



Employee Policies & Procedures  
December 2023



Welcome to the Franklin County Auditor's office!

I wish you every success here and the opportunity to provide outstanding service to the residents of Franklin County.

We value transparency, accountability and accessibility to the residents of Franklin County.

This handbook will offer you information and guidance about the Auditor's office and its policies and procedures, which are designed to provide a comfortable, supportive work environment where employees can deliver dedicated, excellent service that will assist in making our community the very best place to live and work.

It is a privilege to lead a dynamic team of employees who take pride in serving the residents of Franklin County. I am looking forward to your development and growth as the office strives toward excellence and a commitment throughout the communities we serve in Franklin County.

Please know that my door is always open, and please never hesitate to come up and say hello.

Welcome to the team, we're happy to have you!

Michael Stinziano  
Franklin County Auditor



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## **Introduction**

The Franklin County Auditor's policies and procedures are designed to provide relevant, valuable information and guidance pertaining to the operations, policies, and work protocols within the Auditor's office.

For non-bargaining unit positions, these policies and procedures serve as your primary source for information. If your position is in the bargaining unit, your unit's Collective Bargaining Agreement is your first point of reference. If the Agreement is silent on a matter, refer to the office policies and procedures.

Please review the office's policies, procedures, working conditions, and benefits. You will be asked to affirm that you have read, understand, agree to abide by, and acknowledge receipt of the policies and procedures.

As public employees, you are expected and agree to conduct yourself in a mature, responsible, and professional manner. You, further agree to work in an efficient, conscientious, and diligent manner using good judgement.

The Franklin County Auditor's Office offers an open-door policy in which employees are encouraged to take problems to the next level of management if they are unable to resolve a situation with their direct supervisor.

The current policies and procedure here within supersede all previous versions, and its terms replace those contained in previous versions.

The Franklin County Auditor's office reserves the right to withdraw or change policies and procedures, benefits, and working conditions at any time for any reason, and without prior notice, although every effort will be taken to notify employees when an official change in policy or procedure has been made.

The Franklin County Auditor's policies and procedures are not a contract of employment, nor is it intended to create contractual obligations for the Franklin County Auditor's office of any kind.

We look forward to working with you!

## **Mission, Vision, & Core Competencies**

### **Vision Statement**

The Franklin County Auditor's Office will serve the residents and businesses of Franklin County by protecting consumers, providing fair and equitable real estate assessments, and by ensuring fiscal integrity.

### **Mission Statement**

Our mission is to deliver superior 21st century services to the residents and businesses of Franklin County, serve as the principal monitor of county funds and a primary resource for information regarding Franklin County.

### **Core Competencies**

*Accessibility:* ensuring all our functions are available to all residents and businesses, both digitally and physically.

*Accountability:* taking responsibility for the quality and timeliness of providing information and results to the residents and businesses.

*Constituent Service:* respond accurately and in a timely manner to residents and businesses and anticipate their needs.

*Communication:* inform and educate regarding the responsibilities and functions of County government and, specifically, of the County Auditor.

*Innovation:* remain proactive in implementing new technologies to provide 21<sup>st</sup> century services.

*Professionalism:* perform our work with integrity, compassion, and empathy.

## **2.0 Adoption Assistance Reimbursement**

The FCAO offers financial assistance to full time employees seeking to become adoptive parents. Employees who choose parenthood through adoption are eligible to receive reimbursement for adoption-related expenses. Please refer to the Benefits section on the Employee Portal for more details.

## **2.1 Disability Programs**

The FCAO offers voluntary group Short Term Disability and Long-Term Disability Insurance. Both plans are offered at the time of hire, at the occurrence of a qualifying event, and again during the annual Open Enrollment period for employee benefits. These coverages replace a portion of your income lost due to sickness, pregnancy, or accidental injury that prevents you from working.

Employees can purchase either plan or both plans. The cost of disability insurance is 100% employee paid. The premiums for the coverage are deducted on a “post tax” basis as a bi-weekly payroll deduction. Please refer to the Employee Portal Benefits section for more details.

## **2.2 COTA Monthly Pass/Employee Identification Badge**

All FCAO employees will be provided with a Franklin County photo identification badge. Employees are required to have their photo identification badge on them at all times while on county property or conducting county business. Lost, stolen or damaged identification badges must be reported to FCAO HR immediately and a replacement badge will be provided. Identification badges must be turned in to FCAO HR upon separation of employment.

Employees may use their FCAO employee ID badge as a COTA pass . Please contact FCAO HR if you have questions.

## **2.3 Holidays**

The following holidays are observed and paid for Employees:

1. The first day of January (New Year's Day)
2. The third Monday in January (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day)
3. The third Monday in February (President's Day)
4. The last Monday in May (Memorial Day)
5. The nineteenth day of June (Juneteenth)
6. The fourth day of July (Independence Day)
7. The first Monday in September (Labor Day)
8. The eleventh day in November (Veteran's Day)
9. The fourth Thursday in November (Thanksgiving Day)
10. The day after Thanksgiving
11. The twenty-fifth day of December (Christmas Day)
12. Any day designated as a holiday by the Governor of Ohio or the President of the United States.

Effective January 1, 2024, there shall be two (2) Floating Holidays per calendar year that must be used in increments of four (4) hours or eight (8) hours and shall be taken only after obtaining supervisor approval. These floating holidays, if unused, cannot be carried over into a subsequent calendar year.

In the event that any of the aforesaid holidays fall on Saturday, the Friday immediately preceding the actual holiday shall be observed as the holiday.

In the event that any of the aforesaid holidays fall on Sunday, the Monday immediately following the actual holiday shall be observed as the holiday.

Part-time employees shall be paid holiday pay for that portion of any holiday for which they would normally have been scheduled to work.

If the FCAO grants any other holiday or authorizes an early dismissal, employees who have previously requested to use paid time off for those periods, shall be permitted to rescind their paid leave request.

In order to receive holiday pay, an employee must work the scheduled workdays immediately before and immediately after a holiday unless the employee is on approved vacation; approved paid leave; has an FMLA claim on file specific for that day; or provides a licensed health care worker's statement for absence due to illness of the employee or a family member. A pattern of unplanned absences either the day before or after a holiday may result in disciplinary action.

## **2.4 Insurance Benefits**

Permanent active FCAO employees scheduled to work at least 30 hours per week are entitled to participate in the County's health care benefit plan. Coverage is effective on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month following date of hire. Enrollment must occur within 30 days of employment, during open enrollment each year, or when the employee experiences a qualifying life event. If this occurs, the employee may make changes to their coverage. New employees will receive a Franklin County Employee Benefits link to learn more about County benefits and to enroll.

The employee and the Board of Commissioners share the premium for the health insurance package. For information concerning the benefit plans, refer to the employee benefits page on the Employee Portal or direct your inquiries to FCAO HR for assistance.

If an employee has insufficient gross wages to cover their benefits contribution, the employee will be required to reimburse that amount to the FCAO.

Employees must inform FCAO HR of a divorce, legal separation or a child losing dependent status under the group health plan within 30 days from the date the change occurred.

Insurance coverage ends the last day of the month in which an employee separates. The County's COBRA Claims Administrator will be notified and, in turn, will offer the employee an opportunity to continue in the group plan by paying their own premium.

Basic life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance are provided at no cost to the employee and cover only the employee. Optional supplemental life insurance is available through payroll deduction.

For more information, visit the benefits section on the Employee Portal or contact FCAO HR.

## **2.5 Leave Donation Program**

The intent of the leave donation program is to allow active FCAO employees to voluntarily provide assistance to their co-workers who are in critical need of continuous leave due to the serious illness of the employee or a member of the employee's immediate family. For purposes of the Leave Donation Program only, immediate family is defined as an employee's spouse, domestic partner, parent, child, foster child, stepchild, sibling, or person who stands in place of a parent (in loco parentis). Employees may donate accrued sick or vacation leave, subject to certain restrictions.

An employee may receive donated leave upon submission of a Leave Donation Application Form to FCAO HR, supported by proper medical documentation. Upon approval by the FCA or designee, the employee may receive donated leave up to the number of hours the employee is scheduled to work each pay period,

The employee who has requested donated leave must meet the following criteria:

1. Has a critical need for themselves or a member of their immediate family due to a serious illness or injury that generally requires surgery or treatment with a prolonged recovery period, hospitalization, or involves multiple traumatic injuries, or is life threatening. Normal pregnancies, short term acute conditions, and intermittent leave do not qualify for the leave donation program.
2. Has no accrued leave,
3. Has applied for any paid leave, worker's compensation, or benefits program for which the employee is eligible (however, donated leave may not be used to supplement a disability benefit), and
4. Has not been disciplined for attendance issues in the last year.

Employees may donate leave if the donating employee:

1. Voluntarily elects to donate leave and does so with the understanding that donated leave will not be returned,
2. Donates a minimum of 8 hours,
3. Retains a combined leave (sick and vacation) balance of at least eighty (80) hours,
4. Remains an active employee during the pay period leave is donated, and
5. Submits the donor form to Human Resources designating the number of hours and type of leave being donated (sick and/or vacation)

The leave donation program is administered pay period by pay period and any leave accrual by the recipient must be used in the next period before using donated leave. Hours donated through the program are on an hour for hour basis.

Employees using donated leave shall be considered in active pay status and shall accrue leave and any other benefits to which they would otherwise be entitled. Leave accrued by an employee while using donated leave shall be used, if necessary, in the following pay period before additional donated leave may be received. Employees using donated

leave must return to work as soon as the medical condition necessitating the use of donated leave permits.

Donated leave shall not count toward the probationary period of an employee who receives donated leave during the probationary period. An employee who has not yet qualified for vacation leave may only receive leave into their sick leave account. Donated leave shall have no impact on the donor's wellness incentive program or performance evaluation. It shall never be converted into a cash benefit for the recipient. An eligible employee shall receive no more than 800 hours of donated leave from all sources combined in any calendar year period (123:1-46-05 Leave donation program).

Employees are not forced to donate leave. There shall be no direct solicitation due to privacy reasons. The FCAO HR will initiate an open call for donations of leave on an as needed basis. The FCAO HR will maintain and administrator the bank of leave for the purposes of the Leave Donation Program. The donation of leave shall occur on a strictly volunteer basis.

