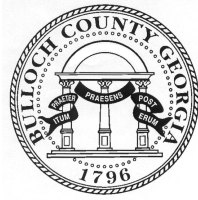


# Bulloch County Employee Handbook



## **General Purpose**

This employee handbook is intended to provide you a summary and brief explanation of our key policies, procedures and general practices. The information contained in this handbook is meant to assist you in understanding your responsibilities as an employee of Bulloch County.

All employees are subject to the provisions of this handbook. It and the policies and procedures that it covers may be canceled or changed at any time, with or without notice. In such case, the new or revised policies will supersede those published in this handbook. Should there be a conflict between information provided in the handbook and the provisions of the Bulloch County Personnel Policy Manual, the policy manual will govern.

This handbook offers a summary of the policies contained in the Bulloch County Personnel Policy Manual. All employees are expected to familiarize themselves with the policies. A copy of the Bulloch County Personnel Policy Manual is available for your review from your supervisor. All policies are subject to review and revision on an ongoing basis, and policies may be added, deleted or revised.

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## **Background Check**

It is the policy of Bulloch County to validate the information you provide on the Bulloch County employment application including work history, criminal background, licensure, and education as required for the position. If you do not meet the standards for hiring, you will not be considered for employment or transfer.

You must complete and sign all pre-employment paperwork including the application and background check authorization in order to be considered for employment.

If you are convicted of a misdemeanor or felony, except for routine traffic violations, you are required to report such conviction to Human Resources and to your supervisor within three days of the conviction. You may be involuntarily separated, based upon your position and the nature of the conviction.

## **Dual Employment**

It is the policy of Bulloch County to ensure compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), aggregation of scheduled hours for benefit eligibility, and appropriate payment of FICA taxes.

You are a Dual Employee if you work in more than one department or work multiple jobs within the same department. The Primary Department is the department where you have the most regularly scheduled hours. The Secondary Department is any department where a dual employee works other than the Primary Department.

Scheduled hours for Regular Full Time and Part Time jobs will be aggregated to determine benefits eligibility. Temporary, Special Shift or Intermittent positions will not receive benefits even if total hours worked equal an amount that would otherwise be entitled to benefits.

To begin a dual job, you need to fill out a dual employment form in Human Resources and secure approval of your primary job Department Head. This should be done at least two weeks before the start date.

## **Employment Guidelines**

It is the policy of Bulloch County to hire those individuals who meet employment requirements and are the most qualified applicant. Bulloch County is an equal opportunity employer and complies with applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and guidelines regarding equal opportunity employment.

All newly hired County employees are on a probationary status which, unless provided otherwise, extends for three (3) months from the date of hire. Probationary periods may be extended under special circumstances. Probationary Employees are "at will" employees, meaning that they can be terminated from employment with or without cause.

Employees are classified into the following types once the Probationary Period has been completed: Regular Full-Time, Regular Part-Time, Temporary, Special Shift, and Intermittent.

Regular Full-Time Employees and Regular Part-Time Employees may only be terminated for cause.

Temporary, Special Shift and Intermittent Employees are "at will" employees, meaning that they can be terminated from employment with or without cause.

All employees must attend New Employee Orientation, and in most circumstances you should attend before you start work in your department.

## **Employment of Relatives**

It is the policy of Bulloch County to consider for employment relatives of an employee provided the applicant meets all of the qualifications for employment. Such employment should not create either a direct or indirect supervisor/subordinate relationship with the family member, or create either an actual conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest. No Bulloch County employee may seek to influence the outcome of selection, transfer, promotion or corrective action decisions of relatives.

A Relative includes immediate family members, including spouse, child, parent, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, father-in-law, mother-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, stepparent, stepchild, stepsister, stepbrother, or other relative living in your household. The relationships include those arising from half blood, adoption, or marriage.

Relatives of members of the Board of Commissioners are ineligible for employment by any County department as either regular full-time or regular part-time employees; provided, however, that a relative who is already employed by the County as a regular full-time or regular part-time employee at the time of the election of members of the Board of Commissioners shall be eligible to remain so employed by the County. Assuming other policies and guidelines relating to conflicts of interest are met, relatives of the Board of Commissioners shall be eligible for employment in any County department as temporary, special shift, or intermittent employees. Relatives of the County Manager are ineligible for employment in any capacity in any County department.

## **Employee Records**

It is the policy of Bulloch County to maintain records for applicants, employees and past employees in order to document service dates, employment-related decisions, evaluate and assess policies and comply with government record keeping and reporting requirements.

All information contained in employee files, regardless of location, will be kept confidential, except as needed for business purposes or as disclosed to third parties as required by law.

You are responsible for ensuring that Human Resources has your current employee data including home address, name, dependents, etc.

## **Equal Employment Opportunity**

Bulloch County is an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) employer and complies with applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and guidelines regarding equal opportunity employment.

Bulloch County does not tolerate the intimidation of, harassment of, or discrimination against individuals with regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, age, veteran status or any other characteristic protected by law.

In order to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions at Bulloch County will be based on merit, qualification, and abilities, including:

- Recruiting, hiring, placement, transfer, promotion and demotion
- Training, development, and educational opportunities
- Resolution of employee complaints
- Compensation and benefits
- Reasonable accommodation to disabled persons

Bulloch County encourages all employees to bring questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in the workplace to the immediate attention of Human Resources or management.

