



**Volunteers of America®**

**EASTERN WASHINGTON  
& NORTHERN IDAHO**

**EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

**April 2015**

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## MISSION

Volunteers of America of Eastern Washington & Northern Idaho is dedicated to helping those in need rebuild their lives and reach their full potential. Operating a variety of innovative programs throughout the Inland Northwest, we are a locally governed, locally managed affiliate of the national Volunteers of America movement that helps more than two million people each year in more than 400 communities.

Working in partnership with congregations of all faiths, businesses, foundations, and state and local government agencies—and supported by thousands of individual donors and volunteers—we stand by people and offer them a continuum of services until they're ready to stand on their own. Some people call that empowerment. We call it nurturing the human spirit.

## PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

Volunteers of America believes it is important to keep employees fully informed about our policies. We want each employee to understand what he or she can expect from the organization as well as the obligations assumed as an employee. The policies and practices described in this handbook reflect a great deal of care and concern for the people who make it possible for Volunteers of America to exist—our employees.

The intent of this handbook is to provide employees with a basic outline of some of the programs, policies, and benefits available to Volunteers of America employees. Nothing contained within this handbook is intended to create, or shall be construed as creating, an express or implied contract or guarantee for employment for any term.

These policies may change with time or they may need to be clarified, amended, supplemented, or rescinded. Therefore, the employer reserves the right to modify, rescind, delete or add to the provisions of this handbook as well as any of its other personnel policies and practices from time to time as the organization deems necessary or appropriate.

Please keep this handbook throughout employment with VOA. We intend to keep the employees advised of changes in policies or practices through the employee's supervisor, notices on the bulletin board, employee meetings or periodic revisions to the handbook or other policy documents.

The employee's specific program may have its own procedures and policies. The employee's supervisor will discuss them with the employee. If the employee has questions about what may be the current practice or need additional information, please talk to the supervisor.

## OUR GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

VOA is a chartered affiliate of Volunteers of America Inc., a national, non-denominational Christian human service organization. As such we are expected to satisfy certain requirements of quality and accountability. VOA of Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho is governed by a local Board of Directors, responsible for setting goals and policies for the organization. The Board of Directors hires the President/CEO (also called Executive Director) who is responsible for day-to-day operations of VOA. The Board and the Executive Director share the responsibility for developing the personnel policies but the Executive Director is responsible for interpretation, enforcement and execution of the personnel policies.

## **Employment at will**

Employment with Volunteers of America is at will, which means that either the employee or the employer is free to terminate the employment relationship at any time *with or without reason, advance notice, or warning*.

No representative of this organization has the authority to change this at-will relationship except in a specific written agreement declaring such intent and signed by the employee and the President or CEO.

## **Equal Employment Opportunity**

The management of VOA believes that every employee has the right to work in surroundings that are free from discrimination. It is our policy, notwithstanding any requirements of affirmative action, to hire, compensate, promote, transfer, discharge, and make all other employment-related decisions without consideration of an employee's race, color, creed, sex, religion, national origin, disability, veteran status, marital status, unlawful consideration of age, sexual orientation or any other basis prohibited by local, state or federal law.

Further, we go beyond simple compliance. As an affirmative action employer, we strive to help our community overcome barriers and perceived barriers that may have discouraged women, minorities, veterans or persons with disabilities from pursuing certain occupations and we promote the principle that opportunity is based on individual merit.

We will accomplish these goals by providing an environment of acceptance and inclusion of all employees. We will apply only valid, job-related requirements for hiring, promotion or upgrading. We will evaluate each individual according to his/her individual talents and accomplishments. We will annually review our affirmative action efforts to ensure that we are fulfilling these commitments. We should be proud of the fact that we are an Equal Opportunity Employer. Individual accomplishment is the key to our success, and diversity among people is truly an asset. Each employee should remember that these commitments are essential to our business, essential to our community and are, therefore, conditions of our employment.

Our Executive Director/President/CEO is responsible for the overall implementation of the Affirmative Action Plan and employees should provide full cooperation. Let the supervisor know immediately if there are any questions or problems related to this policy. The text of these Affirmative Action plans may be reviewed by appointment during business hours.

# EMPLOYMENT BASICS

## Initial Evaluation Period

The first six months of employment are designated as the initial performance evaluation period. During this time the employee's supervisor will be assessing the employee's ability to learn and perform the job and eligibility for various benefit programs is delayed. It is an important time for the employee to learn and put into practice the high standards of conduct and performance we expect of our employees. Continued employment during this or any other period depends on the effectiveness in fulfilling these standards to management's satisfaction. We do not promise continued employment either during or after the initial evaluation period and the employment relationship continues to be at-will.

Following this period, the employee's supervisor will schedule the first performance review. If management evaluates the performance as satisfactory or better, the employee's success will be recognized in writing and placed in the employee's personnel file. In addition, the employee will be eligible for any benefits or other recognition tied to the successful initial evaluation. The effect of this period on the employee's benefits eligibility is discussed in the BENEFITS section. When deemed appropriate, evaluation periods may be extended up to an additional three months.

## Employment Classifications

This information is provided so that employees understand their employment status and eligibility for benefits. All employees are hired for an unspecified duration. These classifications do not guarantee employment for any specific length of time. The employer and employee retain the right to terminate employment at any time, without reason or notice.

1. Full-time Employee: An employee who is hired to work on a regular and predetermined schedule of at least 30 hours per week. Full-time employees are eligible for benefits once they satisfy the terms and conditions of the various benefit programs.
2. Part-time Employee: An employee who is hired to work on a regular and predetermined schedule of less than 30 hours per week. A part-time employee may be eligible for some prorated benefits.
3. Casual, Temporary or Seasonal Employee: An employee who is hired on a temporary basis, with the expectation that he/she will be employed for a finite period of time. Such employees may also be hired to complete a specific job or project.

## Non-Exempt or Exempt Status

Employees are either nonexempt or exempt from federal and state wage and hour laws. Employees will be informed of their exempt or nonexempt status upon hire. In general:

1. Nonexempt employees are entitled to overtime compensation at the rate of time and a half of their regular rate of pay for all hours worked over forty in a work week, pursuant to certain provision of federal and state law. Such employees are also covered by minimum wage and record keeping requirements.

2. Exempt employees are excluded from specific provisions of state and federal law requiring overtime pay, minimum wage, and record keeping. Only employees in a bona fide Executive, Administrative, or Professional capacity as defined by federal law and who are also paid on a salaried basis may be considered Exempt". Some employees in certain employment categories are exempt only from overtime pay requirements.

If the employee has further questions regarding status, the employee should contact his/her supervisor.

## Compensation

When the employee begins work he/she is told the rate of pay. Pay decisions are based on our assessment of the employee's position, training, experience, the market for similar jobs and the pay relationship between the employee's job and other jobs and employees. Increases in compensation can be tied to the employee's overall job performance. However, increases may be granted at any time they are deemed warranted by increased responsibilities or due to changes in financial conditions. Similarly, there may be no increase in performance compensation, if market or financial conditions do not warrant it. The provision of any increases is solely at the discretion of VOA.

1. Pay Periods and Paydays: Paydays occur on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> day of each month. On that day, employees are paid for the ½ month period ending five days before payday.
2. Payroll Deductions: The following deductions from the employee's paycheck are required by law: FICA (social security), federal income tax and all other applicable state and federal taxes including the employee portion of the industrial insurance premium. VOA will honor administrative and court orders for garnishment or wage withholding pursuant to state and federal law. Any other deductions may require written authorization. Examples of such deductions include deductions for employee's portion of any insurance premiums, voluntary wage assignments, 401k or assistance fund.

## Workweek and Scheduling

The basic day of work for full-time employees is eight hours. Various factors, such as work loads, operational efficiency and staffing needs, may require variations in the employee's starting and quitting times and total hours worked each day or each week. Thus, we reserve the right to assign employees to jobs or shifts other than their usual assignment when required. Additionally, employees may be required to work overtime or hours other than those normally scheduled whenever necessary.

Punctual and consistent attendance is a condition of employment.

For payroll and accounting purposes, the work week begins at 12:00 a.m. Sunday and ends at 11:59 p.m. on the following Saturday. Our normal business hours are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. The normal workday for a full-time employee is eight hours. VOA may establish other workdays or workweeks for individual employees or certain positions.

Work schedules are established by the immediate supervisor. The employees are expected to work all of the hours and days assigned. Employees are also expected to be at their work stations and ready to work at the beginning of their assigned shifts. Work schedules may be posted in advance. Employees review the schedule thoroughly to be familiar with the assigned hours and days off.



Personal schedules should be arranged to accommodate established working hours. Requests for changes in schedules or for particular days off must be made ahead of time and approved in advance by the employee's supervisor. Employees absent for three days who have not contacted their supervisor will be assumed to have voluntarily terminated employment as of the end of their third day missed.

## **Rest and Meal Periods**

All employees receive one 10-minute paid break for each four hours of working time. Ideally, the break will occur near the midpoint of each four-hour work period, but scheduling will be done by the supervisor. Break periods may not be used to extend a lunch period, work overtime or leave early. If employees work more than five hours in a day, they are required to take a meal break two to five hours into their shift. The normal meal break is a 30-minute paid period. If employees work three or more hours beyond the scheduled shift, the employees will have an additional meal period before or during that period.