Leave donation may be discontinued if it is determined to be excessive, abusive, or detrimental to the operation of the office.

## 2.6 Tuition Reimbursement Policy

Employees are encouraged to further their education to improve skills related to their employment with the FCAO. Based upon availability of funds, the FCAO will reimburse for books and instructional fees up to \$5,000 per calendar year for approved courses successfully completed (grade “C” or better or “Pass” for a Pass/Fail course) during that calendar year. Employees are eligible for up to \$30,000 total tuition reimbursement during their employment with the FCAO.

1. Who is eligible? Any active full-time employee of the FCAO who has completed 6 months of continuous FCAO active service prior to the start of the course(s) shall be eligible for tuition reimbursement in courses of instruction voluntarily undertaken. The employee must also have completed six or more months of continuous service in the position to which the course work applies unless otherwise approved by the FCA or designee. However, no employee on an unpaid leave of absence, unauthorized leave of absence, disability leave, or injury leave may apply for tuition reimbursement.
2. What courses can be taken? There must be a direct correlation between the employee's duties and responsibilities and the courses taken or the degree program pursued. This decision will be made by the FCA or designee. An employee seeking approval of a degree program (as opposed to individual courses) must present certification from the educational institution of his/her acceptance to the specific degree program for which approval is sought. The employee may be required to submit additional certification to demonstrate that an individual course is approved by the educational institution as a part of the degree program previously approved.
3. Where may course work be taken? Courses must be taken at accredited colleges, universities, technical and business institutes or at their established extension centers. Courses offered by these accredited entities over the Internet may be acceptable. Seminars, conferences and workshops are not included.
4. When may course work be taken? All courses must be taken outside scheduled working hours. Any situation which, in the discretion of the FCA or designee, would require an employee's presence on the job shall take complete and final precedence over any times scheduled for courses.
5. What is the procedure for applying to participate in the tuition reimbursement program? Tuition reimbursement applications may be obtained on the Employee Portal. The application is to be completed by the employee and must be approved by the director and FCA prior to the start of the third class of the course(s). Employees may be required to submit a course catalog and fee schedule, if requested. Courses for which application is made must be the same courses for

which reimbursement ultimately is sought; the employee cannot switch classes without prior approval of the director and FCA or designee. Employees must notify the director and FCA or designee when canceling a class after the application has been approved.

6. Is financial assistance acceptable? If an employee receives financial assistance from any other source (other than loans) for the course applied for, regardless of when such assistance may be received, that amount shall be deducted in its entirety from the full tuition. Reimbursement to the employee from the FCAO shall be limited to the remaining tuition amount owed up to the limits of this policy. If an employee's tuition is fully covered by another source, then the employee is not entitled to any payment from the FCAO.
7. What is the procedure for obtaining reimbursement? Reimbursement for tuition will be made when the employee presents to FCAO HR an official certificate or a grade report confirming completion of the approved course and a receipt of payment. These documents must come from the institution. This must be done within four (4) weeks of course completion.
8. What other costs are reimbursable? In addition to tuition, an employee may request reimbursement for the costs of course required textbooks. Approval of such requests is within the discretion of the FCA or designee.

Any employee who has received money under the tuition reimbursement program less than one year prior to the date of a resignation, retirement, or separation for a reason other than job abolishment or layoff, is obligated to repay the reimbursement immediately upon receiving an invoice. At the discretion of the FCA, there may be limited circumstances where this does not apply.

## **2.7 Remote Work Policy**

### **Section 1.**

Remote work is a privilege and not a right. The Employer understands that remote work can improve employee recruitment and retention and increase employee job performance and productivity. Remote work does not change the basic terms and conditions of employment. All policies and procedures apply regardless of work location.

### **Section 2.**

The following criteria shall apply to remote work:

- a. Remote work schedules shall be determined in advance by the division Deputy Chief of Staff.
- b. An employee's remote work schedule shall be reviewed annually in conjunction with the annual performance evaluation.
- c. Employees shall not be required to work remotely.
- d. Certain named positions will be ineligible for remote work including Weights and Measures Inspector or Team Lead, Administrative Assistant I, IT Support Specialist and Transfer and Conveyance Assistant and any other new or existing position Employer determines cannot work remotely. Probationary employees and those within their evaluation period are ineligible for remote work.
- e. Any bargaining unit employee with active discipline on file shall be ineligible for remote work.
- f. During specific time periods, a bargaining unit employee with a remote work arrangement may be required to be in the office for five (5) days a week.
- g. An employee scheduled to work remotely can be called into the office. If called in under these circumstances the employee must report to the office within 1 hour. This call-in is not subject to call-in procedure under Article 15.3 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- h. Unless given prior approval, a bargaining unit employee working remotely must be working within 60 miles of the office.
- i. The remote work location must be safe and free from hazards.
- j. The remote work location must be reasonably free from interruptions and distractions that would affect work performance.
- k. The remote location must allow for the employee to preserve the confidentiality of any sensitive or non-public information.
- l. The remote work location must provide a reliable internet connection that supports connection to the county network via VPN provided by the Franklin County Data Center.
- m. Remote employees shall not meet physically with the public or other clients at the remote location in any official capacity.
- n. An employee may be subject to disciplinary action as a result of actions taken while working remotely, i.e., decrease in work quality, inability to reach an employee, etc.

- o. An employee cannot act as a care provider while working remotely. If children or adults in need of primary care are at home during the employees' work hours, another person must be present to provide the care.
- p. An employee's arrangement to work remotely is subject to modification at any time by the FCAO.
- q. An employee who works remotely in any capacity for any amount of time must work five (5) days a week (Monday through Friday) for eight (8) hours a day. Flexible schedules during remote workdays must be pre-approved by the Supervisor.
- r. Remote work is covered under Ohio Workers' Compensation law for injuries occurring in the course and arising out of the performance of official duties at the remote work location. Any injury should be reported before the end of the scheduled workday unless impractical to do so.
- s. While working remotely, employees must maintain a professional appearance with the ability to turn their cameras on for video conferences. Employees are expected to have their cameras turned on during important meetings, during 1:1 meetings with their supervisors, and when requested.
- t. The Employer will provide a laptop that can be used for remote work and a communication solution for interacting with the public as needed. The Employee will be responsible for any other equipment that is needed for their remote workspace.
- u. The employer will not actively monitor Employee activity through a county-owned device's camera. A right to privacy on a county-owned device does not exist.

## **2.8 Wellness Incentive**

The FCAO Wellness Incentive program allows full-time employees to convert a specific amount of accrued unused sick leave from the previous twelve-month period (beginning the last Monday in November through the last Sunday in November the following year) to either a cash payment or to an equal number of personal leave hours.

Once the conversion is made, the hours are eliminated from the sick leave balance. Employees who choose to convert sick leave hours to personal leave hours must use those personal leave hours within the next 52-week wellness period. At the end of that period, any unused personal leave balance will be deleted and there will be no cash payment for those hours.

An employee who used no more than 40 hours of sick leave from the last Monday in November to the last Sunday in November of the following year may convert up to 40 hours. Sick hours that an employee used; as the result of a workers' compensation claim or FMLA will NOT be counted "against" the employee.

This is a voluntary program. Even if the Employee is eligible, the Employee does not have to convert hours; instead, the Employee may keep them as part of their accrued sick leave balance.

The FCAO's Wellness Incentive Program is subject to the Board of County Commissioners' continuation of the countywide Wellness Incentive Program.

### **3.0 Alcohol & Drug Policy**

The FCAO is a drug and alcohol-free workplace. Possession, sale, manufacture, purchase, use or transfer of alcohol, unauthorized prescription drugs, illegal, legal, or controlled substances on County property or while performing work for or acting on behalf of the FCAO is strictly prohibited and is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination, even for a first offense. Reporting to work while under the influence of illegal, legal, or controlled substances, or unauthorized prescription drugs or alcohol in your system, constitutes grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination, even for a first offense.

If you need to take prescription or over-the-counter medications that have been or may be capable of impairing the senses, coordination, or judgment, you must notify your supervisor or FCAO HR of this use before starting work. You may be required to use your accrued leave in order to avoid an unsafe workplace condition.

If there is reasonable suspicion to believe that alcohol, illegal, legal, or controlled substances, or medically unauthorized drugs are present in your system while you are working which impact your behavior, you will be required to submit to a testing procedure to determine the presence of those substances in your system. In addition, if you have been found to be in violation of this policy and were not terminated for the violation, you will be required to take and pass an alcohol and/or other drug test before you are permitted to return to your work assignment. The failure to submit to the testing procedure is considered insubordination and is grounds for discipline, up to and including termination.

#### **Reasonable Suspicion Testing**

Where there is reasonable suspicion to believe that an employee, when appearing for duty or on the job, is under the influence of, or job performance is impaired by, alcohol, illegal, legal, or controlled substances, or medically unauthorized drugs, the employee may be required to submit a urine specimen for testing for the presence of drugs or a breath sample for testing for the presence of alcohol. Behaviors leading to reasonable suspicion might include unusual conduct, negative performance patterns, or excessive, unexpected or unexplained absenteeism or tardiness.

#### **Substance Abuse Treatment**

Employees are encouraged to seek treatment through the Employee Assistance Program (also known as EAP) or other qualified program before substance abuse issues result in discipline.

### **3.1 Attendance, Tardiness & Unauthorized Leave**

Employees are expected to report for work on time, stay until their designated quitting time, and leave and return from paid and unpaid breaks at the designated times. Unnecessary absenteeism and the failure to be punctual (known as “tardiness”) are expensive, disruptive, and place an unfair burden on other employees and supervisors. A good attendance record is essential for effective performance, productivity, and fairness to coworkers. We rely on one another to get the work done, so we have to be reliable and dependable. This is an important way to build trust and respect in the workplace.

If an employee is unable to report for work for any reason, the employee must notify their direct supervisor or other member of management via phone call, text, or email on each day the employee is unable to report to work by thirty (30) minutes after their designated start time, unless there are valid extenuating circumstances. Employees should check with their supervisor on the proper call off procedures for their department.