Anyone found to be engaging in any type of unlawful discrimination will be subject to corrective action, up to and including involuntary separation.

### **Hiring of Minors**

It is the policy of Bulloch County to verify the age of minors seeking employment with Bulloch County and to obtain work authorization for those minors.

### **Hours of Work**

It is the policy of Bulloch County to establish time and duration of work hours according to service needs, work production flow, and state and federal guidelines.

The normal work week is Monday through Sunday beginning and ending at midnight on Sunday. The normal work day, for most positions, is eight hours and an unpaid meal period. Rest breaks of twenty minutes or less are considered as time worked.

If you are an hourly employee, your manager may schedule overtime as needed. You must work overtime if requested by a manager. You may not work overtime without the prior approval of your manager or department director. You may not work outside the parameters of your schedule. To allow you time to prepare for work at the start of a shift and to wrap up work at the end of a shift, you have a 7 minute grace period at the beginning and end of a shift. You may clock in to work up to seven minutes before the start of a shift and leave up to seven minutes after the end of a shift before overtime calculations begin.

To ensure that pay is correct with no improper deductions, you should review pay stubs promptly to identify and report any errors. Any complaint will be resolved within a reasonable time given all the facts and circumstances. If an investigation reveals that improper deductions were made, you will be reimbursed.

### **Licensure**

It is the policy of Bulloch County to require you to have and keep current licensure if it is required by your job. It is your responsibility to keep your licensure current.

You may not work if you allow your licensure to expire. In this event, the department director is responsible for placing you on disciplinary suspension until evidence of current licensure is verified. You may be given a maximum of thirty days disciplinary suspension to produce evidence of current licensure. If you are unable to produce such evidence, you will be separated from employment.

### **Orientation and Training**

It is the policy of Bulloch County to require employees to attend certain educational classes as assigned, and to offer employees optional training and education to enhance personal growth and development and organizational effectiveness.

New Employee Orientation, or an equivalent, must be completed before you report for work in your department. Additionally, each employee must complete the initial orientation as designated for the position before being assigned to work independently.

You must seek authorization from your department director to attend educational programs that will help your job performance or growth and development. Training will be conducted during normal work hours whenever practical.

## **Sunshine Law**

It is the policy of Bulloch County that employees should have no expectation of privacy beyond those specifically exempted by law from the Sunshine Law. You have obligations and responsibilities to follow the Georgia State Law commonly referred to as the Sunshine Law that makes most public records and official meetings open to the public.

All requests for records under the Sunshine Law will be processed within three days and in accordance with Georgia Law. The County Staff Attorney is available to provide guidance and may be contacted with questions about open records requests.

The receipt of personal mail at County work locations not only creates a cost to the County for processing it, but the mail may become subject to Georgia's Sunshine Law and could be treated as a public document. Therefore, the receipt of personal mail at any County work location is prohibited.

## **Transfer and Promotion**

It is the policy of Bulloch County to facilitate transfers within departments and/or within Bulloch County. Employees interested in applying for transfer will be given consideration for transfer into a position for which they are qualified prior to the hiring of an external candidate.

To be eligible for transfer, you must have been in your current position for at least six months and must meet all minimum requirements, including testing, for the position. If additional background screening is required, and the criminal background check received by Bulloch County is unacceptable, you will not be considered for transfer and may be involuntarily separated. If drug/alcohol screening is not successfully completed, when required, you will not be considered for transfer and may be involuntarily separated.

If you have a current corrective action, you may be considered for transfer upon the approval of both the current manager and the interviewing manager.

You must complete an employee transfer request form and submit the form to the Human Resources department for approval and routing.

Should an offer be made and accepted, you are responsible for giving the appropriate notice to your supervisor. Transfers should generally occur between two weeks and thirty days from your acceptance of an offer, and should coincide with the beginning of a payroll period.

## **Work Authorization**

It is the policy of Bulloch County to require all employees to provide proof of eligibility for employment within the United States, in compliance with federal regulations.

## **Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)**

It is the policy of Bulloch County to encourage employees to bring work related complaints to the attention of management. You are provided with a process to present your issue for review and to appeal decisions by management through an internal process. This process allows for investigation of issues, open discussion and timely final decisions. Any current Bulloch County employee is eligible to utilize the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process. Claims related to illegal acts will be investigated whether or not an employee makes a formal ADR request.

If you are experiencing a conflict, you are encouraged to first seek to resolve the issue directly with your supervisor, and if it is not successfully resolved, to seek resolution through the chain of command. If this is not successful and/or not appropriate, eligible issues may be addressed through ADR.

Eligible issues included in this policy are those which involve a Negative Employment Action: failure to secure a transfer or promotion or a written corrective action. This policy does not apply to claims under an insurance policy provided by Bulloch County, complaints about annual reviews that do not result in Negative Employment Action, joint or group complaints, or conflicts between co-workers unless the complaint relates to unlawful actions.

You are encouraged to use the ADR process and will not, under any circumstances, be penalized for doing so. No employee may retaliate, harass or intimidate any employee for participating.

You may choose to participate in the ADR process by submitting a request to Human Resources. The request should include all issue-related information and relevant documentation. You should do so within thirty calendar days of the issue.

All information concerning the complaint will be confidential, except as needed for business purposes or when required by law.

Human Resources will review the issue with you, and will conduct an investigation and communicate a determination in writing.