## **Overtime**

The regular workweek is 40 working hours, but as the need arises, the employee's supervisor may ask the employee to work beyond the normal shift. Although the employee will be given advance notice when feasible, this is not always possible. The employee may not refuse to work assigned overtime. Any overtime must be authorized by the employee's supervisor. Overtime is paid to all nonexempt employees. The overtime pay rate is one and one-half times the regular rate of pay for all hours worked over 40 hours in one workweek. Exempt employees receive no overtime compensation.

Non-exempt employees must begin work no earlier than five minutes before their shift starts and end no later than five minutes after their shift ends. The employee may not report earlier or stay later without the specific advance approval of the supervisor. Unauthorized overtime or other violations of this policy are subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

## **Record Keeping and Reporting**

Accurate records of the hours the employee works ensure that he/she will be paid correctly and will receive full credit for the work done. All employees use time sheets to record hours worked. Additions, corrections or changes to the time sheet must be initialed by the employee's supervisor. The employees are responsible for the accuracy and completeness of the information on the time sheet. Time records are the property of VOA. Removal of the time sheet from the facility or alteration of the time sheet will invalidate it and require that the employee verify the time worked to the satisfaction of the supervisor. Unauthorized removal, alteration or falsification of any time record is strictly prohibited and will subject the employee to discipline, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

## **Employment of Relatives**

VOA believes that it is in the best interest of all to keep business and professional relationships separate from personal and family relationships. Accordingly, we will not employ close relatives, spouses or two individuals living together in a relationship that is essentially equivalent to marriage, or two individuals involved in a dating relationship, except under circumstances where (1) neither employee will supervise,

appoint or discipline the other; (2) neither party will evaluate the work of the other; and (3) the working relationship will not create a conflict of interest or the appearance of favoritism in the opinion of management. If two employees who work in the same department or supervise each other develop a dating or marital relationship after employment, one of the two may be transferred or if no suitable position is available, terminated. The decision as to which employee will be terminated, if transfer is impossible, will be left to the employees involved, unless business necessity requires VOA to make the decision.

VOA also reserves the right not to employ close relatives of officers or other high-level employees of our customers, competitors or others with whom we deal, where such a restriction is necessary to avoid the actuality or appearance of conflict of interest or to protect confidential information. For purposes of this policy, close relatives include: spouses, siblings, parents, children, grandparents, grandchildren, nieces, nephews and people living in the same household.

## **Personal Information and Release of Personnel Records**

Employee personnel records are confidential. Although we are required to comply with subpoenas, court orders and government requests directing us to provide information from an employee's personnel records, generally speaking, without specific written authorization from the individual, no personnel information will be provided.

Additionally, as part of the enforcement of court ordered child support payments, employers must report all persons hired or returning from leave or layoff to the Washington State Support Registry, along with relevant details of their employment.

## **Change of Employee Information**

When an employee moves, changes telephone numbers or has other changes in personal information, he/she should keep the Personnel Department informed of such changes so we may maintain accurate and up-to-date records. It is the employee's responsibility to be sure that the Payroll/Personnel Department has his/her present address and phone number and current dependant/marital status for tax and benefit purposes. When changes occur, the Payroll/Personnel Department should be notified as soon as possible.

## **Employee Access to Personnel Records**

Employees may review his/her personnel records at a mutually convenient time during regular business hours, one time per year. If an employee wishes to do so, he/she should please notify the Program Director so that a specific time may be scheduled when a representative will be available to answer questions. Any concerns regarding the completeness or accuracy of the information contained in personnel files should be taken up with the Program Director. If an employee disagrees with an item in the file, the employee may request that management correct or remove the item. If this request is denied, the employee may place his/her own rebuttal or correction statement in the file.

## Travel

Travel for VOA business (not including travel to and from regular work station) not provided by VOA, shall be reimbursed at the current VOA approved rate, upon presentation of an expense form with receipts attached, signed by the employee, Program Director and Executive Director. Out of town travel must be approved in advance by the Executive Director and he/she will designate the mode of travel and lodging arrangements.

## Holidays

VOA observes the following days as paid holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day (July 4)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day
- 2 Discretionary holidays (Veteran's Day, Christmas Eve, Day After Thanksgiving or another day as approved by supervisor two weeks in advance)

If any holiday falls on a Saturday, the preceding Friday will be recognized as the holiday. If any holiday falls on a Sunday, the following Monday will be recognized as the holiday.

All full-time employees will receive their regular scheduled hours' pay at their normal rate for the holidays listed above. In order to receive holiday pay, the employee must have been scheduled to work on the holiday in question. Part-time employees regularly scheduled to work on a holiday will receive holiday pay equivalent to the number of hours they otherwise would have worked.

If required to work on a holiday, all hourly employees will receive 1.5 times their regular rate of pay.

At the Program Director's discretion, hourly employees who work on a holiday may receive and take an equivalent number of hours of holiday leave in lieu of receiving 1.5 times their regular rate of pay for the holiday.

Employees on a leave of absence for any reason are ineligible for holiday pay. If a holiday falls during an employee's annual leave, the employee will be paid for the holiday.

# BENEFITS

## Medical Reimbursement Policy

In 2014 only, Volunteers of America has decided to forego our group medical insurance but will provide reimbursement for a portion of the premiums for eligible employees who obtain other coverage, either through the Exchange or through some other available means (coverage on a family members' plan or individual plan). All eligible employees (those regularly scheduled to work at least 30 hours/week who have successfully completed their initial 90 days of employment) will be responsible for purchasing their own individual health insurance, either through the Exchange or a private company. Volunteers of America will provide reimbursement to eligible employees who obtain insurance coverage in cases where:

- Coverage is classified as at most "silver" level coverage (comparable to our 2013 Asuris plan with 30% co-insurance) and
- Where the premium cost exceeds \$120.

The employee will remain responsible for the first \$120 of the premium and VOA will provide reimbursement for the remainder of the premium. Employees seeking reimbursement will need to provide proof that they have paid the premium for that month as well as proof of coverage that does not exceed silver-level. See Lisa Vollert, Finance Director, for a summary of the 2013 plan.

The monthly premium amount available for reimbursement will be calculated to figure out the annual amount and reimbursement payments will be made equally through the year. The payment will be included in your paycheck and itemized as a medical reimbursement.

To verify that you are paying your premiums quarterly, you will need to submit a statement showing you paid your premium once a quarter to continue receiving your medical reimbursement. Should you cancel your coverage during the quarter you must advise VOA ASAP. If you have been overpaid for any premiums that were not paid by you, any overpayment will be deducted from your future wages.

Every eligible employee is responsible for making sure to update income information and household size, if you have a change during the year, to make sure you are paying the correct premium amount. You need to report a change in income that is \$150 or more and is expected to last for at least two consecutive months. You also need to report any changes in your marital status or changes in the number of your dependents. You will need to report your annual medical premium on your 2014 taxes. So it is in your best interest to update your income to make sure you are paying the correct premium amount.

\*\*The Affordable Care Act requires all citizens (with a few exceptions) to purchase health insurance. The penalty for noncompliance in 2014 is \$95 per adult and \$47.50 per child or 1% of salary, whichever is higher; in 2015 the penalty increases to \$325 per adult and \$162.50 per child - or 2% of income, whichever is greater; in 2016 it goes up to \$695 per adult and \$347 per child - 2.5% of income, whichever is greater. Certain individuals may be eligible for subsidies, depending upon whether they meet the criteria as set forth by the ACA.

## Vacation or Paid Annual Leave

Non-exempt full-time and part-time employees will accrue annual leave benefits based upon hours worked in accordance with the following schedule. (The accrual rate for Exempt employees may differ.) Employees working between 20 and 39 hours per week earn annual leave benefits on a prorated basis.

Upon Completion of:	Annual Leave Accrual
1 <sup>st</sup> year through 2 <sup>nd</sup> year	10 days
3 <sup>rd</sup> year through 9 <sup>th</sup> year	15 days
10 <sup>th</sup> and succeeding years	20 days

**Eligibility:** Full-time and part-time employees must complete six months of employment and their initial evaluation period to become eligible for paid annual leave. Vacation benefits accrue during the first 6 months of employment. Annual leave is not accrued during non-work periods such as leaves of absence. All annual leave must be scheduled in advance in accordance with the policies and approved by the appropriate supervisor.

**Scheduling:** The scheduling of annual leave must be approved and scheduled by the employee's supervisor and depends upon the work load. When possible the leave will be scheduled at the time requested by the employee, but management's need to ensure proper service coverage will control. Leave requests made ahead of time are more likely to be honored. The minimum amount of annual leave that will be scheduled is 4 hours; the maximum amount is 10 days, without permission from the Executive Director. Annual leave is important to each employee's rest and relaxation. Accordingly, we encourage employees to take their accrued annual leave each year.

**Benefit Accumulation:** Accumulated annual leave over 40 hours must be used by August 31 of each year. The Executive Director may make exceptions to this policy. Requests for exceptions must be submitted by Program Directors. It is the responsibility of Program Directors to see that their employees utilize annual leave throughout the year.

**Payment upon Termination:** After completion of six months of employment and the initial evaluation period, employees will be paid upon termination for all annual leave time accumulated but not used.