Failure to report an absence may result in the absence being designated as unauthorized leave. A request for leave must be entered in Employee Self Service immediately upon returning to work. An employee is not required to notify management if the employee is on an extended leave of absence and has supplied management or FCAO HR with a statement from a medical provider that provides an expected return to work date.

Tardiness is the failure to report for work at the scheduled starting time at the beginning of the day, or upon return from lunch or breaks. It also includes leaving prior to the scheduled break time or quitting time. In situations where tardiness cannot be avoided, and employee shall notify their supervisor as soon as possible. If their supervisor is not available, an employee must contact their director.

Employees should make every effort to arrive at work on time (for example: leaving home a little earlier when the weather is bad) and to not stop working prior to the scheduled break or quitting time.

Excessive absenteeism or tardiness is not permitted and may be grounds for discipline. Failure to work required hours and/or excessive unscheduled call-offs (time off without prior planning) may place the employee in an unauthorized leave status resulting in disciplinary action as well. Department supervisors are responsible for setting their own attendance expectations.

## **Unauthorized Leave**

Employees are not paid for unauthorized leave and may be disciplined for being absent without official leave (AWOL).

Circumstances in which you might be AWOL include but are not limited to:

1. No call/No show – failure to report to work without properly contacting your supervisor.
2. Not having the appropriate leave balances to use paid leave.
3. Using paid leave accruals for unauthorized purposes (such as calling off sick when you're not sick).
4. Not obtaining prior approval for Authorized Leave Without Pay (LWOP) or using it inappropriately.
5. Failing to return on time from an approved leave.
6. Leaving work at a time other than for a scheduled break or the end of your workday without speaking to your supervisor, director, or HR Director before leaving the job.

## **3.2 Discipline**

When an employee's conduct interferes with the orderly and efficient operation of the County, or when an employee's performance does not meet the expectations or requirements of the job, management may take corrective action. When appropriate, supervisors are encouraged to use corrective counseling first as the preliminary means of providing notice that conduct or performance does not meet expectations.

Generally, the FCAO follows progressive discipline, which gives the employee time to correct the unacceptable behavior. An example of progressive disciplinary action is a verbal reprimand, written reprimand, one-day suspension with or without pay, three-day suspension with or without pay, five-day suspension with or without pay, and termination. This example is intended only to illustrate the progression of more severe action and does not constitute a mandated path. However, certain offenses, by their nature, may be severe enough to require management to jump steps or move toward immediate removal from employment without abiding by progressive discipline steps.

Employees in unclassified positions as designated by the FCAO serve at the pleasure of the Auditor and can be removed from their positions at any time for no reason. Unclassified positions are not subject to the progressive discipline steps outlined above.

Managers, in collaboration with FCAO HR, Deputy Chief of Staff and the Chief of Staff have the responsibility of administering disciplinary policies concerning employees within their unit. Prior to the imposition of discipline involving a suspension or removal, a pre-disciplinary conference will be held to ensure that the employee has both sufficient notice and an opportunity to respond to any allegations about their job performance or behavior before disciplinary action is imposed. In all cases of reprimand, suspension, or removal, the employee will be issued a copy of the disciplinary action. Suspensions of more than three (3) days for an overtime eligible employee or five (5) days or more for an overtime exempt classified employee, or removals of a classified employee, may be appealed within ten (10) calendar days to the State Personnel Board of Review.

FCAO may require the employee to report to work to serve the suspension. If so, the employee will continue to be compensated at their regular rate of pay for hours worked. The disciplinary action will be recorded in the employee's personnel file as a working suspension for the purposes of documenting progressive disciplinary actions.

Reprimands will be of no further force and effect after one (1) year, in the absence of intervening discipline, and more severe disciplinary action shall be of no further force and effect after two (2) years, in the absence of intervening discipline.

### **Examples of Grounds for Discipline**

Employees of the FCAO must conduct themselves appropriately at all times. The following examples are intended to provide notice of conduct that falls short of the

standards to which employees are held. It is not an exhaustive list.

Incompetency, inefficiency, dishonesty, immoral conduct, insubordination, intoxication, discourteous treatment of the public, neglect of duty, failure of good behavior, misfeasance (doing something inadequately or poorly), malfeasance (doing something wrong), nonfeasance (failing to do something), violation of Ohio Civil Service Law, violation of County policy, violation of department work rules, or conviction of a felony constitute grounds for discipline.

### **Examples of Unacceptable Conduct**

- (1) Interfering with or hindering work schedules; failing to work on a shift as scheduled, arranging your own replacement on a shift without permission from your supervisor, or working overtime without authorization.
- (2) Directly or indirectly making or publishing false or malicious statements about any employee, supervisor, the County, agencies or departments, projects, or any other individual.
- (3) Excessive absenteeism or tardiness without valid excuse and/or proper notification, or falsely reporting the reason for absence or tardiness.
- (4) Failure to perform job or work assignments satisfactorily, safely, and efficiently while in person or remote.
- (5) Unauthorized distribution of literature or posting of notices, signs, or writings in any form on County premises during work time and in work areas.
- (6) Unauthorized active solicitation, sale, or distribution of items during work time.
- (7) Smoking in other than designated areas, or improper disposal of smoking materials.
- (8) Engaging in activities on County property while on working time which could discredit the County or its employees.
- (9) Violation of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct.
- (10) Accepting, soliciting, or using the authority or influence of your position to secure anything of value from a party interested in doing business with your employing agency.
- (11) Lack of good personal appearance or hygiene which interferes with your professionalism or adversely affects the image of Franklin County.
- (12) Failure to report any conditions of health or safety which might endanger yourself or others.

- (13) Any other failure of good behavior, misconduct, misfeasance, malfeasance or nonfeasance, including violation of any policy set forth in the handbook or an agency's work rules.
- (14) Offering, taking, or soliciting a bribe or gratuity in connection with any County negotiation or transaction.
- (15) Altering or recording one's own or another's time records for the purpose of creating a false record/defrauding the FCAO.
- (16) Refusal to be searched or have personal property examined by security personnel or law enforcement officials where there is reasonable cause for a search.
- (17) Supplying false or misleading information or withholding pertinent information when applying for employment or at any time during your employment with the County.
- (18) Possessing dangerous or deadly weapons on County property, or while in the performance of County duties, unless authorized to possess the weapon.
- (19) Theft (unauthorized removal), misappropriation, or unauthorized possession, storage, transfer, or use of County property/equipment or that of another employee.
- (20) Failure to conduct yourself civilly in the workplace, during working hours, or while representing the County. This includes immoral or indecent conduct, illegal gambling, fighting, coercion, dangerous or potentially dangerous horseplay, bullying, being disrespectful, verbally or nonverbally intimidating or harassing others.
- (21) Unauthorized possession, consumption, selling, being under the influence of illegal drugs, hallucinogens, narcotics or related drugs, medically unauthorized prescription drugs or alcohol and having the presence in one's system of the above described substances on working time, operating County equipment, or acting on behalf of the County as well as failure to submit to drug or alcohol testing upon request.
- (22) Failure to submit to drug or alcohol testing upon request.
- (23) Refusing to obey the direct order of a supervisor (insubordination).
- (24) Abusing, defacing, or destroying County property or the property of other employees.
- (25) Falsifying or unauthorized altering or destroying of County reports or records.
- (26) Loitering or sleeping on the job.
- (27) Willfully hindering, limiting, or sabotaging County, department, or agency operations,

or business.

- (28) Offering, taking, or soliciting a bribe or gratuity in exchange for job preferences, promotion, or performance.
- (29) Unreported absence from work for three (3) consecutive working days.
- (30) Failure to observe established fire and safety rules, or common safety practices, or failure to report any personal injury or accident sustained while in the course and scope of employment.

### **3.3 Dog License**

All dogs in Franklin County over three months or older must be licensed by January 31 of each year, or within 30 days of bringing a new dog home according to ORC 955.01. It is the expectation of the FCAO that all employees who own an eligible dog have a valid license for that dog.

### **3.4 Dress Code**

FCAO strives to provide customers, both external and internal, with outstanding quality services. The FCAO believes that the appearance of employees sends a clear message to constituents about the quality of service they can expect. It is expected that employees wear clothing appropriate for the nature of our business and the type of work performed by the individual employee, both expected and unexpected. Cleanliness and neatness should prevail in determining acceptable attire. Exercise common sense and good judgment about your appearance. If you are not sure about the appropriateness of an item of clothing or accessory, then do not wear it. Department supervisors make the decisions about the appropriateness of attire for their areas.

Inappropriate attire includes, but not limited to:

- Shorts (unless volunteering at an Outreach event)
- Gym wear or exercise attire
- Pajamas
- Midriffs or halter/crop tops
- Hats
- Clothing with offensive graphics or profanity
- Ripped jeans
- Crocs, flip flops

Employees are expected to maintain personal hygiene. Keeping good hygiene helps to maintain a comfortable working environment for all employees along with representing the FCAO in a professional and positive manner. Employees may share any direct questions or concerns with the Chief of Staff.

## **3.5 Ethics**

The FCAO conducts business and requires all its employees to perform their duties in an ethical manner. It is expected that employees aspire to the ideals of honesty and truthfulness in relationships, diligently pursuing the public interest to the best of their ability, subordinating self-interest to the public good, and treating all people with fairness and respect.

All employees shall comply with Ohio Ethics Laws which are located in Chapter 102 of the Ohio Revised Code. These laws require government employees to meet the following standards of conduct:

1. Employees may not use a public position for financial gain for (a) themselves, (b) their households, or (c) a business with which the, or a member of their household, is associated.
2. Employees may not use County property or facilities for private benefit.
3. Employees may not use confidential information received in the course of public service for private gain.
4. Employees may not solicit or receive a promise of future employment with the understanding the promise will influence official action.
5. Employees may not solicit or receive a gift that will influence official action. Should the FCA or COS authorize an employee to meet with a current or potential vendor, the employee will not accept any gift, compensation or service from that vendor, including but not limited to meals, travel benefits, or any other item of any value in accordance with the ethics policy.
6. Employees may not be engaged with outside employment that conflicts or interferes with our current job. Employees must complete and submit to FCAO HR an Application for Secondary Employment for any other employment including, but not limited to paid or unpaid work, self-employment, contractor and consulting work, and all volunteer work done outside of the FCAO.