### **Attendance and Punctuality**

It is the policy of Bulloch County to require employees to report for work punctually as scheduled for all assigned shifts.

You must provide Reasonably Immediate Notice: notice that is given no later than 28 hours after the time you were scheduled to report to work.

Time away from work must be authorized by the supervisor or designee. An employee who fails to report to work without authorized leave or who fails to give reasonably immediate notice after failing to report to work may be separated from employment for job abandonment.

Employees are expected to report for work as scheduled in the event of inclement weather, unless otherwise notified. Employees who are unable to report for work during inclement weather are expected to follow the reporting guidelines as required for any other absence or late arrival.

Three occurrences of absence in a three-month period are considered excessive, and may be grounds for corrective action.

Tardiness, or occurrences of leaving early, three times in a three-month period are considered excessive and may be grounds for corrective action.

### **Drug Free Workplace**

Bulloch County is committed to providing a safe work environment and to fostering the well-being and health of its employees. That commitment is jeopardized when any County employee illegally uses drugs on or off the job, comes to work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, possesses, distributes, or sells drugs in the workplace, or uses alcohol on the job. Bulloch County takes very seriously its responsibility and commitment to provide and maintain a safe and productive working environment free of alcohol and drug abuse. Therefore, any employee who violates any portion of the County's substance abuse policy, including but not limited to the refusal to submit to a substance abuse test when required to do so, shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

It is a violation of County policy for any employee to use, possess, sell, trade, offer for sale, or offer to buy illegal drugs or otherwise engage in the illegal use of drugs on or off the job. It is a violation of County policy for any employee to report to work under the influence of or while possessing in your body, blood, or urine illegal drugs in any detectable amount. It is a violation of County policy for any employee to report to work under the influence of or impaired by alcohol, or to consume or possess alcoholic beverages on County premises. It is a violation of County policy for any employee to use prescription drugs illegally, i.e., to use prescription drugs that have not been legally obtained or in a manner or for a purpose other than prescribed. However, nothing in this policy precludes the appropriate use of legally prescribed medications.

In compliance with Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991 and Federal Highway Administration regulations (49 CFR, Part 382), Bulloch County will maintain a program for testing alcohol and controlled substances for CDL holders. This program will include pre-employment, reasonable suspicion, random and post-accident alcohol and controlled substances testing of applicants for employment or employees who are required to hold Commercial Driver's License (CDL). Separate testing may be required to comply with federal regulations.

As part of the post offer assessment, Bulloch County will conduct drug testing on all final applicants for safety sensitive positions.

Any employee who sustains a work-related accident or injury may be required to submit to a drug/alcohol test. Refusal to submit to the test and/or failure to cooperate during the testing process may result in involuntary separation from employment.

Employees in all positions designated as Safety Sensitive shall be required to submit to a drug and alcohol screening test at random or on a periodic basis as determined by Human Resources.

All employees are subject to testing when there is a reasonable suspicion of drug or alcohol use in the workplace.

Any employee using prescription medication while on the job shall do so in strict accordance with medical directions. It is your responsibility to notify the prescribing physician of the duties required by your position and to ensure the physician approves the use of the prescription medication while you are performing his/her duties. The abuse and/or misuse of legally prescribed drugs, including the performance of duties when you know or should know that he or she is potentially impaired due to prescription drug use, shall be prohibited and is a violation of this policy. Employees and job applicants shall at the time of testing, provide the testing agency with a list of those prescriptions and over-the-counter medications you have recently used.

Nothing in this policy should be construed to restrict your rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act or other law.

### **Harassment**

It is the policy of Bulloch County to provide a work atmosphere for its employees that are free from harassment from any source, and to require employees to maintain a work atmosphere that is free from harassment of any kind including verbal, physical, or sexual harassment. It is the policy of Bulloch County to provide employees a procedure for reporting harassment. Retaliation toward any employee who reports harassment is prohibited.

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



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

Harassment is any verbal, visual, or physical conduct which has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment because of race, religion, national origin, ancestry, disability, marital status, age, or any other protected status.

You are required to maintain a work atmosphere that is free from harassment of any kind including verbal, physical or sexual harassment.

If you feel harassed, you are strongly urged and encouraged to report the situation to your supervisor. If your supervisor is unavailable or you believe it would be inappropriate to contact that person, you should contact the Human Resources department or the County Manager. If you make a report, you are not required to do so in writing but you are required to maintain the confidentiality of the information, discussing details only with those individuals within the organization on a "need to know" basis.

The Human Resources department is responsible for conducting a thorough and confidential investigation and for conducting corrective action if the evidence is sufficient to confirm that harassment has taken place.

If you observe anyone violating this policy, notify your supervisor, a representative of Human Resources, or the County Manager.

Retaliation against employees for reporting sexual harassment or other illegal forms of harassment or assisting the organization in the investigation of a complaint will not be permitted. Retaliation can include, but is not limited to, such acts as refusing to recommend an employee for a benefit for which he or she qualifies, spreading rumors, encouraging hostility from co-workers and escalating the harassment.

If, after investigating a harassment complaint, the Human Resource department learns that an employee has made a complaint in bad faith or knowingly provided false information regarding a complaint, disciplinary action may be taken against the individual who provided the false information.

## **Hearings**

It is the policy of Bulloch County to allow any Regular Full-Time or Regular Part-Time employee who has been demoted, suspended without pay or terminated to have the right to appeal for a hearing.