**Use of Benefit for Family Care:** When an employee has annual leave available, he/she is entitled to take that leave for the care of a child under the age of eighteen with a health condition that requires treatment or supervision. Additionally, the employee may use annual leave for the care of a spouse, parent, parent-in-law, or grandparent who has a serious health or emergency condition. The employee may also utilize sick leave for this purpose, as noted below. It is the employee's choice to determine whether available sick leave or annual leave will be used and, in what order, if both are used. An employee may not take advances on this benefit.

## Sick Leave

If an employee misses work because of an illness or other valid reason, he/she may be allowed to take sick leave to cover payment for lost work hours. Absence of more than three days due to illness may require a written physician's certification at the time the employee returns to work or earlier, upon the employer's request. A physician's certification for an illness of less than three days may be required at the supervisor's option. The accumulated reserve of sick leave may be used for the following situations only:

1. Personal illness;
2. Personal medical disability;
3. Health condition of a child under the age of eighteen years that requires treatment or supervision; &
4. Serious health or emergency condition of a spouse, parent, parent-in-law, or grandparent.

**Accumulation:** Employees begin to earn sick leave at time of employment but may not take sick leave until the completion of the initial evaluation period. Employees working 40 hours per week shall accrue sick leave benefits at the rate of 6.66 hours for each calendar month of continuous employment. Employees working 20-39 hours per week shall accrue sick leave benefits on a pro rata basis according to hours worked. Employees do not earn sick leave benefits during a leave without pay. Unused sick leave hours are carried over from year to year (maximum of 320 hours). Unused sick leave benefits are not paid upon termination of employment.

**Use of Benefit for Family Care:** When accumulated sick leave is available, this benefit may be used for family care as noted above. Employees may also utilize annual leave for this purpose. It is the employee's choice to determine whether available sick leave or annual leave will be used and in what order if both are used. An employee may not take advantages on this benefit.

Employees may request donated sick leave benefits to cover unpaid time when experiencing a qualifying event as defined within FMLA for more than ten working days. The employee receiving the donated hours must have exhausted 100% of his/her annual leave, personal and sick hours. Additional time off beyond the twelve-week FMLA entitlement or donated leave may be granted. The Executive Director must approve a written request for such benefits, including the amount of time needed, along with an explanation for the request. During the time an employee is on such leave, no vacation or sick leave benefits accrue. The maximum amount of donated leave an employee may receive is 240 hours in a one-year period.

Employees may voluntarily donate sick hours in response to a donation request. All employees earning sick time may donate time. The employee donating time must have over 120 hours of sick leave in order to voluntarily donate sick leave hours. The amount donated must not drop the employee below 120 hours of sick time. Personal and annual leave hours may not be donated. Donated hours will be paid at the hourly rate applicable to the employee receiving the hours and will be treated as normal income to the receiving employee for tax purposes.

Any employee deemed to have abused sick leave privileges by falsification or misrepresentation shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination of employment.

## **Bereavement Leave**

In case of a death in an employee's immediate family, he/she may receive up to three working days' paid leave. In the event of the death of a member of the employee's immediate family that is more than 500 miles from the workplace, he/she may receive up to five working days paid leave. This time off is to be used to attend memorial services as well as to attend to associated family matters. Immediate family includes parents, grandparents, siblings, spouse, children, grandchildren, parent-in-law, brother-in-law or sister-in-law. A paid leave of one day is allowed for funerals of other relatives or friends.

## **Conference and Training Leave**

VOA has a professional responsibility to contribute leadership in special areas of competency and employees benefit from participation in conferences and training. Such leave may be granted by the Executive Director for specific periods of time with pay, depending on the effect of the employee's absence, relationship to VOA objectives and availability of funds.

## **Jury Duty Leave**

Serving on a jury is a fundamental responsibility of citizenship and, unless business necessity requires it, the employer will not ask that an employee be excused from jury duty. If an employee is serving on a jury, he/she will be paid his/her regular earnings. For the dates on which the employee received his/her regular earnings, the employee is required to submit all payment received for jury duty, excluding travel expenses, to the employer immediately upon receipt. Employees are expected to work their regular work schedule on days when court is not in session and work the remaining part of their scheduled shift if they are excused from court for 4 hours or longer.

## **Family and Medical Leave**

As provided by the 1993 Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), employers with at least 50 employees will be covered by the terms of the FMLA. An employee will be covered where: he/she is employed in a location with at least fifty (50) employees within seventy-five (75) miles; he/she has worked at least 1,250 hours in the past twelve (12) months of employment; and has worked for the employer for at least twelve months, not necessarily consecutive. Eligible employees may apply for up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave during a 12 month period for one or more of the following reasons:

1. To care for the employee's child after birth or placement for adoption or foster care;
2. To care for the employee's spouse, child or parent with a serious health condition; or
3. A serious health condition of the employee which makes the employee unable to perform the job.

A health condition is serious if it requires inpatient care or continued treatment of incapacity of three (3) days or more, subsequent recovery involving two (2) or more treatments by health providers, or at least one treatment which results in a regimen of continuing treatment or incapacity due to pregnancy or chronic disease or permanent or long term disability. Occasional illness such as colds, flu, upset stomach or headaches are not by themselves covered.

## Benefits While On FMLA Leave

Group Medical Insurance/Health Plan Benefits/Dental Insurance – An employee on approved FMLA leave is entitled to maintain group health plan and dental plan coverage on the same basis as if he/she had continued to work, provided the required payments are made.

**Job Restoration:** At the end of the FMLA leave, the employee will be restored to the same or an equivalent job with equivalent status, pay, benefits and other employment terms.

**Exclusion of Key Employees:** The employer may choose to exempt salaried employees in the highest paid 10 percent of all employees in the 75 mile radius from reinstating rights where exercise of such rights would cause substantial and grievous economic injury to VOA.

**Use of Paid Time off Benefits:** If an employee has accrued paid time off benefits that are otherwise permitted for use in such absences, they will be used concurrent with the FMLA leave and will not extend it. The employee may designate the order in which the annual or sick leave benefits are used. (Use of vacation time and paid sick leave may be mandated by VOA.)

**Intermittent Leave and Reduced Work Schedules:** In certain cases, intermittent scheduling of leave is permitted.

**Procedure for Requesting FMLA Leave:** All employees requesting leave under this policy must complete a Family/Medical Leave application form. In addition, the employer may designate legally qualifying FMLA leave on its own.

When an employee plans to take leave under the policy, the employee must give VOA 30 days notice. If it is not possible to give 30 days notice, the employee must give as much notice as is possible. An employee undergoing planned medical treatment is required to make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment to minimize disruptions to the operations.

The employer may require the employee to provide certification of an employee's or immediate family member's serious health condition by a qualified health care provider.

**Employer – Designated FMLA:** When we reasonably conclude that employee absences, either continuous or intermittent, are due to a serious health condition or other FMLA qualifying circumstances, we may provisionally designate the leave as FMLA, notify the employee that FMLA rights are being used, and request the legal medical certification. If the absence does not qualify under FMLA, days or hours taken will be restored to the FMLA annual entitlement.

## Pregnancy Disability Leave

An employee medically disabled as a result of pregnancy or childbirth will be eligible for an unpaid leave of absence for the period of disability, regardless of duration. VOA may request medical certification to verify that the individual is incapacitated due to pregnancy or childbirth. When the employee is no longer disabled, she is entitled to return to the same or equivalent position, unless this is no longer possible due to business necessity. Such an employee may use all vacation and sick leave accrued during this period. The pregnancy disability leave will run concurrently with FMLA leave. All benefits normally



received during periods of vacation and sick leave will be available. Where health insurance coverage is not continued during periods of other Non-FMLA leaves, VOA is not required to maintain health insurance coverage during this type of leave.

## **Non-FMLA Leaves**

Absences of 30 days or longer for a variety of reasons are governed by our unpaid leave program. We usually consider holding the employee's position open for the period of the approved leave. However, due to business needs, there will be times when positions cannot be held open. Accordingly, it is not possible to guarantee reinstatement.

If an employee's former position is unavailable when the employee is ready to return in a timely manner from an approved leave, every effort will be made to place the employee in a comparable position for which the employee is qualified. If such a position is not available, the employee may be offered the next available and suitable position for which he/she is qualified. Additionally, VOA will attempt to reasonably accommodate employees who are released for partial or modified duty.

A leave of absence must be requested in writing and submitted to the immediate supervisor as soon as the need for such a leave is known. No benefits, such as vacation or sick leave, are accrued while on leave. Group insurance continuance depends on the reason for the leave and the number of years of employment at the time of request.

## **Benefits While on Non-FMLA Medical Leave**

Eligibility begins at date of employment. Medical leaves may be used for actual periods of disability associated with the employee's long term illness, recovery from injury, pregnancy or childbirth. A medical leave of absence requires a doctor's certification. Continuation of group insurance in place at the time leave begins is allowed up to the following limits:

Under 5 years service:	1 month at employee rate, 2 months with employee paying all premiums.
5 to 10 years service:	3 months at employee rate, 3 months with employee paying all premiums.
Over 10 years:	6 months at employee rate.
Over 20 years:	Up to one year at employee rate.

