ***Legal Insurance,***
- ***Long-term Care Insurance, and***
- ***Spending Accounts.***

Please see your Human Resource Representative or contact the Office of Human Resource Management and Development – Operations and Benefits Section for specific information on available benefits, or refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #902, Flexible Benefits.*

Peach State Reserves

Peach State Reserves (PSR) is a plan offered by the State of Georgia to its employees that provide an opportunity to save for retirement while reducing current taxable income and accumulating tax-deferred savings. PSR offers DHS employees a Section 401(K) Plan and a Section 457 Plan.

If you are interested in participating in the Peach State Reserves Program, please contact the GaBreeze Benefits Center at 1-877-342-7339 or visit their website at https://www.GaBreeze.ga.gov

COBRA

Employees are allowed to continue their health insurance coverage under the State Health Benefit Plan in some cases when coverage would normally be lost. The Federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) requires that the Plan offer employees and their qualified dependents healthcare coverage if Plan coverage is lost due to a qualifying event. Examples of a qualifying event include resignation, leave of absence without pay or reduction in work hours. The length of time coverage may be continued is based on the qualifying event.

Under COBRA, employees or dependents must pay the full cost of coverage at the State's group rate. An administrative fee must also be paid. The State Health Benefit Plan provides employees with written notice describing important information about rights and obligations under COBRA when loss of eligibility is reported.

For more detailed information, please contact your Human Resource Representative, the Office of Human Resource Management and Development – Operations and Benefits Section, or refer to your State Health Benefit Plan material.

Georgia Work Away Program

DHS participates in the Georgia WorkAway Program. The WorkAway Program offers alternatives to balance the demands of work and home, including teleworking, alternative and flexible work schedules and compressed workweeks. For more information on this program, please contact your Human Resource Representative, the Office of Human Resource Management and Development, or refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #111, Teleworking,* and *Policy #1002, Official Hours and Work Schedules.*

IV. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees are expected to maintain and exercise the highest moral and ethical standards in carrying out their responsibilities and functions and to perform their jobs in a professional manner. Employees must conduct themselves in a manner that prevents all forms of impropriety, placement of self-interest above public interest, partiality, prejudice, threats, favoritism and undue influence.

Employees must be alert in conducting business with employees and non-employees to avoid even the appearance of misconduct, personal or financial gain, or conflict of interest. While performing departmental duties, employees are required to comply with Federal and State laws, the Code of Ethics for Government Service, the Governor's Executive Order (dated January 15, 2003), and Rules of the State Personnel Board and Department policies.

Employees are required to report all suspected violations of Federal or State law involving DHS employees or anyone contracted to provide services to DHS. Reports should be made to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) immediately upon the employee becoming aware of the suspected violation.

Personal Appearance during Work Hours

While the Department does not specify a Department-wide dress code, employees are expected to be clean and neat in appearance during work hours. As representatives of the State, employees should present a business-like professional image. Dress code policies may be established by DHS organizational units. In certain types of jobs, employees may be required to wear uniforms.

DHS organizational units may designate specific days as "casual days". Dress on casual days may be less formal, but should always be clean, neat and suitable for the work place.

If lettered or illustrated clothing is worn, it should not promote a particular political, moral, religious, personal or other opinion. Clothing which is obscene, vulgar, offensive or inflammatory is prohibited. Employees may be required to change inappropriate dress or instructed not to wear the same or similar clothing in the future. Employees who do not

comply with established dress code standards may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including separation.

Use of State Property

State property is to be used for work-related reasons only. Employees are not to use, misuse or permit the use of State property for other than work-related reasons. State property includes, but is not limited to, computers, telephones, fax machines, copiers or other equipment, supplies, vehicles, work areas and furniture.

The Department reserves the right to conduct reasonable searches on any type of State property including, but not limited to, desks, lockers, work areas, State vehicles, etc. Permission to search must be authorized by the Office of Human Resource Management and Development prior to any search being conducted.