Whenever the term "employee" is used in this section, the term employee refers to Regular Full-Time and Regular Part-Time Employees, both of whom can only be terminated for cause.

Cause includes, but is not limited to, unsatisfactory work performance or a violation of any of the provisions of this policy manual or any other policies applicable to your department.

Adverse Employment Action includes termination, demotion that results in a decrease in pay, or a suspension without pay.

### Pre-Termination Hearing

Department Heads or their designees may take adverse employment action against an employee for cause. Prior to taking such adverse employment action, the Department Head, or designee, shall notify the employee orally or in writing of the specific reasons why the adverse employment action is being considered. The employee shall be given a reasonable amount of time after receiving the notice (at least 24 hours) to respond orally or in writing to the Department Head or designee concerning charges against

him. The Department Head or designee shall set a definite time within the above parameters by which the employee must respond and so inform the employee. If the employee wishes to respond to the charges orally, the Department Head or designee shall schedule a meeting with the employee at a reasonable time and place. The Department Head or designee shall give due consideration to any response offered by the employee, whether written or oral or both, prior to making any action on the proposed action. If the Department Head or designee decides to terminate the employee, The Department Head or designee shall give the County Manager written notice of the termination and the reasons therefore. Any employee who has an adverse employment action shall have the right to appeal for a hearing before the County Manager or the Board of Commissioners, as applicable, in accordance with the procedures set forth below.

#### Termination Appeal

The employee or his authorized agent shall file a written request for such hearing within 5 calendar days after the effective date of the disciplinary action that is the subject of the appeal. Employees other than those evaluated by the County Manager shall file their written request for a hearing with the County Manager and simultaneously send a copy of the request to the employee's supervisor. Employees evaluated by the County Manager shall file their written request for a hearing with the Chair of the Board of Commissioners and simultaneously send a copy of the request to the County Manager. The hearing shall be held not less than 5 working days nor more than 20 working days after the receipt by the County Manager or Chair of the request and the employee shall be promptly notified of the time and place of the hearing after it has been scheduled.

Prior to the hearing, the employee may request from his supervisor the identity of any witnesses against the employee and a list of any documents or other tangible evidence related to the charges against the employee. The employee's supervisor shall furnish such information to the employee upon request, unless such information is deemed confidential under any state or federal law or unless there are other good and substantial reasons to withhold the information (for example, the identity of witnesses might be withheld if the supervisor has a reasonable belief that disclosure of this information could endanger the witnesses' physical safety). If the employee so requests it, he shall be granted supervised access to any documents or other tangible evidence related to the charges against him prior to the hearing.

Hearings shall be conducted informally and technical rules of evidence shall not apply. All testimony shall be under oath. The employee may request the assistance of another person of his choosing, including legal counsel, in preparing and presenting evidence at the hearing. The employee shall have the right to present witnesses and other evidence and shall have the right to cross-examine witnesses presented but not called by the employee. The County Manager or Chair, as appropriate, shall have the authority to compel any employee of the County to appear at the hearing as a witness under penalty of termination for failure to appear.

The affected employee shall be promptly notified in writing by the County Manager or Chair, as appropriate, of the final determination with respect to the adverse employment action. In the event the County Manager or, as the case may be, the Board of Commissioners, finds that there was not sufficient cause for the adverse employment action, the affected employee shall be paid in full for such portion of time as he was unjustly suspended, reduced in pay, or removed, and the employee shall be restored to his former position and pay status or to a position in the same class and pay status.

The County Manager or the Chair, as appropriate, may grant continuances of hearings at the request of either party to the hearing if, in the County Manager's or the Chair's opinion, such a continuance is necessary to enable either party to fairly present its case.

## **Personal Appearance**

It is the policy of Bulloch County for employees to abide by departmental requirements related to personal appearance in order to present a positive, well groomed, and professional appearance and to be easily identified, when appropriate.

Bulloch County expects you to present a professional image to the public. You are expected to meet the requirements for safety in the conditions you work under. You are also expected to follow department guidelines regarding uniforms and other specifics of appearance. Individual departments may have dress and grooming requirements specific to the type of work.

If you are required to wear an ID badge, you must do so in a visible area on the upper body, right side up. Nothing should be worn on the badge which conceals your name or department.

## **Personal Conduct**

It is the policy of Bulloch County that employees who engage in conduct deemed to be inappropriate and unacceptable may be subject to corrective action. As representatives of Bulloch County, you must conduct yourself in a professional manner, abiding by the standards of conduct consistent with the mission and values of Bulloch County and consistent with federal and state law.

You must not engage in any activity, practice, or act which conflicts or appears to create a conflict of interest. You are not to accept an employment relationship with any organization which does business or seeks to do business with the County. You are not to accept gifts, any special discount or loans from any person or firm doing or seeking to do business with the County. You are not to act as agent, broker, salesman, or representative on behalf of any company that offers products or services that are similar to those offered or planned to be offered by Bulloch County.

The following examples depict behaviors considered inappropriate and unacceptable. Employees who engage in such behaviors may subject to corrective action, including involuntary separation.

### **Policy Violation/Insubordination:**

- Leaving assigned duty without permission.
- Sleeping during work time, except where authorized.
- Insubordination or the refusal to accept job assignments or requests made by supervisory personnel.
- Violation of established safety rules and procedures.
- Violation of policy on attendance.