Employees will be required to complete ethics training upon hire. Thereafter, each year all FCAO employees will be required to complete one (1) hour of ethics training. The manner and method of training will be provided. For any questions on ethics, please speak with your supervisor or the HR Director.

## 3.6 Harassment

The FCAO is committed to providing a work environment that is free of discriminatory insults, sexual harassment, intimidation, stalking and other forms of harassment. In keeping with this commitment, the FCAO maintains a strict policy prohibiting discriminatory harassment of any kind. This policy applies to all FCAO employees and agents or representatives.

Harassment based on political affiliation, race, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, veteran status, disability status or any other status protected by applicable law is a violation of this policy. Harassment may be overt or subtle, but whatever form it takes – verbal, nonverbal, or physical – harassment is insulting and demeaning to the recipient and cannot be tolerated in the workplace. Examples of harassment are verbal abuse; racial, ethnic and religious epithets; slurs or jokes; graffiti (remarks written or drawn on walls or other structures); obscene gestures; and hazing. Even derogatory remarks between friends may lead to overt acts of unlawful discrimination.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to, making unwanted advances and requests for sexual favors where:

1. Submission to such conduct is made an explicit or implicit term or condition of employment; or
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Personality conflicts are not construed to be harassment.

Employees who violate this policy are subject to discipline up to and including termination.

If the unwanted behavior persists, the employee should promptly report the facts of the incident or incidents and the names of the individuals to the HR Director.

**You have a duty** to report suspected harassment in the FCAO whether you are or you are not the victim. The facts relating to the suspected harassment should be reported to the HR Director immediately. The HR Director will gather the initial facts and conduct a thorough investigation immediately. The FCAO will take appropriate disciplinary action as justified by the circumstances.

If you are being harassed, you have a right to ask harassers to stop offensive behavior. Supervisors are expected to foster a workplace that is free of harassment.

Every effort will be made to investigate and resolve complaints of harassment or other forms of illegal discrimination lodged in good faith by any employee. Any employee who makes a false or spurious claim against another employee or agent will be subject to disciplinary action. Retaliation of any kind against any employee bringing a complaint, reporting harassment, or assisting in the investigation of a complaint or report is prohibited.

### **3.7 Lunch & Break Periods**

Employees are entitled to take up to an hour lunch. Supervisors will schedule staggered lunch periods to allow coverage throughout the day. Employees may take a break no more than 15 minutes in the mid-morning and mid-afternoon. Breaks must be coordinated with the department supervisor.

With the approval of the Supervisor or Director, an alternate or flex lunch may be taken. Neither lunch period nor breaks may be used to shorten the workday without prior supervisor approval.

### **3.8 Nepotism/Conflict of Interest**

The FCAO seeks to ensure that hiring, transfers, promotions, disciplinary actions, and supervision is conducted in a manner which enhances public confidence in government and prevents situations which give the appearance of partiality, improper influence, or presents a conflict of interest.

#### **A. Definitions For this policy**

1. “Public Official or employee” means any person who is elected or appointed to an office or is an employee of any public agency under the jurisdiction and control of the FCAO. Public employee includes full-time, part-time, interns, temporary, intermittent and seasonal employees.
2. “Closely related by blood or marriage” is defined to include, but not limited to spouse, children (whether dependent or independent), parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, in-laws, step-children, step-parents, step-grandparents, step-siblings, step- aunts, step-uncles, and other persons related by blood or marriage who reside in the same household.
3. “Business associates” are defined as parties who joined together in a relationship for business purposes or acting together to pursue a common business purpose or enterprise.
4. “Supervision” means direct ability or power to effectively recommend the hire, transfer, suspension, layoff, recall, promotion, discharge, assignment, reward, discipline, distribute work or determine schedule.

All FCAO employees are prohibited from authorizing or using the authority or influence of their position to secure the authorization of employment or benefit (including a promotion or preferential treatment) for a person closely related by blood, marriage or a business associate. This includes, but is not limited to the following circumstances:

#### **B. Hiring**

1. No public official or employee serving as supervisor or above shall be involved in the hiring process of a person closely related by blood, marriage or a business associate.
2. No employee in Human Resources shall process any personnel actions or use the authority or influence of that employee’s position to secure the employment of a person closely related by blood, marriage or a business associate.

### **C. Supervision**

1. No public official or employee shall supervise any person closely related by blood, marriage or a business associate.
2. Should a supervisory conflict arise, or a relationship develops, the agency shall work to relocate or transfer one of the individuals to eliminate the conflict to the extent permitted by law and/or collective bargaining agreement. This relocation or transfer should be to a comparable position with minimal inconvenience for the transferring employee if possible.
3. No employee in Human Resources shall review or be involved in the disciplinary actions of a person closely related by blood, marriage or a business associate.

### 3.9 Political Activity

As an employee of the Franklin County Auditor's Office, it is inappropriate to engage in political activity on government time. An employee may not use government resources for political activity. This includes, but is not limited to, use of the office phone, computer, copier or general office supplies. An employee may not campaign on county time. For example, an employee cannot sit at their desk and use their personal phone to make campaign calls nor wear candidate shirts, buttons or the like to work.

Under Ohio law, classified and unclassified employees are treated differently with regards to permissible political engagement. As a general rule, classified employees are prohibited from partisan campaign activity.

Examples of **permitted** political activity provided to off-duty classified staff include but are not limited to the following: (note all of this must be done on the individual's own time not office/county time):

- (1) Registration and voting;
- (2) Expression of opinions, either oral or written;
- (3) Voluntary financial contributions to political candidates or organizations;
- (4) Circulation of nonpartisan petitions, petitions that do not identify with any particular party, or petitions stating views on legislation;
- (5) Attendance at political rallies;
- (6) Signing nominating petitions in support of individuals;
- (7) Display of political materials in the employee's home or on the employee's property;
- (8) Wearing political badges or buttons outside of work, or the display of political stickers on private vehicles; and
- (9) Serving as a precinct election official under section 3501.22 of the Revised Code.

The full outline of political activity of classified employees can be found in Ohio Administrative Code 123 :1-46-0 2.

The following activities are **prohibited** to employees in the classified service:

- (1) Candidacy for public office in a partisan election;
- (2) Candidacy for public office in a nonpartisan general election if the nomination to candidacy was obtained in a partisan primary or through the circulation of nominating petitions identified with a political party;
- (3) Filing of petitions meeting statutory requirements for partisan candidacy to elective office;
- (4) Circulation of official nominating petitions for any candidate participating in a partisan election;

- (5) Service in an elected or appointed office in any partisan political organization;
- (6) Acceptance of a party-sponsored appointment to any office normally filled by partisan election;
- (7) Campaigning by writing for publications, by distributing political material, or by writing or making speeches on behalf of a candidate for partisan elective office, when such activities are directed toward party success;
- (8) Solicitation, either directly or indirectly, of any assessment, contribution or subscription, either monetary or in-kind, for any political party or political candidate;
- (9) Solicitation of the sale, or actual sale, of political party tickets;
- (10) Partisan activities at the election polls, such as solicitation of votes for other than nonpartisan candidates and nonpartisan issues;
- (11) Service as witness or challenger for any party or partisan committee;
- (12) Participation in political caucuses of a partisan nature; and
- (13) Participation in a political action committee which supports partisan activity.

**Please note: participating in parades for a partisan candidate/office holder is prohibited political activity.**

Classified employees who engage in prohibited activities are subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Unclassified employees do not have similar restrictions in their political activity. Unclassified employees must still only conduct political activities on their own time and should avoid activities that are conflicts of interest with their work within the FCAO. If you are unsure about a conflict, please contact the Open Government Officer.

### **3.10 Selling Real Estate in Franklin County**

A conflict of interest could arise if a FCAO employee from the Real Estate Division or the Appraisal Division is working in their private capacity as a realtor assisting with the sale or purchase of property in Franklin County.

Therefore, it is the expectation of the FCAO that if a property of an employee in the Real Estate Division or the Appraisal Division has been previously associated with as a private realtor should come before the employee in their public role, that employee must stop working on that property immediately and notify their supervisor of the potential conflict. Appraisers I & II are not permitted to work as a realtor in Franklin County.

### **3.11 Social Media Policy**

*Social media* includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's web log or blog, journal or diary, personal website, social networking or affinity web site, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with FCAO as well as any other form of electronic communication.

The FCAO has established guidelines for appropriate social media use on and off the clock. Social media represents an important part of our customer service at FCAO. Our office strives to reach the public and be as open and transparent about our operations as possible. Our goal is to provide the best customer service possible to all taxpayers. Part of reaching these goals includes a social media presence. Utilizing social media platforms allow this office to reach more customers and the public where they are. While there are many benefits to official social media channels, they can also pose potential ethical and legal dilemmas. It is the goal of this policy to assist in navigating these potential pitfalls.

The Director of Communications or the Deputy Chief of Staff – External Engagement will post to various social media platforms and respond to inquiries that come from social media.

#### **Expectations for Posting on Personal Social Media Channels**

We want you to enjoy your off-work hours, but we ask that you use common sense and good judgement. We are all professional adults, and we request that you act accordingly.

The same principles and guidelines of professionalism and behavior that is in our employee policies should apply to your activities online. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online content, consider the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow associates, or otherwise adversely affects members, customers, suppliers, people who work on behalf of the Auditor, and the legitimate business of this office may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

#### **Social media at work**

Refrain from using social media while on work time or on equipment provided by the county unless it is work-related as authorized by your supervisor and consistent with the FCA's policies. Do not use your Franklin County email addresses to register on social networks, blogs, or other online tools utilized for personal use.

#### **Know and follow the rules**

Carefully read the office's policies and procedure and ensure your postings are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence, or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated.

### **Be respectful**

Always be fair and courteous to fellow associates, customers, and suppliers. Also, keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers or supervisor than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. Always avoid using statements, photographs, video, or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparage customers, members, associates or suppliers, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, disability, religion, or any other status protected by law or company policy.