Use of computers, which includes E-mail, Internet and other computer searches and communications, should be professional and for work-related reasons only. The display or transmission of sexually explicit images, messages or cartoons is prohibited. Other prohibited activity includes ethnic slurs, racial comments, off-color jokes or anything that may be considered harassment or showing disrespect for others.

Employees are not to use computers for playing games, conducting inappropriate searches, conducting personal business or otherwise performing other employment activities.

Employees are prohibited from making or charging long-distance telephone calls to the Department, unless work-related. The receiving and making of local telephone calls of infrequent, short duration are permitted. These privileges may, however, be withdrawn if abused. Voice mail messages should be professional, business-like and communicate accurate information.

Use of the Internet for non-work related reasons is permitted on a basis similar to that applied to local telephone calls on State telephones, i.e., the use is infrequent, of short duration and does not interfere with work. This privilege may also be withdrawn if abused.

If approved, employees may have personal items in the work area if suitable and reasonable. These items must not be offensive or inflammatory, or otherwise inconsistent with the Department's work setting. Employees may be required to remove items determined to be inappropriate from work areas at any time.

Employees are responsible for reporting misuse of State property to their supervisors, Human Resource Representatives or other appropriate officials. Misuse of State property may result in disciplinary action, up to and including separation from employment.

Use of Privileged or Confidential Information

Many employees are exposed to privileged or confidential information which may be of significant interest to the public. Privileged or confidential information must not be used by employees to gain advantage for themselves, relatives, friends, or acquaintances.

Privileged or confidential information may only be released by authorized DHS officials.

Use of computers to obtain information concerning clients, patients, customers, other employees or other third parties for non-work-related reason is prohibited.

Activities and Relationships with Non-DHS Employees

Employees must be alert in conducting business with non-employees to avoid even the appearance of misconduct, personal or financial gain or conflict of interest.

Employees must report ownership or partial ownership of a company if the company in which the employee is owner or part owner is doing business, or seeks a business relationship with DHS.

Employees are prohibited from membership on the Board of Directors of any private or private non-profit agency with the Department of Human Services contract.

Employees are prohibited from accepting personal favors or benefits under circumstances that may influence or give the appearance of influencing their official activities. Such favors and benefits may not be accepted by employees on behalf of other individuals.

Employees are prohibited from involvement in official activities in which a client, patient or customer is a relative or in-law. Employees are prohibited from involvement in official activities in which a client, patient or customer is a personal acquaintance when the relationship creates a conflict or perception of conflict of interest.

Misconduct or abuse involving clients, patients or customers in any form is a matter of serious concern and will not be tolerated.

Arrests and Convictions

Employees are **required** to disclose felony convictions on *Applications for Employment* and convictions and/or pending charges on *State Security Questionnaire/Loyalty Oath* Forms. Employees are also **required** to notify their supervisors, appropriate Human Resource Representative or other authorized official of any arrests and/or convictions **within five (5) calendar days** of the date of arrest or conviction. A determination of appropriate action will be made on a case-by-case basis.

For detailed information regarding standards of conduct and ethics, pleae contact your Human Resource Representative, the Office of Human Resource Management and Development – Employee Relations, or refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1201, Standards of Conduct and Ethics in Government.*

V. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

The Performance Management Process establishes a common salary increase eligibility date of *October 1* each year, unless changed by the General Assembly. Generally, the performance review period is *July 1 through June 30* of each year.

Performance Management Plans

DHS employees eligible to be considered for performance-based salary increases are to receive Performance Management Plans for each new performance review period or when placed in a new position. Performance Management Plans include:

- Statewide Core Competencies,
- Individual Goals/Competencies, and
- Job Responsibilities

Supervisors have the authority to add individual goals/competencies, assign job responsibilities; take from, add to, eliminate entirely or otherwise change the duties and responsibilities of employees; and to direct and control their work. Based on the needs of the Department, the assignment of duties and responsibilities may be temporary or permanent. When significant changes are made during a review period, Performance Management Plans should be modified accordingly.