## **Personal Leaves**

Eligibility begins at 2 years of employment. Leaves for compelling personal reasons may be granted for up to 90 days, where there is reasonable likelihood of the employee returning to work. Longer leaves are not considered except in cases of employees with over 10 years of service. Medical benefits with

VOA contributions are limited to the calendar month in which leave begins and 2 additional months at the employee's expense.

## **Military Leave of Absence**

In general, service members must provide advance written or verbal notice to their employers for all military duty unless giving notice is impossible, unreasonable, or precluded by military necessity.

Employees required to attend annual military reserve trainings or other short-term active military duty may take the time as either regular vacation or unpaid leave. Reserves are entitled to return to their jobs as provided under federal and state laws. For military service of less than thirty-one days, health care coverage continues as if the service member had remained employed.

An employee who enters the state or federal armed services for an extended tour of duty is eligible for an extended military leave of absence, which may continue up to five years. Employees may receive all accrued vacation pay as soon as their extended military leave begins.

Individuals performing military duty of more than thirty days may elect to continue employer sponsored health care for up to eighteen months. Such employees may be required to pay up to one hundred and two percent for the full premium.

All pension plans are protected. An employee who leaves work to serve in the military is entitled to re-employment consistent with relevant state and federal laws. Such employees are required to report for work within the time frame set forth by applicable federal and state law.

## **Other Benefits**

This section is provided to let you know that VOA makes contributions on your behalf to the Social Security System in addition to those each employee makes through the FICA payroll deductions. We also pay a tax based upon employee's wages to the Northwest Agency Trust for employees working in Washington and the state insurance fund for employees working in Idaho. Unemployment compensation benefits are generally available after termination to employees who become unemployed through no fault of their own. VOA also has a voluntary 401k program after a year of employment. Your contributions (up to \$2,000 per year) are matched 25% after a 4 year vesting period. For more information contact the Finance Director.

# VOA FACILITIES

## Internal Communications

VOA wants employees to be well informed concerning their workplace, safety rules, new developments or changes in policies or rights under state and/or federal law. General distribution memos are utilized for rapid dissemination of information.

Bulletin boards are another official means of communicating information. As a general rule, only those notices that are of general importance or interest will be posted. Such postings are used to communicate announcements required by law, official safety information and other employer notices. Please check these boards frequently, as employees are required to be aware of their posted contents.

## Telecommunication Systems

VOA maintains various systems, including but not limited to computer hardware, software, internet and e-mail access, a telephone system, and a fax system to assist in the conduct of business within and by the employer. Accordingly, employees should limit personal use to a minimum. All necessary telephone calls should be made during break periods or the lunch break whenever possible. No personal long distance or toll calls are to be charged to VOA.

All information stored on VOA's systems, including but not limited to computers, networks, voice mail, e-mail and telephone records, is considered property of VOA. All computer passwords must be provided to VOA for safekeeping. VOA reserves the right to access, audit, review, copy, disclose, and delete any message sent, received or stored on these systems for any purpose and to disclose this information to any party (inside or outside the organization) that it deems appropriate without prior notice. Even voice mail or e-mail messages deleted or erased by an employee may not be permanently deleted from VOA's systems, and VOA retains the right to access them for so long as the information may be obtained from any source. Based on this fact, employees have no expectation of privacy in these systems and are urged not to use them for messages they would not want reviewed by others.

The telecommunications systems may not be used to solicit or proselytize for commercial ventures, religious, political or charitable causes (except VOA as approved by Program Director), outside organizations, or other non-job related solicitations. These systems may not be used to create offensive or disruptive messages. Among the messages that are considered offensive are any messages containing sexually explicit or obscene language or content or those containing language or content prohibited by this organization's unlawful harassment policy. Additionally, these systems are not to be used for the transfer of copyrighted materials, trade secrets, confidential information, or other proprietary information without prior authorization.

Any employee in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

## Computer Use Policy

Volunteers of America ("VOA") provides computer workstations to certain employees to enable them to perform their respective job functions. Any computer use that is directly job-related is appropriate. In addition, personal email use, Internet use, and incidental computer use are acceptable, so long as they conform to the policies described within this document.

Adhering to the policies in this document helps ensure that you avoid inappropriate computer use that may put you or VOA at unnecessary risk. These policies promote a secure network, improved productivity, and the best use of computing resources.

**Policy Scope:** VOA's computer use policies apply to all VOA employees, volunteers, contractors, consultants, temporary employees, and other workers who use or have access to any of the following:

- The VOA network and its computer systems.
- A VOA-owned computer or workstation used to connect to the VOA network.
- A personally-owned computer or workstation that is used to connect to the VOA network; computer use of this nature requires the prior written approval the President/CEO or the President/CEO's delegate.
- A computer account (or any form of access that supports or requires a password) on any system that resides at any VOA facility, that has access to the VOA network, or that stores any proprietary VOA information.
- Remote access connections that access the VOA network to do work on behalf of VOA, including reading or sending email, and viewing intranet web resources. Computer use of this nature requires require the prior written approval the President/CEO or the President/CEO's delegate.

**Enforcement of policy:** VOA may monitor, review, inspect, or remove any content (software, email messages, and files) stored on a VOA computer at any time, with or without prior notice to the employee. This includes software, email, or files that may be considered to be of a personal nature.

Any employee found violating VOA's computer use policies may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

**Passwords:** If an employee is granted use of a computer work station, the employee will assigned a user name identification and be required to select a password in conformance with the VOA policies. Passwords must be at least six (6) characters long and contain at least one non-alpha character (e.g. #,\*, or ?). Passwords shall be required to be changed at least every six (6) months. An employee is never to share their password, or to write down their password. If you forget your pass word, please contact the President/CEO or the President/CEO's delegate. Under no circumstances are staff allowed to give anyone else, including clients, their passwords.

**PC Usage:** When using VOA computers, no personal disks are to be used as they may transfer virus' and spyware to the VOA system. Jump drives or thumb drives are permitted. Absolutely no clients are allowed to use any of the VOA computers connected to the network. If there is a question about which computers are available for use to clients, please ask your supervisor.

Incidental and occasional personal use of electronic mail is permitted within VOA, but such messages will be treated no differently from other messages. Discretion and decorum are required because messages can often unintentionally give offense to others. Excessive personal use, whether on VOA or personal time, and transmission of information that may be harassing or defamatory is prohibited. Such excessive or inappropriate use may subject the person involved to disciplinary action; determination if

electronic mail use is as permitted shall be at the President/CEO or the President/CEO's delegate's sole determination.

Incidental and occasional personal use of electronic mail for contact with persons outside VOA for non-business purposes is permitted on a limited basis.

VOA reserves the right to access, review, and disclose the contents of electronic mail messages. This includes both internal disclosure for VOA purposes and external disclosure.

Incidental or occasional personal use of the Internet is permitted, but appropriate discretion and decorum should be followed. Excessive personal use of the Internet through VOA computer systems, whether on VOA or personal time, is prohibited. Such excessive or inappropriate use may subject the person involved to disciplinary action; determination if Internet use is permitted shall be at the President/CEO or the President/CEO's delegate's sole determination.

**Authorized Software:** Authorized software is software that has been approved for general or specialized business use by VOA computer workstations and that is supported by the VOA designated IT team. When you receive a VOA computer, it comes loaded with all of the software that is needed for your particular position or that was requested by your supervisor.

Specialized software is any software that has not been authorized for general business use, but is still needed to perform your job. As designated by VOA, specialized software is loaded onto your computer workstation as required by your particular position and as requested by your supervisor. If you think you need specialized software to perform your job, please see your supervisor.

**Mandatory antivirus software:** Due to possible virus contamination when downloading files, you must have the VOA designated antivirus software ("Antivirus software") running on your system at all times. The Antivirus software automatically scans downloaded files and email attachments for viruses. The Antivirus software was installed during your initial computer setup, and automatically updates the software with the Network. Do not remove or disable the Antivirus software for any reason.

Conditions for authorized software: Software must meet the following conditions before it becomes authorized:

- The VOA President/CEO or designee must approve the software for general or specialized business use.
- There must be complete licensing compliance before the software is installed.
- The software must be installed and configured on the computer workstation as authorized by VOA.

VOA reserves the right to install and test all legally acquired software in order to evaluate its potential for general or specialized business use.

Enforcement: VOA does not support and/or reserves the right to remove any of the following:

- Any approved specialized software or Internet software that interferes with workstation or network stability.

- Any software that has not been pre-approved.
- Any prohibited software.

**Internet software:** Do not download, install, or use unauthorized or unapproved software. Violations of this policy are subject to immediate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

You must obtain written approval from the President/CEO or his/her delegate before you download or install software from the Internet or an FTP site. This policy includes screen savers, computer add-ons, and plug-ins.

Because software viruses can be embedded in Internet files, security precautions are strictly enforced to minimize risk to VOA.

Do not download, install, or use unauthorized or unapproved software. Violations of this policy are subject to immediate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

**Prohibited software:** Any software that is not authorized is prohibited. Do not download, install, or use unauthorized or unapproved software.

Also, do not install or use any software that allows access to VOA hardware, software, or internal network resources from outside of VOA's network. If you require remote access to VOA's internal network, contact your supervisor.

**Why we prohibit software:** Computer workstations are to be used for conducting VOA business. Prohibited software uses valuable network and/or computer workstation resources.