### **Be honest and accurate**

Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Be open about any previous posts you have altered. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false.

### **Post only legally permissible, appropriate and respectful content**

1. Maintain the confidentiality of the FCAO. Certain information you come into contact with may be protected even from a public records request. When in doubt, don't share it.
2. Express only your personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for FCAO. If FCAO is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that you are an associate and make it clear that your views do not represent those of FCAO, fellow associates, members, customers, suppliers or people working on behalf of FCAO. If you do publish a blog or post online related to the work you do or subjects associated with FCAO, make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of the Auditor. It is best to include a disclaimer such as "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer."

### **Media contacts**

Employees should not use social media to communicate to the media on the Auditor's behalf. All media inquiries should be directed to the Director of Communications.

## **Interaction with Constituents**

The recent court decision of *Davison v. Loudon County Board of Supervisors* found that public officials cannot block critical comments on digital platforms used to conduct official government business and to interact with constituents. The official channels of the FCAO will not engage in the practice of blocking individuals.

We recognize that official government and elected official social media channels have become de facto public forums and we strive to abide by the Free Speech doctrine regarding public forums. While we will not block individuals or delete commentary on the basis of viewpoint, we do reserve the right to delete commentary that violates the use policies of a particular platform or our general use policies. All monitoring of speech will be done in a neutral and consistent manner. This type of monitoring could include, from a neutral viewpoint, deleting of comments that are violent, harassing, profane, or violate a state or federal law.

### **3.12 Solicitation & Distribution of Materials**

Employees who engage in any kind of solicitation that interferes with their own work or another employee's work may be subject to disciplinary action. When you are off duty, you should not interfere with or disturb employees while they are working.

The distribution of any kind of non-work specific leaflets, literature or other material in working areas is prohibited. No political campaign material is to be displayed or promoted anywhere in the FCAO or other County work areas.

Solicitation and distribution of materials pertaining to County-sanctioned activities are allowed with the approval of the FCA or designee. Other solicitations of a charitable nature must have prior approval by the FCA or designee.

### **3.13 Tobacco**

Franklin County is committed to providing a healthy work environment for all County employees. The FCAO recognizes that smoking is an addiction and extends support to employees who wish to stop nicotine tobacco use of any type (contact EAP for resources to assist you).

Chapter 3794 of the Ohio Revised Code bans smoking in all public places. Tobacco use is prohibited in all Franklin County places of employment. These include, but are not limited to, offices, meeting rooms, production and storage areas, restrooms, stairways, hallways, warehouses, garages, loading docks, county-owned vehicles and areas immediately adjacent to entrances and exits of places of employment. This prohibition is in effect without regard to the time of day or the presence of employees.

Employees are permitted to use their lunch periods and break times to take tobacco-use breaks on their own time during the day. Should excessive time be taken, the supervisor will discuss the issue with the employee to develop effective solutions that do not interfere with productivity or fairness to all employees.

This policy applies to tobacco products of any kind, e.g., cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco, and pipes. Additionally, this policy applies to any electronic smoking device designed to resemble cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos, and pipes. The use of electronic smoking devices is commonly called “vaping” due to the vapor produced when using the device.

Employees violating this policy may be subject to progressive discipline.

### **3.14 Visitors/Guests**

In order to maintain proper professional atmosphere in the FCAO, all visitors/guests must be accompanied by an employee. Employees must notify their supervisor when bringing visitors/guests into the work area. If the supervisor is not available, the employee must contact their director. Certain areas may be restricted due to confidential forms or documentation. The duration of a visitor/guest stay in the office must be kept to a minimum. Employees are responsible for the actions of their guests.

### **3.15 Workplace & Family Violence**

The FCAO is committed to providing employees a workplace that is safe, secure, and free of harassment, threats, intimidation, and violence. In addition, the FCA has a commitment to creating a supportive and non-judgmental environment where employees can feel comfortable discussing violence that is occurring at home and to seek the assistance they need.

The FCAO has a zero-tolerance policy for threats and violence. No threatening or violent behavior is acceptable and any threatening or violent incident, including domestic violence on-site, will not be ignored. Any physical assault or threat made by an employee while on County premises, during work hours using County resources, or at a County sponsored event is a serious violation of this policy.

This policy applies not only to acts against other employees, but to acts against all persons.

Like all violent crime, workplace and family violence creates ripples that go beyond what is done to a particular victim. It damages trust and the sense of security every worker has a right to feel while on the job. In that sense, everyone loses when a violent act takes place whether here or at home, and everyone has a stake in efforts to stop violence from happening. The FCAO will make every effort to respond to the needs of employees who are victims of family violence as County business needs allow. Some responses may include temporary modifications to job assignments, schedules, etc., to make it more possible for an employee to focus on both personal safety and work responsibilities. As an employee, you can actively contribute to preventive practices by doing the following:

1. Accept and adhere to all policies and practices pertaining to nonviolence, crisis response, and anti-harassment.
2. Become aware of and report violent or threatening behavior by coworkers, visitors on County property, or warning signs of violent or potentially threatening behavior.
3. Confide in your supervisor, FCAO HR or work with EAP to seek assistance for family violence.

If you are the subject of, or a witness to, a suspected violation of this policy, report the violation to the next-in-line supervisor who is not a party to the violation. If you are in a violent home setting, we encourage you to ask for assistance by sharing your concerns in the strictest confidence with your supervisor, manager, director, or HR Director, or contact the EAP provider.

## **4.0 Notary**

An employee may be reimbursed for the costs associated with applying for and maintaining a notary license, as long as that employee provides the service for the FCAO business as needed. If an employee is interested in becoming a notary, contact the department supervisor or director to discuss the need for the service in the department.

## **4.1 Performance Review**

Employees are evaluated on a continual basis. An informal evaluation generally occurs at the end of the employee's probationary period and a formal evaluation occurs annually at the end of the year. If an employee is hired on or after July 1<sup>st</sup>, the employee will not receive a formal performance review at the end of that year. If the employee is required to serve a probationary period, the employee will receive an informal performance review upon successful completion of the probationary period. During the annual performance review process, employees will complete a self-review. The purpose of the self-review is to give employees an opportunity to highlight their successes, provide updates on goal completion, identify areas for improvement, and set performance goals for the following year. Evaluation forms for staff and management are located on the Employee Portal.

## **4.2 Professional Certification, Education & Memberships**

A professional certification may be required for some jobs within the FCAO. In some instances, the FCAO may pay for initial certification and annual licensing costs, and the cost of continuing education to maintain the certification. All such costs are subject to approval by your director, Fiscal, and Chief of Staff.

Updating your technical knowledge and skills may also directly benefit the FCAO. Attendance at seminars or courses must be pre-approved by your director, Fiscal and Chief of Staff. In these instances, the FCAO will pay for the cost of the training and allow you to attend on County work time, subject to work demands.

Membership in professional organizations may also benefit the FCAO. Consult your Director for specific requests. Approval by Fiscal and Chief of Staff may be given for payment of dues and/or attendance of meetings on County work time.

## 4.3 Training & Development

The FCA recognizes that training and development is essential to employee success. The FCA strongly encourages professional development as a means of personal and professional growth. For this reason, the FCAO is taking advantage of training offered by the Commissioners' Training & Staff Development Office and with external vendors. Employees may be asked to share what they've learned and/or submit proposals centered on departmental or agency-wide improvement.

Mandatory core classes help employees prepare for various situations they may encounter in the workplace. These classes also bring employees up to date on laws related to employment. All newly hired FCAO employees must complete the commissioners' core training classes within 180 days of their start date. Release time must be provided for employees to attend these mandated courses:

1. Multi-Cultural Awareness
2. Customer Care
3. Ethics
4. CRASE – Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events
5. Sexual Harassment Awareness
6. Safety and Wellness 101

Refresher courses may be mandated on an annual basis.

Optional classes are offered in a variety of areas, including communication, personal and interpersonal skills, safety, technology and computer programs, and supervision. Employees should consult with their supervisor about enrolling in classes that may improve their job skills and efficiency. Ethics training is required on an annual basis. FCAO HR will notify employees on when the training is to be completed.

Also see the **Professional Certification Policy and the Tuition Reimbursement Policy.**

## **5.0 Bereavement Leave**

The FCAO recognizes that a time of bereavement is very difficult. To offer support during a time of loss, full-time employees are provided up to three (3) days of paid leave upon the death of an immediate family member. This leave must be used within 1 year of the date of death.

For purposes of bereavement leave, immediate family members are defined as the employee's mother, father, sister, brother, spouse, child, foster child, grandparent, grandchild, mother- or father-in-law, sister- or brother-in-law, son- or daughter-in-law, or other person who stands in place of a parent, domestic partner and domestic partner's mother, father, sister, brother, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister- or brother-in-law, son- or daughter-in-law. Leave should also include step and half where applicable.

Employees may supplement their bereavement leave with other available approved leave.

Supervisors are encouraged to be flexible in granting requests to extend leave beyond the paid bereavement leave benefit when operational needs would not be unduly adversely impacted.

## **5.1 Court Leave**

Employees are entitled to paid leave for court appearances when summoned for jury duty or subpoenaed to appear before any court, commission, board, or other legally constituted body authorized by law to compel the attendance of witnesses where the employee is not a party to the action.

Employees shall honor jury duty notices and subpoenas issued to them. Upon receipt of a subpoena or jury duty notice, the employee should contact their supervisor. The employee will need to submit a copy of the notice to their supervisor and FCAO HR. FCAO HR will then add the pay type to the employee's electronic timesheet. Employees will be paid their regular rate of pay while serving on a jury or when testifying for work related court hearings.

All compensation received for court and jury duty less meals, travel, and any parking expenses, is to be remitted to FCAO HR, unless such duty is performed outside of the employee's normal working hours.

Attendance at such hearings does not necessarily relieve the employee for the full work shift. If the employee can be reasonably expected to leave work in time to reach the hearing or return to work following the hearing, they are expected to do so.

On any day an employee is not required to appear as a potential juror/witness, they must report to work. The employee may submit a request to their supervisor to use leave for hours they are not required to report for jury/court duty.