Interim Reviews

Evaluating supervisors must meet with employees **at least once** during the performance review period to conduct an interim review of the employees' work performance and compliance with terms and conditions of employment. Notes of such meetings should be placed in the supervisory file. A Management Review Form may be used to record the meeting but is not required.

Classified employees on working test due to promotion or interdepartmental transfer are to be provided a Management Review Form within ten calendar days of completing half of the working test period or as near to such date as is practicable. The Management Review Form should include an evaluation of the employees' progress and recommendations, if any, for corrective action.

Performance Management Evaluations

Performance Management Evaluations are completed by evaluating supervisors to rate performance and adherence to terms and conditions of employment of employees eligible to be considered for performance-based salary increases. Based on these evaluations, salary increase determinations are made.

For specific information concerning the Performance Management Process, please contact your supervisor, Human Resource Representative, or the Office of Human Resource Management and Development, or refer *to DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #701, Performance Management.*

VI. HOURS OF WORK & CLOSURES

Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) applies to all employees of the Department unless employees are specifically exempted because of their work assignment. Employees who are subject to the FLSA are considered "non-exempt".

The provisions of FLSA include guidance for establishing work periods, payment of minimum wages, and hours of work, overtime compensation, and required record keeping.

Overtime

Non-exempt employees are not authorized to work more that 40 hours in a work period, unless prior approval is received from supervisors. Emergency situations in which prior approval is not possible will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Whenever possible, non-exempt employees who have met their established work hours in a designated work period should have work hours adjusted during the work period to avoid overtime accrual. Non-exempt employees earn overtime at a rate of time and one-half for time **actually worked** beyond 40 hours in a work period. Overtime will be granted as compensatory time, or in unique situations, employees may receive overtime pay.

Exempt employees are not entitled to overtime for time worked beyond 40 hours in a work period. In unusual circumstances when exempt employees are required to work an extraordinary number of hours, supervisors may grant some time off within a reasonable period of time. Time off for exempt employees should not be on an hour-for-hour basis.

If you have questions about FLSA, please contact your supervisor, Human Resource Representative, or the Office of Human Services Management and Development, or refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1001, Fair Labor Standards Act.*

Official Work Hours and Work Schedules

The official work hours of the Department are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday (except for 24-hour facilities). During this time all offices and facilities should be open for business, unless not possible due to administrative or programmatic needs. All offices and facilities are to be adequately staffed to transact business during those hours necessary and appropriate for their service and administrative functions.

Work schedules may vary depending upon the type of job and work location. In other operations, work hours may vary by Units, Sections, Offices, or Divisions.

The work hours of employees must be scheduled based on the needs of the organization. Supervisors have the authority to assign hours of work and arrange the work schedules of employees as necessary to meet the needs of the Department.

Managers may allow employees to work their desired hours if it does not negatively impact the Department or the workload of other employees. Provisions for adequate supervision of employees working modified hours must be made, and written records of such employees' work hours must be maintained.

In order to comply with efforts to improve air quality, supervisors may adjust employees' work schedules to accommodate alternative commute options.

For more information, please refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1002, Official Hours and Work Schedules.*

Office Closures

There may be times when the Department of Human Services (DHS) organizational units may be closed due to inclement weather or other emergencies. Generally, the Governor will determine when DHS organizational units in the metro Atlanta area will be closed due to inclement weather. The DHS Commissioner has the authority to close any DHS organizational unit due to inclement weather or other emergencies. The DHS Commissioner has delegated this authority to Division/Office Directors for closures outside of metro Atlanta. This authority may be further delegated to appropriate staff throughout the state

For further information, please refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #108, Office Closures.*

VII. SAFETY & WORK-RELATED INJURY, ILLNESS OR EXPOSURE TO OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE

Observing Safety Regulations

Safety is a shared responsibility between employees and supervisors. It is important for employees to be "safety conscious" and take precautions to avoid injury, illness and exposure to occupational disease while performing official duties. Employees are to follow all safety rules and regulations applicable to an assignment and are to bring potentially unsafe or unhealthful working conditions and/or potential exposure to hazardous chemicals to the attention of supervisors for review and appropriate action. For information on safety, please refer to the publication entitled *Safety Guidelines* located at the Office of Human Resource Management and Development's official website.