Potential problems with prohibited software include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Invalid or improper licensing, which can lead to fines of up to \$100.00 per unlicensed copy or user.
- Unnecessary network or Internet traffic, which can slow down critical business software and processes, and which can incur the additional costs needed to provide increased network bandwidth.
- Potential copyright infringement, which can lead to potential legal action against individuals and/or VOA.
- Compromised network security, which can lead to the destruction or theft of client data or VOA data.

VOA reserves the right to remove prohibited software, prohibited files, or any software that is not specifically authorized, approved, or provided by VOA. Prohibited items can be removed from any workstation immediately and without notice.

Do not download, install, or use unauthorized or unapproved software. Violations of this policy are subject to immediate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. If you have any questions or concerns about the guidelines contained in this policy, please contact your immediate supervisor or the President/CEO.

## Social Network Sites, Blogs and Forums Workplace Policy

We respect employees' and volunteers' freedom to use the internet, weblogs (blogs), web forums, social networking and social media sites as they feel appropriate while off-duty using equipment or systems not owned or provided by Volunteers of America so long as the activity does not break confidentiality, have a negative effect on our workplace environment, Volunteers of America or its business interests. For this reason employees/volunteers should remember these points when using these systems.

- Employees/volunteers may not use work facilities, equipment, or time to develop, design, maintain, update, or make entries on these sites, blogs, forums, or social networks, with the exception of Public Relations staff assigned this task for agency business. Similarly, employees/volunteers may not link these sites, forums, etc. to the employer's website unless sharing a link published by Volunteers of America for this purpose.
- Employees/volunteers should be respectful of those we serve, vendors, owners, managers, supervisors and fellow employees or volunteers. At all times, employees and volunteers must comply with our confidentiality policies to protect confidential and proprietary information about our business, employees, vendors and clients. ***This responsibility applies to all professional and personal communication, even while off work using one's own equipment and includes friending, following or otherwise involving clients in your activity on social network sites, blogs or forums.***
- These systems may not be used to threaten, harm, harass, stalk, invade privacy, publish private facts, defame or infringe intellectual property of any entity or person, with whom we work, serve or have a business relationship or Volunteers of America or its staff.
- Employees/volunteers may and are encouraged to express their individual views or beliefs. At the same time, if employees/volunteers state they work for or volunteer with Volunteers of America, they must also state that any opinions expressed are those of the individual and not the employer. It must be clear that they speak for themselves, and do not speak for or on behalf of Volunteers of America. Individuals are solely responsible for the content of their communication on such sites, blogs, forums and networks and are solely liable for any criminal or civil obligations arising from that activity.
- Employees/volunteers may not use employer trademarks, logos, service marks, slogans or copyrighted materials without express prior written authorization with the exception of links published by the agency for the purpose of sharing.
- Use of social networking sites, blogs, forums or other networks must not violate the employee's duty of loyalty and confidentiality to Volunteers of America. Social networking and/or internet based activities may not interfere with the employee's work commitments.
- These systems may not be used for illegal, unethical, or other activity that tends to cast the employer in a negative light or that in any other manner impacts or impairs the employee's relationship to the employer, co-workers or those we serve.
- The fact that this policy does not specifically identify a particular site or technology does not limit the extent of the application of this policy.

Volunteers of America monitors its facilities and systems for compliance with this policy and monitors the internet and various sites for the use of our name, copyrights, marks, website, other intellectual property and any other associated inappropriate material. Employees/volunteers who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action up to and including immediate discharge.

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Employee/Volunteer Signature

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Date



## **Employee Parking**

For employees working at 525 W. Second Avenue, employee parking spaces are available in near-by parking lots. General parking for employees in these parking spaces is on a first-come, first-serve basis. A number of parking spaces are reserved in the rear of the VOA building for visitors, designated staff and/or handicapped employees/visitors. Please do not park in these spaces. Employees working during the day can request a bus pass that VOA may pay. If the employee chooses to drive, the employee may pay the difference between the cost of the bus pass and the parking pass. To request either a parking pass or bus pass, complete a request or payroll deduction form.

## **Smoking**

Smoking is prohibited inside any area.

## **Personal Mail and Copying**

Employees may not use VOA's name, address or stationary for personal mail. Postage stamps and use of the copy machines are available to employees at cost.

## **Personal Possessions**

VOA does not assume responsibility for any theft or damage to personal belongings of employees. Please keep personal possessions in a secured area.

## **Other VOA Property**

Employees will take reasonable care to protect property belonging to VOA, other employees, clients and visitors. VOA property cannot be removed from VOA premises without prior authorization from the Executive Director. Employees may be held responsible for the replacement or repair of any property that they cause to be lost, damaged or destroyed through their negligence, except VOA owned vehicles.

# EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

## Open Door Policy and Team Communication

In our desire and willingness to listen to our employees, we believe in an open door communication policy. Employees are encouraged to discuss with their immediate supervisors any questions, problems, or concerns. An employee's supervisor may secure the assistance of other resource persons. We promise to listen to concerns with respect and do our best to help solve any problems.

If there is any reason an employee feels he/she cannot bring a concern directly to his/her supervisor or the person involved, a meeting with the Program Director or Executive Director may be scheduled. Please remember—do not keep a problem to himself/herself. We cannot help solve a problem if we do not know it exists. Please feel free to communicate concerns without fear of reprisal.

## Policy against Harassment

It is the policy of this organization to provide our employees a working environment in which their individual dignity is respected. The harassment of employees because of their race, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, age, religion, disability or health condition, or veteran status is strictly prohibited. This applies to any employee, lead person, supervisor, manager, director or outside third party with whom employees must deal in performing their work.

Prohibited conduct may include any of the following actions when such action involves reference to, or is directed at, someone's race, ethnic background, national origin, sexual orientation, age, religion, disability or medical condition:

- Telling jokes, teasing, derogatory remarks;
- Circulating writings, printed material or cartoons; and/or
- Displaying of offensive objects or symbols.

Sexually harassing conduct may consist of, but is not limited to:

- Sexual advances or teasing;
- Telling of sexually oriented jokes or stories;
- Requests for sexual activity or dates;
- Display or distribution of suggestive jokes, pictures or other materials;
- Using electronic mail for romantic or suggestive communication;
- Suggestive or obscene gestures, including physical posturing or contact; and/or
- Any abusive language or conduct directed at someone because of the person's sex.

Such activity, especially if severe or repeated and unwelcome, is a violation of anti-discrimination laws and perhaps other laws which can result in law suits against the employee as well as VOA. Therefore, it is our policy that any of this conduct, engaged in at any time or at any place by any employee, whether on or off our premises, can result in prompt disciplinary action against the employee, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

While all employees are held to high standards, supervisors and lead employees are held to even higher standards because of their positions of influence or authority, and are required to act immediately to

stop any such behavior observed or reported to them and to report it to management as soon as possible.

If an individual feels that a violation of this policy has occurred, he/she may use the VOA's complaint process promptly and in a confidential manner. Employees may skip steps in the process if they feel that the person responsible for that step is involved in the offensive conduct or would not be responsive to a complaint.

An investigation of all complaints will be undertaken immediately. Complaints will be kept confidential to the extent possible, while allowing the investigation to proceed. The complaining employee will be kept informed of the progress of any investigation and findings. The complaining employee will also be protected from any retaliation. He/she will be asked to refrain from discussing the complaint with other employees or those outside the investigative process in order to protect the integrity of the investigation process and reduce the risk of release of the identity of the complainant or witnesses.

Any corrective action taken will be sufficient to immediately stop the conduct and prevent any future harassment.

Any form of retaliation, including but not limited to derogatory comments against individuals making harassment complaints, witnesses or any other involved employees, is against the VOA policy and is strictly prohibited. Retaliatory activities will be treated as a separate violation of this policy and will subject the individual to discipline, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

## **Performance Review**

Regular performance reviews provide the employee and his/her supervisor with the opportunity to discuss how well expectations are being met, to clarify job responsibilities and to explore possibilities for improving performance. The performance review is part of an employee's personnel records. Each employee is asked to sign the performance review to indicate that it was reviewed with the individual; signature does not necessarily imply agreement with the evaluation. Employees will receive a copy of their evaluations upon completion of the review.

It is our intent to conduct performance reviews at the end of the initial evaluation period and annually thereafter. Casual or temporary employees do not receive formal performance reviews, although their performance may be monitored. Performance reviews may also be conducted at other times for specific reasons such as promotion, poor work performance or disciplinary problems.

## **Commendations**

Employees whose performance warrants special recognition will receive a Commendation. A copy will be sent to the Executive Director and another placed in the employee's personnel file.

## **Mandatory Training**

Orientation and periodic training are required to help us meet our professional and licensing standards. The employee's supervisor will inform the employee about these mandatory meetings.

## **Attendance and Tardiness**

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential functions of any position with VOA. In order to serve our clients and provide for efficient operations, employees must be at work. Furthermore, regular

attendance and punctuality show respect for his/her fellow employees who must do the job in his/her absence.

It is necessary for employees to report to work regularly and on time. If an employee is unable to report to work or will be late, he/she must let the supervisor know as soon as he/she knows he/she will be absent or tardy and always before the scheduled starting time. If the supervisor is unavailable, leave a message with the appropriate staff, stating (1) the reason for being late or for not being able to report to work, (2) the probable duration of the absence, (3) and a telephone number where he/she can be reached. If an employee's absence or tardiness is due to an emergency, he/she must call in or have someone call in for he/she as soon as possible. Attendance or tardiness problems as well as failure to call in may result in discipline, up to and including immediate termination of employment. Any employee who fails to report for work or call in for three days in a row will be deemed to have abandoned his/her job.