### **Breach of trust:**

- Acts, omissions, or mistakes which endanger the public.

### **Inappropriate Behavior:**

- Conviction related to felony charges or a felony.
- Discourtesy to customers, visitors, or employees.
- Use of profanity or abusive language.

### **Fraudulent Activities:**

- Falsification or alteration of any record or report such as an employment application, payroll or time record, production record, expense account or shipping and receiving record.
- Forgery or alteration of checks, misappropriation of funds, any irregularity in the handling or reporting of money transactions.
- Removal of County money, merchandise, or property, including property in County custody without permission.

#### Illegal Acts:

- Acts or threats of sexual misconduct or harassment.
- Acts or threats of physical harassment or violence.
- Gambling on Bulloch County premises.
- Destruction or defacement of Bulloch County property or the property of customers or employees.
- Possession, consumption, or being under the influence of intoxicating beverages, controlled substances, illegal drugs, or prescription medication outside medical authorization on Bulloch County premises.
- Abuse or misuse of equipment.

The preceding lists are not intended to be exclusive.

If you are convicted of a misdemeanor or felony, you are required to report such conviction to your supervisor or to Human Resources within three days of the conviction.

#### **Political Activities**

It is the policy of Bulloch County to prohibit employees from becoming a candidate for or holding an elected seat on the Bulloch County Board of Commissioners.

You are expected to avoid public political activities that would have the effect of endorsing, promoting, or disparaging a particular candidate for an elected seat on the Bulloch County Board of Commissioners. While you are encouraged to otherwise express your political opinions and to vote for the candidate of your choice in any political election, you should not use your position or County time or resources for political purposes

#### **Progressive Corrective Action**

It is the policy of Bulloch County to assist employees to remedy behavior and performance problems through progressive corrective action before ending the employment relationship by separation. In cases of misconduct or serious work rule violations, you may be subject to involuntary separation without prior corrective action.

Bulloch County is committed to a workplace environment in which all employees are treated with dignity, respect, honesty, and fairness. You are expected to achieve and maintain required levels of work performance, to adhere to the policies and guidelines of Bulloch County, to work cooperatively with others, and to follow the work directives of your supervisors.

If you fail to meet performance expectations and/or fail to follow conduct guidelines, you are subject to corrective action. The corrective action process is intended to provide a structure for information exchange between you and your supervisor, and to provide a reasonable opportunity for you to improve or correct your performance and/or behavior. In general, the corrective actions which are taken become progressively more stringent if you do not achieve the expected behavior change and/or performance improvement within the time frames specified.

The Probationary Period is a period of time during which a new employee is being evaluated on job capability and performance. During this time, both you and the supervisor have the opportunity to assess the relationship for appropriate fit. Probationary employees are "at-will" employees and may be terminated at any time during the probationary period with or without cause.

### **Reasonable Accommodation**

It is the policy of Bulloch County to provide a consistent process to comply with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) by assisting in requesting and obtaining reasonable accommodation in order to be considered for positions for which you may be qualified with reasonable accommodation, or to perform the essential functions of the position in which you are employed.

Reasonable accommodation is available to all disabled employees, as defined under the ADA, where your disability affects the performance of job functions. All employment decisions are based on the merits of the situation in accordance with defined criteria, not the disability of the individual.

If an you request an accommodation in order to interview, begin or continue employment or return to work from a leave of absence, the department head, with the assistance of Human Resources, will make an effort to reasonably accommodate you by reviewing the restrictions as determined by your doctor, reviewing the job description, identifying functions for which accommodation may be necessary, and making recommendations. If no reasonable accommodation can be found, the employment process will end.

If you are unable to perform the essential functions of your job with or without accommodation you may be assigned to an appropriate position for which you are qualified. If you decline a position offered or if at the end of thirty days an appropriate position has not been found, Bulloch County may separate you from employment unless you are on an approved leave.

This policy is based upon current interpretations of the ADA and is subject to change if the Act changes.

### **Searches**

It is the policy of Bulloch County to allow for workplace areas and items to be accessed by supervisor and other employees for work-related purposes and to allow for searches of workplace areas and items when warranted. Workplace areas and items include, but are not limited to, offices, desks, file cabinets, computers, and County-owned vehicles.

### **Separation**

It is the policy of Bulloch County to administer employee separations according to a consistent process.

Employees who resign or retire are required to give at least two weeks written notice. Exempt employees are required to give at least four weeks written notice. If you fail to provide proper written notice, you will receive a reduction in your annual leave balance to offset the amount of notice not given. Annual Leave hours may only be used during the notice period for time scheduled and approved by your supervisor prior to the notice. You are expected to work during the notice period. However, Bulloch County reserves the right to pay you rather than have you work through the notice period.

If you separate voluntarily, you are eligible to receive 100% payment of all Annual Leave hours accrued.

All separating employees are asked to participate in an exit interview and to follow the exit procedures of your department. You must return all County property.

### **Use of Tobacco Products**

It is the policy of Bulloch County to prohibit smoking by employees during scheduled work time. Employees may smoke on Bulloch County premises only while on break or off duty and only in designated areas on or outside facility premises.

## **Compensation**

It is the policy of Bulloch County that the duties and responsibilities of each position be defined and compensated on the basis of relevant external labor market, internal worth, and viable financial status. Bulloch County is committed to a compensation program based on fairness, objectivity and compliance with regulatory agencies.