Workers' Compensation

Employees incurring work-related injuries, illnesses or exposures to occupational disease are eligible for Workers' Compensation benefits. Employees pay no premium for this coverage.

All work-related injuries, illnesses and exposures to occupational disease should be immediately reported to the supervisor. If an incident is not reported within 30 calendar days, Workers' Compensation coverage may be jeopardized.

Supervisors are required to immediately report all work-related injuries, illnesses and exposures to occupational disease that require medical treatment or result in time lost from work in accordance with the provisions of *DHS Human Services/ Personnel Policy #1701, Workers' Compensation and Special Injury Return-to-Work Program.*

In emergency situations, medical treatment should be sought from the nearest health care facility. In all other situations, employees must contact the Medical Review Officer (MRO) at 1-877-656-7475, who will make the necessary medical referral. Employees who do not seek non-emergency treatment based on the MRO referral may jeopardize Workers' Compensation benefits.

If a claim is approved by the Workers' Compensation Program, medical expenses for the work-related injury, illness or exposure to occupational disease are covered. These include hospital bills, prescribed drugs, ambulance, physicians' and other medical expenses.
If a work-related injury, illness or exposure to occupational disease causes lost work time, employees have the option of using accrued leave or receiving Workers' Compensation benefits for the loss of wages. Workers' Compensation wage loss benefits begin after seven (7) calendar days of disability. Employees cannot receive Workers' Compensation wage loss benefits at the same time as receiving salary by using accrued leave.

Employees must complete the *Selection of Payment Option* Form to choose either use of accrued leave or placement on leave without pay in order to receive Workers' Compensation wage loss benefits during the period of disability.

When work-related injuries, illnesses or exposures to occupational disease occur, employees will be returned to work in accordance with the DHS Return-to-Work Program, whenever feasible, as quickly and safely as possible.

Special Injury

Eligible employees who are physically disabled as a result of a physical injury which occurred in the line of duty, and was caused by a willful act of violence committed by someone other than a fellow employee, are entitled to a leave of absence with regular salary for the period of time that they are physically unable to perform their job duties. Special injury benefits are provided for up to a maximum of 180 workdays for injuries resulting from a single incident.

For detailed information, please refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1701, Workers' Compensation and Special Injury Return-to-Work Program*, and *Policy #1702, Leave and Payment for Workers' Compensation and Special Injury Claims,* or contact your supervisor or Human Resource Representative.

VIII. OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

In general, the Department is not concerned as an employer with the non-work time of employees. Off-duty conduct becomes a legitimate concern, however, when it affects departmental operations or reflects negatively on State Government. Such off-duty conduct may result in appropriate disciplinary action being taken.

Other Employment

In addition to their DHS jobs, employees may have other employment if it:

1. Does not violate any Federal or State law, Rules of the State Personnel Board or DHS policy;

2. Does not create a conflict of interest with Departmental employment; and

3. Does not interfere or conflict with their ability to effectively perform assigned duties and responsibilities with the Department. In this regard, employees' jobs with DHS must be considered primary.

Prior to beginning other employment, employees must submit a *Request for Approval of Other Employment* Form to their immediate supervisors.

For specific information regarding other employment, please see your supervisor or Human Resource Representative, or refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1203, Other Employment.*

Political Activity

DHS employees are protected from undue political pressure, influence or coercion by Federal and State laws, as well as Department policy. These same laws and policy limit political activity while assuring that the right to participate in the political process is preserved.

For information on political activity that is allowed, as well as political activity that is not allowed, please refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1202, Political Activity,* or to the publication entitled *Political Activity* located at the Office of Human Resource Management and Development's official website.