We realize that on occasion everyone misses work for valid reasons. Excessive absence or tardiness, however, even for legitimate reasons, may be cause for discipline up to and including immediate termination of employment.

Following absences of more than three days, an employee may be required to complete a verification of absence from work form or provide medical confirmation.

Employees should only be at the job site at their scheduled times unless picking up checks or meeting with supervisor.

## **Personal Appearance**

Public perceptions about VOA can help us succeed and prosper. Perceptions are formed, fairly or not, partly by the outward appearance and dress of our employees. A neat and clean personal appearance is essential to our public perception and employees own advancement. Employees should wear clothing appropriate to each job. The dress code may be more stringent in areas with higher public contact. Hair length and jewelry standards may differ for men and women in keeping with recognized legal standards. Employees who are inappropriately dressed will be sent home without pay and directed to return to work in proper attire. This policy is a general guideline on dress and grooming standards. Please ask the supervisor for specific dress standards for the program.

## **Standards of Conduct and Discipline**

Many individuals and companies rely on the quality and reliability of our service and employees. Thus, all employees are expected to provide excellent and reliable performance. Any failure to meet this high standard serves as a basis for concern and/or discipline, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

It is the intent of our management to employ coaching techniques and clear communication about what is expected so that issues of discipline never arise. In some circumstances, however, discipline may be warranted. While progressive discipline may be available, such use is solely at the discretion of the employer and any disciplinary consequences, up to an including immediate termination may be employed. The employment relationship is at will, and may be ended at any time, with or without notice, and with or without cause.

As is noted above, disciplinary concerns arise where performance falls below expected standards. Additionally, such concerns arise where behavior violates the law or VOA rules and policies. By way of example and not limitation, the following conduct is strictly prohibited:

- Failure or refusal to carry out legitimate job assignments and management requests (insubordination);
- Unauthorized release of private and/or confidential information;
- Unauthorized release of confidential proprietary information
- Swearing or verbal abuse while on our premises or carrying out our job duties;
- Falsification of any work, personnel or other records;
- Removal of property without permission;
- Unauthorized taking of funds or property or unauthorized charges against an account;
- Dishonesty;
- Discrimination against or harassment of coworkers;
- Possession, consumption or being under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance at work or on our premises;
- Deliberate damage to property;
- Altercations, fighting or threatening to fight with another;
- Carrying firearms or weapons;
- Carrying unauthorized passengers;
- Excessive absenteeism or tardiness in reporting to work or returning from rest periods or meal periods;
- Failure to report an absence in accordance with the absenteeism policy;
- Failure to comply with safety or security rules and procedures;
- Carelessness or negligence in the performance of an assigned duty or in the care and use of VOA property;
- Serious misconduct;
- Inefficient or negligent performance of an assigned duty or responsibility;
- Substandard performance of an assigned duty or responsibility;
- Inappropriate relationships with clients;
- Downloading sexually explicit internet materials;
- Sleeping on the job; and/or
- Other violations of specific policies.

## Code of Ethics

We have developed the following Code of Ethics consistent with our organizational values and principles.

In order to hold ourselves to the highest possible standards of conduct, we expect all employees and volunteers to demonstrate their commitment to these standards by signing this Code of Ethics.

1. I will be conscious of the fact that everything I do, directly or indirectly, reflects upon VOA as a whole.
2. I will conduct myself at all times with openness, forthrightness, and honesty in dealing with people and organization, both internally and externally. I will take extra steps to avoid even the appearance of impropriety and hold myself to a higher standard reflective of the work that I do.
3. I will treat everyone with dignity, worth, respect, concern, courtesy, and fairness.
4. I will be sensitive to and seek solution for all instances of discrimination and social injustice that I observe.
5. I will challenge all discrimination and social injustice.
6. I will respect and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.
7. I will exercise prudent stewardship of all VOA resources.
8. I will avoid all “conflict of interest” relationships with board members, staff, suppliers, and other organizations with whom I deal, unless disclosed and approved.
9. I will accept no gifts or favors which might influence the performance of my responsibilities.
10. I will also adhere to and comply with my own professional standards of conduct.

I hereby commit to this Code of Ethics and its’ universal enforcement.

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Employee/Volunteer Signature

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Date

## Confidentiality in the Media

As a non-profit human service organization, we have a responsibility to protect the people we serve, as required under state and federal laws, as well as our own liability constraints. Our clients expect their circumstances and personal matters to remain confidential and we are obligated by laws and ethics to safeguard their identities and all information concerning them.

Our policy also prevents us from divulging client information even when a case has been made public through the news media. There are few exceptions to the confidentiality policy except in life and death emergencies, when information may be given to law enforcement or medical professionals.

There are many times when it might be advantageous for us to speak to the media about our clients or to allow client interviews. It might be beneficial to our organization; it might be useful to hear another point of view.

However, we cannot pick and choose the situations in which the confidentiality policy applies – it always applies. The policy also applies when we sponsor activities or events outside of our facilities.

In order to protect the identity of clients, we do not allow television or newspaper cameras in our facilities or at special off-site VOA events, except under the following conditions:

- Individual youth (under age 18) may be photographed/videoed when the interview is arranged in advance and we have obtained written permission from parents for a specific purpose. This is a rare occurrence, generally special occasions such as graduations or other special achievement events.
- Individual youth aged 18 or older may be photographed/videoed under similar conditions as above – in celebration of achievement.
- Under no circumstances will we pressure our clients to be interviewed.
- In rare circumstances, we allow photos or videotaping if faces of clients are not used. Arrangements must be made in advance so that all clients have an opportunity to leave the premises.

All requests for interviews will be referred to the Executive Director or the Program Director; one of the Program Directors or Executive Director will be available to speak and be photographed or videotaped when arrangements are made in advance.

Thank you for your cooperation. Please contact Marilee Roloff at 624-2378 for more information.

## Confidentiality Policy

Basic to the maintenance of professional ethics and community respect is the principle of confidentiality. All staff of Volunteers of America have a four-fold set of ethical responsibilities by which they are bound to the client, VOA, the community and themselves. VOA clients act in good faith, expecting their circumstances and personal matters to remain confidential, and we are obligated by law and ethics to reciprocate.

The following is presented to provide some guidelines concerning the matter of confidentiality.

1. Information and details about a client's case may be discussed for clinical purposes only. This is, cases may be discussed in clinical and supervisory meetings in order that cases may be more appropriately and therapeutically managed.
2. No identifying information about the clients (names, addresses, and social security numbers) should be revealed except within VOA itself.
3. The case records that are kept on clients should be only used for clinical purposes and not for general perusal. Other agencies requesting records of given clients should first obtain a Release of Information from the client. In no case should the records be automatically sent to another person or agency without first obtaining a Release of Information from the client or legal guardian.
4. Even though names, addresses and social security numbers are not revealed, discussing the details of a case outside of VOA should also be considered a **BREACH OF CONFIDENTIALITY**. That is, one might possibly describe in detail facts about the case and never mention who the person is or allude in anyway to name or any type of descriptive date, yet within the case reveal enough that the listener might possibly identify the client.
5. The fact that a case has been made public through any of the news media does not alter the fact that this person still has confidentiality privileges within VOA itself. For example, if a client is arrested, confidentiality should still remain.

## Exceptions to Confidentiality

The following are general guidelines for the exceptions to confidentiality:

1. **Child Abuse:** Child Protective Services will be notified by Program Director or his/her designee if a youth has been physically/sexually abused or is frightened to return home because of abuse.
2. **Medical Personnel:** Medical personnel and mental health professionals shall be provided with information in emergency situations.
3. **Suicide, Depression or Homicidal Behavior:** When there is a clear and serious threat of a youth harming themselves or someone else Spokane Mental Health and/or local police will be contacted and information pertinent to the situation revealed.
4. **Police:** Information about a client that is requested by an officer related to a crime will be revealed.



5. **Court Cases:** All requests for client files or other information will be referred to the Executive Director. Generally, information is not released without a subpoena or other court document.

## **Confidentiality Oath**

The following confidentiality oath will be signed by all staff and volunteers, and kept on record in personnel files.

I understand and agree to the above policy and am aware that any breach of confidentiality is grounds for immediate dismissal.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee/Volunteer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Conflict of Interest**

It is the policy of VOA to prohibit employees from engaging in any conduct which conflicts with the interests of VOA or its clients. VOA will protect the integrity of its services and employees and ensure that services are equitably provided to clients. VOA encourages and expects professionalism, honesty and integrity from its employees.

VOA does not allow employees to engage in activities that conflict with their VOA employment. An employee may not use his/her work position to gain financial benefits, privileges or advantages beyond normal wages and benefits.

A conflict of interest is defined as an activity or endeavor which creates financial benefit, privileges or advantages for an employee or his/her immediate family, which is directly derived from the VOA employment situation. If an employee or a member of his/her immediate family has a financial interest in a firm that does business with VOA the employee must report the interest to the Executive Director and must not represent VOA in such transactions. No employee or member of his/her immediate family will accept gifts from any person or firm doing or seeking to do business with VOA.