Compensation of non-exempt employees for working overtime hours shall be in compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act. Employees may receive Comp Time in lieu of overtime. Overtime pay is calculated on actual hours worked, and does not include annual leave or sick time or other forms of paid leave. An employee whose actual work hours exceed 40 hours in one week shall not receive additional annual leave pay or sick leave pay for that week unless regularly scheduled to work more than 40 hours.

You may use comp time within a reasonable time period after making a request to your department head, unless doing so would unduly disrupt County operations. If you are unable to use comp time within a reasonable period, you will be paid overtime.

Exempt employees are paid a fixed amount for your work and only under special circumstances may salary be reduced.

The responsibilities and duties of the County make it necessary that certain employees be available ("on call") to report for work outside normal working hours.

When you are on call, you are expected to keep your pager and/or cell phone turned on and with you at all times, to refrain from consuming any alcoholic beverages, and to be available to report to work within approximately one hour or less, depending on department requirements, after being called. Other than these requirements, you are free to use your on-call time for personal activities and are not required to remain in any particular location.

Employees who are on call will be paid according to departmental guidelines.

## **Family and Medical Leave**

It is the policy of Bulloch County to grant leaves of absences to employees who meet certain requirements and require a continuous absence under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

The Family and Medical Leave of Absence Policy is designed to summarize your rights under the Family and Medical Leave Act and the policy alternatives that Bulloch County has chosen under this Act. Nothing in this Policy is designed to circumvent Federal law or to limit any rights you may have under the Act. A Family and Medical Leave of Absence is an approved absence available to eligible employees for up to twelve (12) work weeks in a twelve (12) month period for the following events:

- for the birth and care of a newborn child;
- for the placement of a child for adoption or foster care;
- caring for your seriously-ill spouse, child or parent;
- a serious health condition that makes you unable to perform the essential job functions.

The twelve month period is computed from a rolling twelve month period measured backwards from the date leave begins.

Spouses who are both employed by Bulloch County are limited to a combined total of twelve weeks during any twelve month period if leave is taken for the birth, placement, adoption or foster care of a child or for the care of a parent with a serious health condition.

Your entitlement to FMLA for the birth or placement of a child expires twelve months after the child's birth or placement.

If you meet eligibility requirements for FMLA, intermittent leave may be granted when it is medically necessary for you to care for a spouse, child, or parent; or for your own serious health condition. Employees may not take intermittent leave for the birth or adoption of a child. In determining maximum FMLA leave, total intermittent leave and/or continuous leave added together may not exceed twelve work weeks in a twelve month period.

For foreseeable FMLA leaves, a 30-day advance notice should be provided to Human Resources prior to leave start date. Written medical certification from a health care provider should be submitted to Human Resources at least 15 days prior to the start of the requested leave.

If the need for the leave is unforeseeable, you should give notice to the manager or human resources as soon as practical, ordinarily within one or two working days. Notice should be given either in person or by telephone when a medical emergency is involved. The notice may be given by your spouse or other family member if you are unable to do so due to a serious health condition. If the leave is not foreseeable, you must provide the written medical certification within fifteen (15) days after the FMLA is granted.

When planning medical treatments, you must make reasonable efforts to schedule the leave to avoid undue disruption of Bulloch County operations, subject to the approval of the health care provider.

All sick leave and annual leave must be used during the FMLA, unless you are receiving workers compensation or disability benefits. If you have exhausted available leave time, you will have the option to take the time off without pay.

Bulloch County reserves the right to have a health care provider of its choice review and evaluate your need for FMLA. If medical opinions differ, Bulloch County may require the opinion of a third health care provider, approved jointly by Bulloch County and you and paid for by Bulloch County.

Bulloch County may require you to obtain later medical certifications on a reasonable basis, but no more frequently than every thirty days.

A letter of notification to return to work must be submitted 15 days prior to the scheduled return date. If you need to extend your leave or want to return to work prior to the scheduled return date, you must provide at least two days notice to Human Resources. If you have been on FMLA due to your own serious health condition, you must provide to Human Resource a medical release from the health care provider at least two days prior to the scheduled return date stating that you are able to return to work and can perform the essential functions of your job.

Once FMLA has been exhausted, you may be eligible for other applicable leave policies.

If you do not return to work on the scheduled return date, you will be considered to have voluntarily resigned unless you provided proper notice before your scheduled date of return that you have a change in your medical condition which requires an extension of the leave.

When granted FMLA, you will in most cases be returned to the position held prior to the leave or an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms. If you, after returning from the FMLA do not want to return to this position, you will be considered to have voluntarily resigned from that position and termination is effective as of the date you were to return. If you return to the position but do not wish to remain in the position, you may utilize the transfer process.

## **Leave of Absence**

It is the policy of Bulloch County to allow full and part time employees to apply for a leave of absence for medical, personal or educational reasons beyond those required by law.

A Leave of Absence is a continuous absence from work in excess of two weeks for medical, educational, or personal reasons that has been approved by Human Resources and your manager.

Generally, full-time and part-time employees are eligible for a leave of absence. These guidelines also apply when an employee, who at the end of FMLA, requests additional Leave of Absence.

If you think that you need to be out of work for two calendar weeks or more, a Request for Leave of Absence form must be submitted to Human Resources at least thirty days prior to the first day of the anticipated absence. The Request for Leave of Absence form must be signed by your manager. If the absence was not anticipated, you must submit a Request for Leave of Absence form within thirty days of your first day of absence. This policy does not apply to approved vacations in excess of two weeks.