Questions concerning political activity should be directed to your supervisor, Human Resource Representative or the Office of Human Resource Management and Development – Employee Relations Section.

IX. ALCOHOL AND DRUG POLICIES

Drug-Free Workplace

In accordance with Federal and State laws, the Department of Human Services is committed to providing a drug-free workplace. Employees are prohibited from illegally engaging in the manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of illegal drugs **at any time or place including the workplace.**

As part of the terms and conditions of employment, employees are to be free of illegal drugs while at work or on duty. Also, employees are not to report for work while impaired by over-the-counter drugs. Since it is against the law to take drugs prescribed for someone else, employees should not use someone else's prescription drugs. Employees may be required to submit to drug testing.

Employees who do not comply with the above are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including separation, and future employment by the Department may be denied.

Alcohol-Free Workplace

As part of the terms and conditions of employment, employees are to be free of alcohol while at work or on duty. Employees may be required to submit to alcohol testing. Employees who do not comply with the above are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including separation, and future employment by the Department may be denied.

For specific information on alcohol and drug testing programs, please refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1301, Drug-Free Workplace,* and *Policy #1302, Alcohol/Drug Testing Programs.*

X. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Employees are encouraged to bring work-related concerns to their supervisors for review and potential resolution. Supervisors should communicate directly with employees and be open to review of concerns. Questions concerning any aspect of conflict resolution should be directed to your supervisor, Human Resource Representative or the Office Human Resource Management and Development – Employee Relations Section.

Third Party Involvement in Employment Matters

Supervisors will maintain contact and relations with DHS employees on an individual and direct basis rather than through third part individuals, representatives or organizations.

There will be no recognition, expressed or implied, of any third party involvement in any matter pertaining to management of staff. Third parties include, but are not limited to, employees' relatives, friends, acquaintances, representatives of professional associations, those who are not considered in a "need to know" status, and attorneys.

Supervisors will not meet, confer, negotiate or engage in discussions with any third party individual, representative or organization regarding Departmental employment matters, unless included in the exceptions listed in DHS policy. For further information, please refer

to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #107, Third Party Involvement in Employment Issues.*

Grievance Procedures

Internal Departmental grievance procedures have been established to review allegations of unfavorable employment decisions and conditions that are not considered unlawful discrimination or sexual harassment. There are separate grievance procedures for eligible classified and unclassified employees.

There are specific deadlines by which a grievance must be filed. Attempts at informal resolution do not extend the filing deadlines.

Please refer to the *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1501, Grievance Procedure for Classified Employees, and Policy #1502, Grievance Procedure for Unclassified Employees,* for specific information.

Unlawful Discrimination Complaint Procedure

Complaints alleging unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, disability, age or religious or political opinions or affiliations, and allegations of sexual harassment may be filed with the Office of Human Resource Management and Development – Employee Relations Section for investigation. **There are specific deadlines by which a complaint must be filed.**

Filing a complaint through this procedure does not prevent otherwise eligible employees from filing with the State Commission on Equal Opportunity or other appropriate Federal agency.

Employees who believe that they have been subjected to sexual harassment should immediately report the incident to an appropriate supervisor, Human Resource Representative or the Office of Human Resource Management and Development – Employee Relations Section.

For specific information, please refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #102, Sexual Harassment, and Policy #1503, Unlawful Discrimination Complaint Procedure.*

Mediation Procedure

The Mediation Procedure is a forum for employees involved in work-related disagreements to come together to discuss their concerns with the help of a certified mediator. The intent is to resolve disputes between employees and/or supervisors by reaching a mutually satisfactory agreement. Mediation is designed to be informal and non-adversarial. It may take place either as a part of a grievance or outside of the grievance process.