Employees and volunteers of VOA are prohibited from using their position, contacts, or inside information to obtain a personal or financial interest or benefit, either for themselves, their family, or their business, during their tenure at VOA and for a one-year period after.

An employee who has a second job, outside of and in addition to his/her VOA position, or is involved in private business activities will discuss the outside activity with the Executive Director. VOA reserves the right to prohibit second jobs.

No employee shall directly or indirectly engage in conduct which is disloyal, disruptive or damaging to VOA. No employee shall enter into any business relationship with clients or their families.

Employees may not use VOA equipment, facilities, tangible or intangible assets to promote or operate a private business. Employees may not use VOA clients, contributors or employees to promote and/or establish outside business endeavors.

Employees are prohibited from accepting gifts, money and gratuities from persons or organizations receiving benefits or services from VOA. Fees and/or honoraria accepted by employees as payment for speaking engagements or consultations on behalf of VOA will be turned over to VOA. This does not apply to legitimate and approved outside employee consultation and service. Employees may accept meals at events where they represent VOA.

It is difficult to describe all the situations which may arise involving conflict of interest. Even the appearance of conflict must be scrupulously avoided. Employees should request advice from the Executive Director regarding any questions concerning a possible conflict of interest.

VOA recognizes that its employees may hold a wide range of personal beliefs, values and commitments. These beliefs, values and commitments may create a conflict of interest in the following circumstances:

- When beliefs, values or personal commitments prevent employees from fulfilling job responsibilities;
- If employees attempt to use VOA's time and facilities to further their beliefs, values or personal commitments; and/or
- If an employee continues attempting to convince others of his/her personal beliefs after she/he has been asked to stop.

The Executive Director is responsible for interpretation, monitoring and implementation of the conflict of interest policy. He/she will review the activity and determine if there appears to be either existing or potential conflict of interest. If she/he determines the existence of possibility of a conflict, he/she will notify the employee and prescribe a course of corrective action. Violation of the conflict of interest policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

I have read, understood, and agree to the above policy and am aware that any violation is grounds for immediate dismissal.

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Employee/Volunteer Signature

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Date

## Drug Free Workplace Policy

It is the policy of Volunteers of America of Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, possession or use of a controlled substance or illegal drug of any type in or near the office, property, or workplace(s) of Volunteers of America of Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho is strictly prohibited. Reporting to work while debilitated by “private” and/or off-site usage of controlled substance is strictly prohibited.

It is the policy of Volunteers of America of Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho that employees and volunteers may not report to work under the influence of alcohol, use or possess alcohol near the offices, property, or workplace(s) of Volunteers of America of Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho.

Any employee/volunteer who is in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action which may include suspension and/or termination.

It is a condition of employment/volunteering that each employee/volunteer agrees to abide by the policy statement set forth herein. In addition, it is also a condition of employment/volunteering that each employee/volunteer agrees to notify Volunteers of America of Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho of any drug-related conviction or alcohol-related conviction within five days of the date of any judgment of conviction.

It is understood that any employee/volunteer who is convicted of an alcohol or drug-related offense shall be subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension or termination.

Volunteers of America of Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho reserves the right to require any employee/volunteer convicted of a drug offense or in violation of this policy to submit to drug counseling and/or rehabilitation services as part of disciplinary action.

This statement of policy is presented to you and adopted by Volunteers of America of Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho pursuant to provisions of the Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988.

I have read, understood, and agree to the above policy and am aware that any violation is grounds for immediate dismissal.

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Employee/Volunteer Signature

---

Date

## Reservation of Opportunity to Implement Pre and Post-Employment Testing

The employer reserves the right to implement a testing policy which may include the following:

**Pre-Employment Testing:** Employment offers are contingent upon candidates submitting to and passing a drug test.

### Post-Employment:

1. Blanket Testing - VOA may require drug testing of all employees without advance notice.
2. Random Testing - Employees may be tested on a random basis for current illegal drug use. Random Testing procedures shall be reasonably calculated to ensure that results are random and scientific.
3. Reasonable Suspicion (R/S) Testing

Employees may be subject to alcohol and drug testing for reasonable suspicion. When a supervisor, manager or other designated official has reasonable suspicion to believe that an employee is in violation of one or more prohibitions set forth in this policy, then such employee will be notified that s/he must undergo a R/S drug and/or alcohol test. Upon notification, the employee shall make himself/herself available to proceed to the nearest specimen collection site as soon as possible.

An employee may also be subject to additional fitness for duty examination when, in the employer's judgment, warranted by performance or conduct issues.

Post-accident Testing - Upon the occurrence of an accident which occurs while on working time, an employee shall make himself/herself available to proceed to the nearest specimen collection site as soon as practicable following the accident to be tested for illegal drugs and alcohol.

Return To Duty Testing - If the company permits an employee who has violated a prohibition in this policy (e.g., received a positive test result) to return to work (e.g., after suspension or participation in an approved program), then such employee must undergo a return-to-duty test for the substance that provided the basis for his/her violation. The employee must receive a negative result on such return-to-duty test before actually being permitted to resume work.

## Grievance Policy

As stated previously, it is our intent to provide a reasonable hearing and resolution of employee concerns that may arise. If an employee has a complaint or need a problem solved, we encourage he/she to bring it up as soon as possible with those who can solve it. We want to find a solution that helps us all concentrate on the reason we are here, *TO SERVE OUR CLIENTS*. Sometimes we learn something from the employees that helps us to do our job better. We are happy to catch a problem early and have a chance to fix it, so please don't hold it in out of fear.

**Step 1** – Most concerns about safety, wages, hours, supervision, discipline, application of policy or other working conditions can be solved by talking with the immediate supervisor. However, VOA recognizes that certain problems could involve the immediate supervisor in a way that makes the employee reluctant to discuss it with that person. In that case, please contact the Program Director, or if the Program Director is his/her supervisor, please contact the Finance Director. The immediate supervisor or the alternate named above will try to respond within 5 working days of the date the concern was brought to her/his attention.

**Step 2** – If the employee is not satisfied with the response in Step 1, within ten days he/she should present to that person a written statement of the view of the problem, why the employee disagrees with his/her response and what would like to see as a solution. That person will respond in writing and meet with the employee within five days.

**Step 3** – If the employee is not satisfied with that response, within five days call to make an appointment with the Executive Director who will investigate the written complaint and discuss it with the employee. A final decision will be given within ten days.

This complaint procedure is available to employees with sexual harassment concerns or complaints. However, employees should feel free to bring sexual harassment complaints directly to the Executive Director for investigation and resolution. Sometimes a problem is so serious that skipping a step is called for. If the employee thinks that is the case please talk with any member of management for guidance.

## **Workplace Violence Policy**

Nothing is more important to VOA than the safety and security of its employees. Therefore, we have a zero tolerance policy toward acts of workplace violence. We will not tolerate violence or threatened violence against any of our employees, clients or any other persons on our premises by anyone, including members of the public and/or family, friends, or acquaintances of an employee. Therefore, the employer prohibits acts of violence on or about VOA premises or while carrying out work related activities.

**Prohibited Acts:** Acts of violence include, but are not limited to the following behaviors:

- Physically harming another individual;
- Fighting with another individual;
- Shoving another individual;
- Pushing another individual;
- Striking at another individual;
- Intimidating another individual;
- Coercing another individual;
- Harassing another individual in person or by telephone, electronic or other means;
- Stalking another individual in person or by telephone, electronic or other means;
- Threatening another individual in person or by telephone, electronic or other means; and/or
- Possessing any type of weapon on VOA premises, including parking lots.

**Warning Signs:** Behaviors that may indicate a likelihood of violence include, but are not limited to the following behaviors:

- Verbal, nonverbal or written threats or intimidation;
- Irrational beliefs or ideas;
- Fascination with weaponry and/or acts of violence;
- Expressions of a plan to hurt themselves or others;
- Externalization of blame;
- Unreciprocated romantic obsession;
- Taking up too much of supervisor's time with behavior or performance problems;
- Fear reaction among co-workers/clients;
- Drastic change in belief systems;

- New or increased source of stress at home or work;
- Inability to take criticism;
- Feelings of being victimized;
- Intoxication from alcohol or other substances;
- Expressions of hopelessness or heightened anxiety;
- Productivity and/or attendance problems;
- Violence toward inanimate objects;
- Steals or sabotages projects or equipment; and/or
- Lack of concern for the safety of others.

**Reporting:** Any employee having been subject to or having witnessed violent behavior or who has identified the warning signs of violence should immediately contact his/her Program Director or if not available, the Executive Director to report concerns. This report must be made, orally or in writing, regardless of the relationship between the reporting individual and any involved parties. All reports will be promptly investigated and kept strictly confidential.

**Consequences for Employees:** Any act of workplace violence, or threatened violence carried out by an employee will result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination. Employees using our resources, such as telephones, copiers, fax machines, or computers in order to carry out threats or harassment of any other person, inside or outside of VOA, will be subject to discipline, up to and including immediate termination. The individual may also be ejected from the premises with contact to law enforcement being made.