An employee may not exceed six months for any type of leave in any twelve month period, with the exception of military leave. In the event that your previously-held position is unavailable, you will be eligible for one calendar month's administrative leave to seek another position, beyond the six-month maximum.

While on a leave of absence, you are not eligible for any type of pay except for sick leave, vacation, or workers compensation pay. You do not earn vacation or sick leave while on an unpaid leave of absence.

You may not accept employment elsewhere while on a leave of absence. If you accept employment elsewhere while on a leave, you will be considered to have voluntarily resigned without notice.

If you are granted a Leave of Absence, you are not guaranteed a job upon return unless required by law, such as in FMLA.

## **Military Leave**

To provide employees leaves of absence for military service, training or other obligations in compliance with state and federal laws.

It is the policy of Bulloch County that any employee shall be entitled to a leave of absence while engaged in the performance of ordered military duty and while going and returning from such duty.

It is the policy of Bulloch County that any employee who is or becomes a voluntary member of any force of the organized militia or of any reserve force or reserve component of the armed forces of the United States shall be entitled to a leave of absence while in attendance as a member of such force or reserve component at any service school or schools conducted by the armed forces of the United States for a period or periods up to and including 6 months and while going and returning from the school or schools. However, no employee shall be entitled to leave in excess of a total of 6 months during any 4-year period.

At the conclusion of the leave, employees generally have the right to return to the same position held prior to the leave or to positions with equivalent seniority, pay and benefits. Employees are requested to notify your supervisors as soon as they are aware of the military obligation.

Ordered Military Duty is any military duty performed in the service of the state or of the United States including, but not limited to, attendance at any service schools or schools conducted by the armed forces of the United States as a voluntary member of any force of the organized militia or of any reserve



component of the armed forces of the United States pursuant to orders issued by competent state and federal authority without the consent of you. Such duty, performed for a period or periods not exceeding a total of 30 days in any one federal fiscal year (October 1 – September 30), shall be deemed ordered military duty regardless of whether the orders are or may be issued with your consent.

Unless prevented from doing so by military necessity, you should complete a Request for Leave of Absence and provide your immediate supervisor with notice that you will be engaging in military service, including, where feasible, a copy of the orders directing the military duty. Employees are requested to provide such notice within 30 days of active military service.

Any employee shall be placed on paid leave while engaged in performance of ordered military duty and while going and returning from such duty for a period of time not to exceed 18 days in any one federal fiscal year and not to exceed 18 days in any one continuous period of absence. In the event the Governor declares an emergency and orders any employee to state active duty as a member of the National Guard, such employee, while performing such duty, shall be placed on paid leave for a period not exceeding 30 days in any one federal fiscal year and not exceeding 30 days in any one continuous period of such state active duty service. Employees on military leave may, at your option, use any or all accrued paid vacation during your absence after these paid periods are exhausted.

Questions regarding the military leave policy, applicable state and federal laws and continuation of benefits should contact Human Resources.

### **Paid Time Off**

It is the policy of Bulloch County to enable all eligible employees to receive pay for time away from work for personal use, sickness, jury duty, and bereavement.

Holiday Pay – days set aside annual to observe holidays. Those holidays include:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday
- Two days during the Christmas season (annually designated by the County Manager).

Immediate Family includes your spouse, child, parent, brother, sister, grandchild or similar in-law or step-family relationship, or other relative living in your household.

Jury Duty and Civil Leave is time when you are serving on a jury or when subpoenaed in connection with your County employment to appear before a public body or commission when such service coincides with your regular work schedule.

Sick Leave is time used for personal illness or illness of your immediate family member.

Eligible employees begin to accrue annual leave and sick leave immediately upon employment. Eligible part-time employees accrue annual leave and sick leave at a pro-rated amount based upon the hours regularly scheduled to work. Annual leave cannot be taken during the Probationary Period except for unusual circumstances.

### Annual Leave

Annual leave accrues as follows for full-time employees:

- Employees with up to five years of continuous service accrue annual leave at a rate of 8 hours per month.
- The next pay-period after your five year anniversary date, you will accrue annual leave at a rate of 10 hours per month.
- The next pay-period after your fifteen year anniversary date, you will accrue annual leave at a rate of 12 hours per month.

Eligible part-time employees accrue annual leave at a pro-rated amount based upon the hours regularly scheduled to work

Employees with less than 10 years of service will be allowed to carry over a maximum of 80 hours of annual leave as of December 31<sup>st</sup> each year. Employees with 10 or more years of service will be able to carry over a maximum of 120 hours of annual leave as of December 31<sup>st</sup> each year.

Each November, employees with at least one year of service as of July 1<sup>st</sup> may “cash-out” up to 40 hours of annual leave as long as they maintain a minimum of 40 hours of annual leave after the “cash-out.” “Cash-out” applications are available in Human Resources.

### Sick Leave

Effective on September 1, 2009 with no retroactive accrual, sick leave will accrue as follows for full-time employees:

- Employees with up to five years of continuous service accrue sick leave at a rate of 8 hours per month.
- The next pay-period after the employee’s five year anniversary date, the employee will accrue sick leave at a rate of 10 hours per month.

Part-time employees accrue sick pro-rated leave based on hours regularly scheduled to work.