For more information, please refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1505, Medication Procedure.*

Review of Written Reprimands

Eligible classified employees who are issued written reprimands may file a written request for review with the Office of Human Resource Management and Development – Employee Relations Section. **There are specific deadlines by which a request for review must be filed.**

For more information, please refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1504, Process for Review of Written Reprimands.*

XI. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Disciplinary action may be appropriate due to employees' inappropriate behavior and/or unsatisfactory performance. When disciplinary action (except for separation) is taken, employees should be given sufficient information to enable them to correct the inappropriate behavior and/or unsatisfactory performance.

Since only classified employees are covered by the Rules of the State Personnel Board, there are separate disciplinary action procedures for classified and unclassified employees.

For complete information, please refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1601, Disciplinary/Dismissal Actions – Classified Employees* and *Policy #1602, Disciplinary/ Separation Actions – Unclassified Employees.*

XIV. ENDING EMPLOYMENT

Resignation

Employees who resign should provide advance written notice. Generally, a two-week notice is recommended, unless a shorter period is acceptable to the supervisor. The date of resignation becomes fixed upon receiving notice, and can only be changed with the approval of the supervisor.

Retirement

Employees who have selected a retirement date and have received confirmation from the Employees' Retirement System should advise their supervisors of the retirement date as soon as possible. Supervisors should be given at least thirty (30)-calendar days advance notice.

Staff Reduction

Employees may be separated from employment through a staff reduction as a result of shortage of work or funds, change in organization, or otherwise.

If classified employees will be affected by staff reduction, specific procedures must be followed to implement a Reduction in Force, as set forth in State Personnel Board Rules

If unclassified employees will be affected by staff reduction, their knowledge, skills, abilities, performance and length of service should be reviewed to determine which employees will be retained.

For specific information, please contact your Human Resource Representative or the Office of Human Resource Management and Development.

Unemployment Compensation

All employees who are separated from employment for any reason should receive a *Separation Notice* Form and may file for unemployment compensation benefits. Upon application for unemployment compensation benefits, a determination of eligibility will be made by the Georgia Department of Labor.

XIII. GENERAL INFORMATION

Identification Badges

DHS organizations may require employees to wear identification badges issued by the Department while at work or on duty. Employees are not to wear these identification badges while away from the work place during off-duty hours.

Smoking Policy

Smoking is prohibited in all DHS facilities and vehicles. Smoking is also prohibited in employees' personal vehicles during work times when clients, patients or customers are being transported. Smoking is permitted only in designated areas **outside** buildings during meals and a maximum of two discretionary 15-minute break periods. Areas designated for smoking should not be primary entrances or exits, and should not present a negative image to the public.

For more information, please refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #103, Smoking Policy.*

HIV/AIDS in The Workplace

Employees are expected to care for, treat or provide services to all clients, patients and customers. The guidelines for health and safety standards established by the Department regarding HIV/AIDS should be followed. Supervisors are to ensure that employees are trained in correct procedures and provided protective clothing and proper equipment in order to provide services to those with HIV/AIDS.

Information concerning HIV/AIDS status and testing is confidential. Employees are expected to protect employee, client, and patient and customer confidentiality.

For more information, please contact your supervisor, Human Resource Representative or the Office of Human Resource Management and Development.

Travel

DHS employees may be required to travel in order to perform official duties. State law and Departmental regulations allow employees to be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred while traveling in the performance of such duties. Please see your supervisor or Human Resource Representative for a copy of the current travel regulations.

Credit Unions

Human Services Employees' Credit Union was founded in 1951 on the credit union principle of "not for charity, not for profit, but service for all." They have existed solely for the purpose of serving their members' best interest. This focus on members instead of profit allows them to offer a full range of financial services specifically designed to meet the membership's needs and most often provide substantial savings.

A voluntary board of directors administers Human Services Employees' Credit Union and establishes and reviews policy. The Directors are credit union members who are elected by the membership and serve without pay.