**Consequences for Non-Employees:** Any individual who makes threats, displays threatening behavior, commits violent acts or carries out acts of harassment or stalking on VOA property shall be removed from the premises as quickly as safety permits, and law enforcement will be immediately contacted. The employer will respond to the behavior based on the needs of the affected employees and in a manner that protects all employees and eliminates the threat of further such acts, to the extent possible. The employer's response may include, but is not limited to: obtaining a restraining order, altering the affected employee's work schedule or providing him/her with needed time off, referring the employee to community resources, and providing referrals to local domestic violence services. Additionally, the employer may suspend and/or terminate any type of business relationship with the person responsible for the behavior.

**Reporting Restraining Orders:** We require that all employees who apply for or obtain protective orders or restraining orders list VOA's location as a protected area. Provide the Program Director with a copy of the order granted, even if the order is temporary. The employer will also work with the employee to fill out a trespasser information sheet to allow the organization to identify the individual restrained. These steps will allow VOA to help law enforcement in the event we are contacted to assist in carrying out the order *and* to create a safer workplace for the affected employee, his/her co-workers, and the public we serve. *VOA understands the sensitivity of the information requested and all information will be held as confidential.* Failure to report a protective or restraining order may result in danger to co-workers and members of the public and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination.

**Leave:** Should the employee need time off in order to obtain an order for protection, seek medical treatment, or locate safe shelter, VOA will provide reasonable unpaid leave as needed. The employee may utilize annual leave or sick leave benefits during this time. VOA can also provide information regarding community resources in relation to intimate partner violence, harassment and stalking. For discussion of these matters, please contact the Program Director.

**Law Enforcement Assistance:** Many violent actions, such as assault, battery, and domestic/intimate partner violence, constitute criminal activities. In such cases, this organization will take all steps necessary to ensure that arrest and prosecution occurs.

## Client Rights

Volunteers of America will take reasonable efforts to assure each client:

1. Is treated in a manner promoting dignity and self-respect.
2. Is treated without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, religion, sex or sexual preference.
3. Is treated without regard to disability unless such disability makes assistance offered by the facility non-beneficial or hazardous. Reasonable actions will be taken to accommodate disabled persons with our programs.
4. Is protected from invasion of privacy, provided that reasonable searches may be conducted or other means used to detect and prevent contraband (including firearms) from being possessed or used on the premises.
5. Have all clinical and personal information treated confidentially in communications with individuals not directly associated with Volunteers of America.
6. Have the opportunity to review his/her own client records in the presence of a staff person, upon request.
7. Is provided reasonable opportunity to practice the religion of his/her choice, alone and in private, insofar as such religious practice does not infringe on the rights and treatment of others or the programs themselves. The client has the right to refuse participation in any religious practice.
8. Is not subjected by staff/volunteers to physical abuse, corporal punishment or any other forms of abuse administered by staff/volunteers.
9. Is not denied communication with friends or family in emergency situations.



# EMPLOYEE STATUS CHANGE AND SEPARATION

## Transfers and Promotions

It is our desire to give qualified employees preference over others when filling vacancies or new positions within VOA. However, because of legal requirements, levels of education and other qualifications required for some positions, promotions from within our organization are not always possible. Employees past performance, qualifications, abilities, job experience and potential are important factors that we consider in the selection process of employees for promotion. Where these factors are deemed to be equal among two or more qualified employees and we decide to promote from within, length of service may be a determining factor.

Notices of open positions are posted on bulletin boards with the exception of certain top management positions, positions filled by promotions within the department or positions filled by employees who would otherwise be laid off. Any employee who is qualified for one of the positions and is satisfactorily performing his/her present job may apply for a posted job opening by submitting a written request for transfer/promotion to the person indicated on the posting. Management reserves the right to determine relative qualifications for a posted position or to hire from outside VOA rather than promote from within. Lateral transfers must be approved by the current supervisor. Promotional transfers to another position in a higher pay grade do not require such approval.

Transfers also may be initiated by VOA. This allows us to broaden the range of skills within the organization and enhances individual versatility. Evaluation periods may be re-set at management's discretion after a transfer, promotion or other reassignment.

## Separation

It is understood that the employment relationship is at will and can be terminated, with or without cause, at any time by either party. No employee, manager or supervisor has the right to change this relationship or to make a contract binding on the company except the Executive Director and then only if done in writing and signed by both parties. Employees who have resigned their employment with proper notice or were laid off are eligible for rehire based on the same terms and conditions as other applicants.

1. **Voluntary Resignation:** Non-supervisory employees are expected to give at least two weeks' notice to the supervisor. Management and supervisory employees are expected to provide at least four weeks' written notice, stating the reason for the resignation.
2. **Layoffs:** There are certain times when it may become necessary to lay-off employees as a result of changing conditions, such as reorganization resulting in the elimination or modification of a job, loss of funding or changes in job functions or technology. If VOA determines that a reduction in force becomes necessary or appropriate, we will make every reasonable effort to give employees at least two weeks' notice.

Employees informed that they are to be laid off may seek transfers or promotions. All layoffs are considered permanent. Laid-off employees are entitled to reemployment according to the provisions on rehiring former employees. Any employee recalled from layoff must return to work within five working days when offered reemployment.

3. Involuntary Discharge: If, for any reason, an employee's employment is terminated, he/she may file a complaint under the Complaint Procedure if he/she believes it is warranted, but must do so within three working days of receiving notice of the termination.

## **Separation Pay**

VOA does not provide severance pay to employees who terminate employment either voluntarily or involuntarily.

# SECURITY AND SAFETY

## Security

Security is an important concern for all employees. When leaving the premises at the conclusion of the workday, check the work area for open windows and doors, lights left on, running machinery, coffee makers and tea pots left on and other potential hazards. Learn how to operate the security alarm system, if necessary for the job.

## Unauthorized Personnel

VOA personnel on duty should make every effort to be aware of strangers on the premises. Anyone who notices an unfamiliar or unauthorized person on the premises should contact the supervisor in charge (refer to policies regarding solicitation by outsiders and confidentiality). Off-duty employees are not to be on the premises, other than public areas except for official business or picking up paychecks on off-duty days.

## Selling and Solicitation

The following policies are made for the safety and security of all employees and shall be strictly enforced. The purpose of this policy is to maintain an orderly workplace, to avoid intrusion upon employees at their work and to preserve employee safety and security throughout the facility as to funds, supplies, records and confidential information. Accordingly, all employees are to observe the following rules and report violations to their supervisors:

1. Except for legitimate business purposes and with prior authorization, individuals not employed by this organization may not at any time solicit, survey, petition or distribute literature on any VOA property. This policy includes charity solicitors, salespersons, questionnaire surveyors, union organizers or any other solicitor or distributor.
2. Employees may not solicit for any purpose during work time. Work time includes that time for which the employee is paid and expected to be performing services for the employer. Work time includes both the soliciting and/or the solicited employee's work time. Reasonable forms of solicitation are permitted during non-work time, such as before or after work or during meal or break periods in non-work areas. Employees may not distribute literature for any purpose during work time or in work areas. The employee lunchroom is a non-work area. The employer's telecommunications systems may not be used to solicit or proselytize for commercial ventures, religious, political, or charitable causes, outside organizations, or other non-job related purposes.

## Accidents & Accident Reports

**Basic rules:** We ask that employees cooperate in helping to promote safety and to prevent accidents to him/herself as well as to other employees, clients and visitors by observing all applicable state and federal regulations and all VOA rules.

- Promptly report all unsafe or potentially hazardous conditions to the supervisor.
- Learn the posted fire rules, the location of fire alarm boxes, fire extinguishers, escape routes and own duties in case of fire.
- Keep individual work areas clean and orderly.

- Do not operate electrical equipment with wet hands.
- Store all materials and equipment in their proper area.
- If the job requires protective clothing or equipment, always use it as required.
- Do not engage in horseplay.
- Drive safely and courteously when operating vehicles.
- Do not smoke or permit others to smoke in "No Smoking" areas.
- When lifting heavy objects, follow the proper procedures and use the appropriate number of persons to assist.

## **Safety Orientation and Training**

We also provide specialized safety orientation and training for certain jobs. Attendance is mandatory so that employees will be familiar with all safety rules and procedures that are unique to the job and work area.

## **Specific Safety Programs**

Beyond these general safety related statements, this organization has developed a specific accident prevention program and other specific programs designed to avoid hazards in the workplace. Please refer to those policies for further detail. Employees should contact their supervisors when they are uncertain about safe procedures or detect a hazard.

## **Accidents**

If an employee should sustain an injury while on the job, the employee is required to notify the nearest available supervisor immediately. The supervisor will evaluate the injury, arrange any appropriate first aid, and/or transport the employee to obtain appropriate medical attention if necessary.

# EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGMENT

## Acknowledgment Of Receipt And Understanding Of Employee Handbook

My signature below shall acknowledge and certify that I have received, read and understand the Employee Handbook, dated May 1, 2006, a copy of which has been provided to me. I also understand that the handbook contains important information on VOA general personnel policies and on my privileges and obligations as an employee. I have familiarized myself with the material in the handbook, I understand that the statements contained in the Employee Handbook are not a contract and that my employment with VOA is at-will. Finally, I clearly recognize and understand that the Employee Handbook may be changed by VOA at its sole and absolute discretion at any time with or without prior notice. I have been informed that this handbook supersedes any and all prior handbooks issued.

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Employee Signature

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Print Name

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Date of Signature