Sick leave may be used for your personal illness or illness of your spouse, child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, father-in-law, or mother-in-law.

A medical certification signed by a licensed physician may be required to substantiate time off due to sickness for an absence of three or more consecutive work days or when absences occur frequently.

Employees may accumulate a maximum of 960 hours of sick leave. Beginning July 1, 2006, employees who reach the maximum accrual will have hours converted to annual leave at a four-to-one rate (4 hours of sick leave convert to 1 hour of annual leave.)

Employees with at least one year of service as of July 1<sup>st</sup>, who have no more than one sick leave occurrence (one full day or up to three consecutive days), and have no other unscheduled absences for one calendar year, may convert up to 16 hours of sick leave at a two-to-one rate (2 hours of sick leave convert to 1 hour of annual leave) each year in January.

### Sick Leave Donation Program

The Sick Leave donation program allows employees, with the prior approval of your Department Head and Human Resources, to voluntarily donate accrued sick leave to a qualified employee who is unable to work because of extended illness or injury. Sick leave donation will only be approved in cases of an employee’s serious health condition.

To qualify to receive donated sick leave, you must obtain approval from your Department Head and Human Resources before any sick leave may be donated. Your supervisor may make a request for sick leave donation on your behalf.

Human Resources will request sick leave donations on behalf of eligible employees. Individual employees shall not solicit donations.

An employee must use all applicable paid leave before any donated leave is received.

Employees donating sick leave must maintain a balance of at least 80 hours of sick leave.

#### Bereavement Leave

Eligible employees may receive paid bereavement leave for a death in your immediate family. Full-time and probationary employees being evaluated for full-time positions are eligible for up to 24 hours of bereavement. Part-time employees and probationary employees being evaluated for part-time positions, are eligible for up to 12 hours of paid bereavement leave.

The amount of paid bereavement leave that an eligible employee receives for a death in your immediate family shall be within the discretion of your Department Head based upon the particular circumstances, but shall not exceed the maximum amounts stated above for each period of bereavement leave.

#### Holiday Pay

Eligible employees receive up to 10 paid holidays each year. Full-time employees will be paid 8 hours for each holiday. Part-time employees will receive pro-rated pay based on the hours regularly scheduled to work.

If a holiday falls on a Saturday, it will generally be observed on the preceding Friday. If a holiday falls on a Sunday, it will generally be observed on the following Monday.

Employees may be required to work on a holiday. If an employee is required to work during a holiday, the Department Head may pay you for the holiday or grant you time off within six months of the holiday.

#### Jury Duty

Because jury duty is recognized as a civic responsibility, the County will continue to pay a full-time employee's regular salary when serving on a jury or when subpoenaed in connection with your County employment to appear before a public body or commission when such service coincides with the regular work schedule of you. However, if an employee is dismissed from jury duty before 1:00 pm, you are expected to report for work for the remainder of that day.

### **Computers and Telecommunications Use Policies**

Use of any County-owned computer equipment (i.e. personal computers, system terminals, printers, or other peripherals, or any software), shall be for County business purposes only. The County reserves the right to monitor data, documents, and electronic mail (e-mail) messages at any time, with, or without notice to you. The County Manager, Elected or Appointed Department Heads or their designees may periodically audit the storage devices of all computers and reserves the right to clear any and all data not related to County business. You may be disciplined up to discharge for improper use of County-owned equipment, or software.

### **Financial Policies**

The Bulloch County Board of Commissioners has a responsibility to carefully account for public funds, to manage finances wisely, and to plan for the provision of public services. Sound financial policies are necessary to carry out these objectives responsibly and efficiently. The Bulloch County Board of Commissioners financial policies are the basic framework for its overall financial management. The broad purpose of the following financial policies is to enable the Bulloch County Board of Commissioners to achieve and maintain a long-term positive financial condition. The key values of the

County's financial management include fiscal integrity, prudence, planning, accountability, honesty, and openness. Specifically, the purpose is to provide guidelines for planning, directing, and maintaining day-to-day financial affairs.

### **Purchasing Policies**

The County Manager and associated staff perform as the county's representative in dealing with all businesses supplying or aspiring to supply materials and services to the county. Purchasing policies should be followed when making any purchases.

### **Travel Policies**

Due to the nature of the County's size, operational requirements and location of facilities, periodic travel is required from time to time to conduct county business. The preferred method for employees traveling within the county for business purposes is a county vehicle. However, in certain circumstances, the only other available method is the use of vehicles owned by the employee. The use of either County vehicles or employee owned vehicles is subject to County Vehicle Use Policies and County Safety and Risk Management Policies.

Use of a privately owned vehicle is permitted subject to Bulloch County Safety and Risk Management Policies. If private automobiles are used, employees will be reimbursed at mileage rates established and modified from time to time by the standard allowable U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rate for automobile use.

### **Vehicle Use Policies**

The Vehicle Use policies govern the use of assigned and unassigned Bulloch County vehicles and are applicable to all users of County vehicles. Vehicles owned by, titled to or otherwise controlled by the County are authorized for use in performance of all essential travel and transportation duties. Unless express permission has been otherwise granted by the County Manager, use is not authorized for unofficial travel duties or tasks, the transport of unauthorized persons or items, or the performance of tasks outside the rated capabilities of the vehicle. When in doubt, the deciding criteria should be the nature of the travel task and the extent to which the task is defensible in the event of public criticism or question by higher authority.