Members view credit union service as a benefit that helps them save money. They also find a credit union staff that is dedicated to delivering convenient, dependable, personal service to every member. Human Service Employees' Credit Union wants to be DHS employees' **primary** financial institution and offer an array of products and programs for almost every need. And if they don't offer it, ask and they may just design a program around your request…because there is a very good chance that other members have the same need. A sample of services available:

LOANS:	Automobiles (new & used) RV's, motorcycles, boats, tractors, Personal Loans, Retirement 'Buy-Back' loans, Consolidation Loans, & more! Home Equity Lines of Credit, 1st Mortgages, Fixed Rate 2nd mortgages
SAVINGS:	Regular Share Savings, Holiday Club and Vacation Club Accounts Certificate of Savings: 6 month, 1 year, 2 year IRA Accounts (Roth, Traditional, Coverdale)
OTHER:	VISA Credit cards that earn points for every $1 spent VISA Debit cards "Free" checking "Free" online banking (Called Virtual Branch) Educational programs

DHS employees can join the credit union by opening a share/savings account with a minimum deposit of $30. Credit union membership is also available to any immediate family member regardless of where they live or work. And "Once a member, Always a member", whether you move, change jobs or even go back to school.

Convenient direct deposit allows members to have access to their funds immediately when paid and online technology gives the most up to date account information and convenience

possible! The range of services is varied and you are urged to visit the website at: www.hsecu.org for more information. The office is located at 101 Marietta St. NW, Suite 140, Atlanta, Georgia 30303.

Human Services Employees' Credit Union offers the utmost in security to our members. Accounts are insured up to $100,000 through the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA), a U.S. government agency.

Employees' Suggestion and Awards Program

The Employees' Suggestion and Awards Program encourages employees to make suggestions that will promote efficiency and save funds. Both monetary and non-monetary awards are possible.

Suggestions should be submitted in writing to Suggestion Program Coordinator at the State Personnel Administration.

For more information, please refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1802, Employees' Suggestion Program.*

Charitable Contributions Program

The Charitable Contributions Program is an annual statewide program that gives State employees the opportunity to support eligible charitable organizations. Employees may choose to contribute through a voluntary monthly payroll deduction or may choose to make a one-time contribution.

For additional information, please contact your Human Resource Representative or the Office of Human Resource Management and Development, or refer to *DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1801, Charitable Contributions Program.*

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We hope that the information in this HANDBOOK is useful to you. If you have questions not answered in the HANDBOOK, you should:

- ✓ *Contact your Supervisor;*
- ✓ *Contact your Human Resource Representative;*
- ✓ *Contact the Office of Human Resource Management and Development; or*
- ✓ *Refer to the DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy Manual.*

This HANDBOOK is not a contract of employment or a legal document, and is not to be interpreted as such. The Department has the right to change information in this HANDBOOK at any time or for any reason without prior notice.

Please remember to sign and date the EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM at the back of this HANDBOOK and turn it in to your new employee orientation coordinator.

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EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

The *EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK* has important information about DHS employment. My signature below acknowledges that I have received the *HANDBOOK*, and that I understand it is my responsibility to read and comply with the guidelines described in it. I understand that, if I have any questions not answered in the *HANDBOOK*, I should

- contact my supervisor;
- contact my Human Resource Representative;
- contact the Office of Human Resource Management and Development; or
- refer to the DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy Manual

I UNDERSTAND THAT THIS *HANDBOOK* IS NOT A CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT OR A LEGAL DOCUMENT, AND IS NOT TO BE INTERPRETED AS SUCH. The Department has the right to change information in this HANDBOOK at any time or for any reason without prior notice.

Please complete below:

EMPLOYEE'S NAME (please print)

_____

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE

_____

WORK LOCATION & ADDRESS

_____ DATE

_____ _____

This copy should be retained with the HANDBOOK for future reference.

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Please complete below.

EMPLOYEE'S NAME (please print)

_____

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE

_____

WORK LOCATION &ADDRESS

_____ DATE

_____ _____

Supervisors: Please place a copy of this signed form in your supervisory file and forward the original to the employee's personnel file.