When an employee must appear in court for personal reasons, regardless of whether they are directly or indirectly involved in the case, paid court leave cannot be granted. This includes such instances as appearing in court for criminal or civil cases in connection with personal matters, such as traffic court, divorce proceedings, custody, appearing as directed with a juvenile, etc. The employee may utilize accrued leave for such absences and if an employee does not have sufficient accrued leave to cover such absences, the employee may utilize unpaid leave. An employee who needs to utilize unpaid leave for personal court appearances must provide supporting documentation (e.g. a scheduling order or summons) to their supervisor.

## **5.2 Election Poll Worker Leave**

Employees who are registered voters in Ohio, may be granted leave with compensation for the purpose of working at the polls on Election Day. Any employee interested in working the polls must receive approval from their supervisor prior to contacting the County Board of Elections. Requests may be denied based on operational needs.

Once approval has been granted, FCAO HR will add the appropriate pay type to the employee's timesheet. The employee serving as a poll worker will receive leave with pay, and be considered in active pay status for up to eight (8) hours on election day. The employee will also receive the regular compensation awarded to poll workers in addition to the leave with pay. Any training courses required by the County Board of Elections should be attended outside of the employee's regular working hours. If this is not possible, the employee must obtain prior approval to use vacation, compensatory, administrative or personal leave. Leave without pay will not be authorized for an employee to attend Precinct Election Official training courses.

## **5.3 Paid Family Leave Plans**

### **Family Leave**

FCAO offers Paid Family Leave for full-time, FMLA-eligible employees. This benefit will consist of two parts: Paid Parental Leave and Paid Caregiver Leave. These benefits will complement current leave options, such as vacation, sick, and personal leave.

Employees must be a full-time employee and have completed one year of employment with the FCAO. In addition, employees must have worked 1,250 hours throughout the immediately preceding year. Employees must have an active FMLA on file for the qualifying event and must not have taken paid family leave in the same calendar year. The leave must be used in one continuous block of time and cannot be used more than once per qualifying event. A paid holiday does not count as a paid family leave day.

Requests for FMLA and Paid Family Leave must be made directly to FCAO HR at least thirty-days prior to the requested time off for foreseeable leave or as much notice as is practicable under the circumstances for unforeseeable leave.

### **Paid Parental Leave**

Paid parental leave allows an employee time to provide parental care immediately following the birth or adoption of a minor child, a stillbirth, or a miscarriage during the third trimester of pregnancy. The employee must be the birth mother or father or someone legally responsible for child-rearing including biological parent, spouse, adoptive parent, or domestic partner. FCAO provides up to eight (8) weeks of leave for full-time regular, FMLA-eligible employees at 100% of regular pay. The benefit is in addition to, but runs concurrent with, any short-term disability benefit associated with childbirth.

### **Paid Caregiver Leave**

Paid caregiver leave allows an employee time to care for a covered family member who has a serious medical condition. Covered family members include spouse, son, daughter, parents, adoptive parents, domestic partner. A serious illness or injury is one that generally requires surgery with a prolonged recovery period, or involves multiple traumatic injuries, or is a serious mental illness, or is life threatening. FCAO provides up to eight (8) weeks of leave paid at 100% of regular pay.

## **5.4 Leave Without Pay**

Leave Without Pay is defined as any absence in which an employee does not have another form of leave. An employee cannot take leave without pay without approval.

Leave Without Pay for personal reasons may be granted upon advance request and at the discretion of FCAO HR. It is the employee's responsibility to complete a request for such leave; including the reasons for the leave and the dates for which such leave is being requested.

Leave Without Pay shall not be counted as time in service for purposes of determining sick leave or vacation accrual. Upon the employee's return from Authorized Leave Without Pay of twelve (12) or fewer weeks, the employee will be reinstated in their former position unless such position has been otherwise substantially altered or eliminated, and in such event, reinstated into a position that is substantially equivalent.

For an Authorized Leave Without Pay of longer than twelve (12) weeks the employee will be reinstated into their former position or one that is substantially equivalent.

Authorized Leave Without Pay is reserved for those instances where, in the judgment of the FCAO, an exceptional circumstance exists, and permission is granted for the employee to take authorized Leave Without Pay.

Unauthorized Leave Without Pay is cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## **5.5 Military Leave**

Regardless of the type of military leave needed, prior approval must be requested. The employee must submit a request to the director in writing with a copy of the military orders. An employee on an approved military leave of absence may retain their health and medical insurance plan during this period but continue to be responsible for their portion of the premium payments. The employee has reinstatement rights to the same or similar position if they apply in writing to the director within the designated time after release from active duty date.

For active duty service of less than 30 days, the employee must apply for reinstatement immediately upon release from active duty. For active duty service of 31-180 days, the employee must apply for reinstatement within 14 days upon release from active duty. For active duty service in excess of 181 days, the employee must apply for reinstatement within 90 days upon release from active duty.

Upon returning from an active duty leave and upon making timely notification for reemployment, the employee shall be returned to their former position or equivalent position of employment and responsibilities. A returning employee will receive any wage adjustments that the employee would have clearly earned had the employee been in active pay status.

### **Short-Term Leave**

A short term paid military leave of absence shall be granted to employees for a period not to exceed twenty-two (22) eight hour working days in any year (176 hours), for each calendar year in which military duty is performed. The employee shall be paid his/her regular rate of pay for this period. While on paid military leave, the employee continues to accrue all forms of paid leave.

### **Long-Term Leave**

An unpaid military leave of absence in excess of twenty-two (22) working days in a year shall be granted. Employees may elect to use accrued vacation, personal, or administrative leave or compensatory time, or be on unpaid military leave. Employees on extended military leave shall receive seniority for the time spent in the military service. However, an employee does not accrue paid leave during an extended military leave.

### **Federal Duty Leave**

An employee who is called to active military duty beyond the required 22 paid working days in any one calendar year pursuant to an executive order issued by the President of the United States or an act of Congress shall be granted an active duty military leave of absence and will receive payment of wages in the amount of their regular wages less whatever amount such employee may receive as military pay. Such payment will be made to the affected employee from the time short-term military leave of absence with pay is

exhausted until the end of each calendar year the employee is still in active status or for the duration of the employee's service in the active military, whichever time period is less. The employee will not receive payment under this provision if their military pay is greater than their wages paid by the FCAO. Upon receipt of military pay, the employee must provide a copy of the military leave and earnings statement to FCAO HR for each month the employee remains on military leave. In addition, FCAO HR must be notified of any changes in military pay and/or status during deployment. An employee on active duty leave under this provision shall receive seniority for the time spent in active duty. However, paid leave does not accumulate during the leave.

Employees called to active duty for one year or more receive a yearly cash payment of \$500 for each dependent child in each calendar year of active duty. Contact FCAO HR to apply for this benefit.

Employees are also encouraged to contact both OPERS and the benefits office before active duty begins.

## **5.6 Personal Leave**

All full-time employees on active pay status will be credited 32 hours of personal leave in February of each year. Part-time employees on active pay status will be credited with personal leave on a prorated basis based on hours worked. All leave use must be approved by your supervisor or designated authority. If an employee is not on active pay status in February of the year, the employee will receive their personal leave upon return to active pay status.

Employees must use personal leave balances before December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year, or else forfeit any unused personal leave. Personal leave days do not roll over from year to year.

New employees to the FCAO will be credited personal leave on a prorated basis as follows:

1. 32 hours if hired between January and April
2. 24 hours if hired between May and August
3. 16 hours if hired between September and December

Personal leave is charged in minimum units of .25 hours (15 minutes). Unused personal leave is not compensable or transferable. An employee who does not use his/her personal leave will not be paid for any remaining balance of the unused time. An employee who leaves employment with the FCAO and becomes re-employed by another governmental entity is not eligible to transfer his/her personal leave balance.

## **5.7 Sick Leave**

All employees earn sick leave at the rate of 4.6 hours for 80 or more hours while on active pay status in any pay period. The time credit is strictly proportionate to the hours worked in each pay period up to the 4.6-hour limitation for any pay period. Employees are eligible for sick leave only for days on which they would otherwise have been scheduled to work.

Sick leave is charged in minimum units of .25 hours (15 minutes). Sick leave is not available for use until it appears on the employees' pay stub. Requesting leave in the same period it is earned may result in an unauthorized leave without pay.

If an employee has any prior public service in the state of Ohio, the employee may request to transfer any unused sick leave balances to the FCAO. The employee must complete a Prior Service Certification form found on the Employee Portal and submit to FCAO HR to have the balance credited.

### **Sick Leave Usage**

Sick leave will be granted, upon approval from your supervisor or director, for the following reasons:

1. Injury or illness, mental or physical health of the employee or a member of the employee's immediate family.
2. Medical, dental, psychological or optical visits or treatment of the employee or a member of the immediate family.
3. The employee's health would be jeopardized or the employee's presence on the job would jeopardize the health of others (e.g., an exposure to a contagious disease).
4. Work-related injury: if the employee is eligible for Workers' Compensation benefits, the employee must choose between those payments and sick leave payments. The employee may not receive both for the same time period.

Abuse of sick leave usage will result in discipline, up to, and including termination. If the employee is off three (3) or more consecutive days on sick leave, the employee may be asked to provide a written doctor's excuse to their supervisor to justify the use of sick leave.

The FCAO may require an employee to take a medical examination, conducted by a licensed physician, to determine the physical or mental capability to perform the duties

of the position.

### **Separation Payout**

Upon separation from employment with the County, an employee may elect to be paid for sick leave accumulated as follows:

1. Up to eight (8) years of service (includes service with the state and any political subdivisions): An employee may convert to cash up to 20% of the sick leave balance.
2. After 8 years of service and up to 18 years of service (includes service with the state and any political subdivisions): An employee may convert to cash up to 40% of the sick leave balance.
3. After 18 years of service (includes service with the state and any political subdivision): An employee may convert to cash up to 60% of sick leave balance.
4. The maximum allowable conversion is 360 days or 2,880 hours.

This payment will be based upon the employee's rate of pay at the time of the applicable separation. Payment for sick leave conversion eliminates all accrued sick leave credit earned by the employee up to the time of conversion. An employee who returns to Franklin County service after retirement or resignation may accrue and use sick leave as before but may not convert the unused sick leave at the time of a second separation until the above-mentioned conversion requirements have been met a second time.

## 5.8 Vacation Leave

### Vacation Accruals

Vacation accrual is based upon the years of public service an employee has with any Ohio government entity, state, county, public school district, public university or college. An employee with prior public service as applicable under the Ohio Revised Code may begin accruing vacation immediately. An employee must complete a Prior Service Certification form and submit to FCAO HR to get credit for prior public service.

Vacation leave is earned while an employee is in an active pay status. If an employee is on an approved unpaid leave of absence, the employee does not accrue vacation hours, although their unpaid leave time counts towards service credit, which impacts the accrual rate.

An employee who, based on length of service, advances a level of vacation accumulation, shall receive the commensurate accrual adjustment for the new level effective on the first full payroll period following the date the employee advanced to the applicable level.

Full-time employees with prior service will accrue vacation each pay period based upon the following table:

<u>Service Credit</u>	<u>Hours Per Year</u>
One (1) year but less than five (5) years	80 hours per year (3.1040 hours per pay)
Five (5) years but less than ten (10) years	120 hours per year (4.60 hours per pay)
Ten (10) years but less than fifteen (15) years	160 hours per year (6.20 hours per pay)
Fifteen (15) years but less than twenty (20) years	180 hours per year (6.9 hours per pay)
Twenty (20) years or more	200 hours per year (7.70 hours per pay)

**Vacation Accruals – less than one year of service**

Bargaining unit, classified non-exempt employees with less than one year of service will receive twenty (20) hours of vacation leave upon completion of their probationary period. At one year of service an additional sixty (60) hours of vacation leave will be added to their balance.

Unclassified employees with less than one year of service are immediately allowed to take up to twenty (20) hours of vacation leave. At one year of service an additional sixty (60) hours of vacation leave will be added to their balance.

**Additional Vacation Hours Earned**

All employees will receive the number of hours added to their vacation leave balance when they reach the next service credit threshold based on the following table:

<u>Service Credits</u>	<u>Hours Added to Balance</u>
5 Years	40 hours
10 years	40 hours
15 years	20 hours
20 years	20 hours

The above accrual adjustment for the new level will be effective on the first full payroll period following the date the employee advanced to the applicable level.

**Accruals for Part-time Employees**

Permanent part-time employees will accrue vacation according to the above schedule, prorated for actual hours worked. To begin the accrual for vacation, a part-time employee must have the equivalent of one-year full-time (2,080) hours in public service. Thereafter, the actual hours earned each pay period will be based on the actual hours worked, e.g., an employee who works 20 hours per week with one to five years’ service will earn 40 hours per year. Prior public service certified to the FCAO will be utilized for the calculation of service years for vacation accrual purposes based on 2,080 work hours per year of credit.

**Vacation Carry-Over**

Non-bargaining unit employees that do not use their accrued vacation hours by their **anniversary date** will be allowed to carry-over up to the equivalent of three (3) years, based upon their current maximum accrual tier. At any point in time, a non-bargaining unit employee can have a three-year carry-over plus the current year’s accrual.

Bargaining Unit employees that do not use their accrued vacation hours by the **end of the calendar year** will be allowed to carry-over up to the equivalent of three (3) years,

based upon their current maximum accrual tier. At any point in time, a bargaining unit employee can have three-year carry-over plus the current year's accrual.

### **Approval**

All requests for vacation leave must be submitted through Employee Self Service. Requests should be made at least 48 hours in advance, or as soon as possible. For longer periods of time out, a 30-day advance notice is preferred. Vacation leave is charged in minimum units of .25 hours (15 minutes). If an employee wishes to cancel an approved vacation leave, the employee must submit a cancellation notice through Employee Self Service, rescinding the vacation leave. Leave hours shall only be approved based on the balance that is currently available.

### **Separation Payout**

All eligible vacation balances will be paid to an employee who separates from public service. This includes the prorated portion of any earned but unused vacation leave for the current year at the time of separation, as well as any unused vacation leave carried over from previous years up to the equivalent of three (3) years based on the current vacation tier accrual maximum.

Balances may be transferred and/or converted in whole or part to an employee transferring to or from the FCAO. In the case of an employee transferring to the FCAO, we will accept up to forty (40) hours of vacation leave from another agency. This is based on the policies in place for the transferring and receiving agency.

Upon separation or death, accumulated unused vacation leave is calculated at the employee's rate of pay at the time of separation or death. Payment for vacation leave eliminates all accrued vacation leave earned by the employee up to the time of conversion. In the event of death, final payment will be made in accordance with ORC Section 2113.04.

## **6.0 Early Release or Inclement Weather**

If employees are told to stay at home because of inclement weather conditions or the FCAO grants an early release or late start for any reason, employees will be compensated based upon the employee's normal schedule of work hours.

If a Leave 3 snow emergency is in place in Franklin County prior to the start of a workday, the office will close, and employees will be notified via the Everbridge alert system. If such an emergency is declared during a workday, a decision will be communicated per this policy.

If the weather is extreme in Franklin County ONLY, notification will be made pursuant to the Everbridge alert system. If an employee lives in a surrounding county where there are extreme weather conditions, the employee will have to use accrued leave time if the employee cannot report to work.

## **6.1 County Owned Equipment & Software Usage**

County employees are permitted access to computer equipment and systems for work-related business including electronic mail (email) and Internet access. Ohio law prohibits the use of publicly owned equipment for personal business. This applies to on and off-duty hours. Employees using publicly owned computer equipment or systems for personal use or for reasons other than those authorized by the FCAO will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

County-owned equipment may be taken from the work facility and may be used only for work-related purposes. Personally owned hardware or software may not be installed on County equipment without the prior approval of the Auditor or designee.

County purchased equipment and leased wireless devices are the property of Franklin County. They are not the user's personal property nor are they available for individual resale or remuneration. All County purchased equipment and issued wireless devices must be returned to FCAO HR upon separation from employment. If devices are not returned, after a reminder process, the cost of the device will be billed to the employee.

### **Computer Hardware and Software Usage Guidelines**

The FCAO reserves the right to monitor computer systems to guard against inappropriate use and to assure compliance with Ohio law and policies adopted by the Franklin County Data Board.

The I.T. Director and/or the Franklin County Data Center must approve any installation, removal, or transfer of computer hardware or software. All software used on County-owned computers will be purchased through appropriate procedures.

All FCAO employees will use software only in accordance with its license agreement. Unless otherwise provided in the license, any duplication of copyrighted software, except for backup and archival purposes, is a violation of copyright law. In addition to violating copyright law, unauthorized duplication of software is contrary to the FCAO standards of conduct. Adherence must be given to the following points in order to comply with software license agreements:

1. Software will be used in accordance with its license agreements.
2. Legitimate software will be provided to all users who need it.
3. No FCAO employee will make any unauthorized copies of any software under any circumstances. Anyone found copying software other than for backup purposes is subject to disciplinary action, which may include termination. Any person illegally reproducing software can be subject to civil and criminal penalties including fines and imprisonment.
4. Other than specifically required by their official duties, no FCAO employee will give software to anyone including clients, customers, and others.

If you believe that there may be a misuse of software within the organization, you **must** notify your Supervisor or FCAO HR.

### **Electronic Mail & Internet Guidelines**

Employees are advised that email communications and Internet usage in the FCAO are not confidential and are subject to review for the purpose of enforcing the policies of the FCAO. All employees must sign and adhere to the County email and Internet use policy.

Using the County's email system or Internet connection for the following is strictly prohibited:

1. Sending chain letters
2. Soliciting contributions for any personal use
3. Operating a business for personal gain
4. Transmitting or downloading material that is obscene, pornographic, threatening or harassing
5. Disseminating or printing copyrighted material (including articles and software) in violation of copyright laws
6. Providing access to confidential information or public information (either intentionally or inadvertently) without following the existing rules and procedures found elsewhere in this handbook
7. Using another person's computer access or signature line
8. Any use that interferes with the normal business activities of the FCAO

### **Wireless Devices**

The FCAO has determined that use of wireless phones and tablets – known in this document as wireless devices – contribute to overall effectiveness of business communications, business continuity and increased service levels. The additional hardware and service cost, however, is significant. Therefore, issuance and use of wireless devices is limited by budgetary constraints to specific program requirements that best address the goals of the FCAO.

When necessary, the agency provides staff with agency owned wireless devices for the performance of official agency business. Employees are permitted de minimis personal use only for agency wireless devices. (Small amount that when used does not take a lot of time or cost the agency money).

Wireless devices and their accessories are defined as official government property. It is the employee's responsibility to protect the wireless device and accessories from any possible loss and/or damage. In the event the employee loses and/or damages the device, the employee is to report the loss or damage immediately to FCAO HR and may be responsible for the replacement or repair cost should improper use or neglect have taken place. Should it be determined that the employee is not responsible, a used or refurbished device available through the carrier will be purchased until the time of

renewal. Specific models or functions cannot be guaranteed.

Utilization of any wireless device while driving is prohibited. This includes receiving or placing calls, receiving or sending text messages, accessing the internet, receiving or responding to emails, or checking phone messages.

Users are responsible for returning the device to the IT department when it is no longer required to carry out their work assignments or upon termination of employment. Reimbursement in the amount of the full replacement cost is required for any device not returned.

The user of an agency owned device or personal device used, even occasionally, for county business assumes no privacy of information and understands that content is subject to public records and open record requests. Furthermore, devices will be wiped upon termination of employment.

Storing agency or county data, including but not limited to email, spreadsheets, word documents, multimedia files, or employee files is prohibited without written permission of the FCA. Calls to 900 numbers or other pay-per call numbers are strictly prohibited. Also prohibited is any picture, text or email that can be considered harassment, sexual, degrading, or inappropriate.

## 6.2 Fraud Hotline

The Ohio Auditor of State's Office maintains a system for the reporting of fraud, including misuse of public money by any official or office. In addition, the system allows all Ohio citizens the opportunity to make anonymous complaints through a toll-free number, the Auditor of State's website, email, or through United States mail.

Telephone:	1-866-FRAUD OH (1-866-372-8364)
U.S. Mail:	Ohio Auditor of State's Office Special Investigations Unit 88 East Broad Street P.O. Box 1140 Columbus, OH 43215
Email:	<a href="mailto:fraudohio@ohioauditor.gov">fraudohio@ohioauditor.gov</a>
Web:	<a href="http://www.ohioauditor.gov">www.ohioauditor.gov</a>

## **6.3 Hours of Work/Schedule**

The FCAO standard business hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The FCAO allows individual supervisors and directors to schedule employee's work hours to meet operational needs. The employee's work schedule must be approved in advance by the employee's supervisor. Directors are required to maintain appropriate coverage during core business hours and arrange individual schedules accordingly. No employee will be guaranteed a set schedule for the entire period of employment with the FCAO. The standard workweek for a full-time employee consists of forty (40) hours Monday thru Friday eight (8) hours a day. This does not prohibit the employee from working additional hours when requested.

### **Flexible Work Schedule**

Flextime schedules may be made available in accordance with business needs as approved by the supervisor. Scheduled start times may be no earlier than 6:30 a.m. and scheduled end times may be no later than 6:30 p.m. Specific start and end times must be approved by the supervisor.

## 6.4 Public Records Requests

The Franklin County Auditor believes that transparency and open government is the cornerstone of good government. As such this office makes a great effort to be transparent and open to all members of the public about our work. The cornerstone of that is our public records policy.

The Franklin County Auditor's Office (FCAO) maintains records that document public business. These records are maintained in a manner that provides for prompt access to public records within a reasonable amount of time during regular business hours. The maintenance and accessibility of these records are legislated and mandated to provide trust between the public and our office.

To advance the transparency of government the Ohio General Assembly has passed the Public Records Act – also referred to as the Sunshine Laws. These provisions are outlined Ohio Revised Code (ORC) Chapter 149. Generally speaking, these provisions grant any person the right to inspect a public record within a reasonable time period and at any reasonable time upon request.

The office has a current copy of its records retention schedule and policy available to the public. The policies will be on file with the Open Government Officer.

### **Defined**

A “**record**” is defined as any item that contains information stored on a fixed medium; is created, received, or sent under the jurisdiction of a public office; and documents the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations or other activities of the office, as defined by Ohio law (ORC 149.011(G)).

A “**public record**” as defined by Ohio law (ORC 149.43(A)(1)), means records kept by any public office.

The test to determine if something is a public record is 3 parts. All 3 parts must be met for the item to constitute a public record. A public record is:

- 1) Any document, device or item regardless of physical form;
- 2) Created or received by or coming under the jurisdiction of any public office;
- 3) Which serves to document the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations or activities of the office.

### *Note:*

Form of the record or device used does not impact the item's status as a public record. Records in the form of email, text messaging, and instant messaging, including those sent and received via a hand-held communications device are to be treated in the same fashion as records in other formats, such as paper or audiotape.

Not all items are records. The most common example of items that are not a record are personal notes. Personal notes are not a record if they are:

1. Kept as personal papers
2. Kept for the employee's convenience and
3. Other employees did not use or have access to the notes

### **Requests for a Record**

Requests for public records can be made during normal office hours in either written form or a verbal request for information. The request can be made by an email, a letter, a phone call, or in person. **There is no requirement that these requests be in writing. Further, the requestor is not required to give their identity.**

While there is no requirement that requests be made in writing, we have developed a form to assist the public in making their requests. This form is on file with the Staff Counsel and Open Government Officer, on the FCAO website, and in locations where we interact with the public. By utilizing this form, we can help clarify the understanding of what records are being requested and clear up any ambiguities. Use of the intake form will allow us to respond faster and more fully to requests.

### **Employee Responsibilities in handling Public Records Requests**

It is the responsibility of all FCAO staff to assist in responding to public records requests. All requests should be communicated to the Open Government Officer. The Open Government Officer will advise FCAO staff on the proper handling of all requests.

Once a public records request has been received, staff is expected to consult with the Open Government Officer regarding the public records request within 24 hours.

Failure to follow this policy and to consult with the Open Government Officer on all public records requests may result in discipline.

### **Records that are not Released**

Generally public records are freely available upon request, but the Ohio Revised Code provides some exemptions and exceptions. Under these provisions certain information may be redacted, and in some cases, entire records may/must be withheld. Denial of all or any part of a public record request must include an explanation, including legal authority, for withholding the information. When redacting a portion of a record, the original copy of the record should be maintained. Any altering of a record should be done to a copy of the original record.

**Prior to redacting a record or refusing to release a record, the Open Government Officer must be consulted.**

### **Time to Respond**

Public records are to be made available for inspection promptly. Copies of public records

must be made available within a reasonable period of time. “Prompt” and “reasonable” take into account the volume of records requested; the proximity of the location where the records are stored; and the necessity for any legal review and redaction of the records requested as defined by Ohio law; preparing the request; and providing for delivery.

### **Negotiate a Solution**

If a record does not already exist, we are not required to create a record that contains the information requested or seek out and retrieve records that contain specific information that may be of interest of the requester.

While we are not required to create a record, if possible, FCAO staff should consult with the Open Government Officer to assist the requester with getting them the information they are ultimately seeking. The FCAO is a public office and transparency is of the utmost importance. The Public Records Statute requires we negotiate clarification for overly broad or ambiguous requests. This attempt to negotiate a solution should apply to all records requests this office receives. We will strive to go above and beyond our statutory duties and provide exemplary customer service. FCAO staff shall consult with the Open Government Officer to assist in any negotiation related to a public records request.

### **Copying a Record**

There is not a requirement that the FCAO allow individuals seeking a record to make copies of the public record themselves. The records of this office should remain under the control of this office.

### **Costs**

The FCAO may charge for the actual cost of completing a public records request. These costs could include the copying and mailing supplies but not the actual staff time to complete the request. FCAO may charge for requests that require copying more than 20 pages or that require more than \$10 in supplies such as CDs, USB drives, packaging or postage to complete.

### **Policy Questions**

Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Open Government Officer.

## **6.5 Personal Workspace & Equipment**

Employee work areas may be arranged according to their personal taste. It should present a neat, clean, business-like appearance. Employees should use sensitivity and caution when choosing personal decorations to avoid offending others. Those decorations or items that do not meet these standards will be removed. Employees should also be mindful of the people in the area who might have a fragrance sensitivity and get permission before using natural or artificial scents that could be distracting or irritating to others.

Trash receptacles and recycling containers are located in each office. Put all litter and recyclable materials in the appropriate receptacles and containers. Always be aware of good health and safety standards, including fire and loss prevention. Report anything that needs repaired, replaced, or mounted to the wall to the Administrative Assistant.

At the discretion of your supervisor, personal listening and communication devices such as cell phones, radios and headphones are permitted in your immediate work area, but the volume must be low enough to be kept within the confines of the work area and not be disruptive to other employees and departments.

Personal cell phone usage including texting should be kept to a minimum and only used during lunch and breaks. The County has no liability for personal items. You assume all responsibility for lost, damaged or stolen personal property.

Employees are prohibited from using audio or video recording devices in the workplace without specific written authorization from the COS. This includes using cellular phones with built-in cameras and/or recorders. This prohibition does not include the use of recording devices for the purpose of taking pictures of a social/personal nature (retirement gatherings, birthday parties, etc.). Use of cellphone cameras and audio and video recorders without the knowledge and permission of those whose image or voice is being recorded is prohibited. The use of cell phone cameras in areas where employees may expect privacy, such as restrooms or lactation rooms is strictly prohibited.

## **6.6 Purchasing - Food Policy**

### **Purpose**

This policy addresses the appropriate use of public funds for proper public use and sets forth parameters for the purchase of refreshments or amenities for employees, constituents, event participants, or other members of the public at Auditor approved or hosted community events, meetings, gatherings, trainings, and conferences.

### **Policy**

Expenditure of public funds must receive prior approval of the Auditor or the Chief of Staff prior to spending such funds. Refreshments include, but are not limited to, consumable items such as: coffee, tea, water, soda, donuts, bagels, or lunch and dinner food items. This policy strictly prohibits the purchase of any alcoholic beverages. Funding is contingent upon the availability of funds for such purchases.

### **Procedure**

Prior to purchasing refreshments for any Auditor approved event, the requesting staff member must receive the approval for the purchase from the Auditor or the Chief of Staff in writing and provide notice of the intended purchase to the Finance Specialist. The request should detail the reason for the request and the anticipated cost. Requests for purchases over \$500.00 shall be made in accordance with the regular purchasing policy. Purchases for less than \$500.00 may be made with a procurement card assigned to the user. Once written approval of the Auditor or the Chief of Staff is provided, the staff member may make the purchase in accordance with normal purchasing procedures.

## **6.7 Records Retention**

As a public body, we are required to maintain records that document the work of the FCAO. To assist us in the maintenance of records as required by statute, we have an approved records retention schedule (RC 2). The RC 2 is on file with the Open Government Officer. All employees are responsible for adherence to the approved schedule for the FCAO. In addition to paper documents, electronic mail (email) and text messages that document the activities of the FCAO are also public records, and shall be retained according to content and applicability and subject to the retention schedule. Proper notice must be filed before destruction of any paper or electronic records that are subject to the retention guidelines.

The full records retention policy and protocol, including the RC 2 is posted on the Employee Portal. Questions should be directed to your supervisor or to the Open Government Officer. When in doubt, employees should err on the side of increased retention rather than destruction.

## 6.8 Travel Policy

The FCAO follows the **Franklin County Travel Policy** which can be found in this section. Employee travel and associated expenses will be authorized by the Board of Commissioners (travel with overnight) or the employee's management (travel without overnight). Employee travel should be made at the lowest reasonable cost to the taxpayer, consistent with good business practices.

It is the responsibility of each employee to ensure that:

- I. Employee travel meets the objective of furthering the FCAO mission;
- II. Reimbursement is made only for actual, reasonable business expenses in connection with authorized travel; and
- III. Travel is accomplished without conflict of interest, especially in regard to vendors. You may not solicit or accept payments, subsidies or reduced rates from parties with an interest in matters before, regulated by, or doing business with the particular department or agency involved.

Mileage and parking expenses do not require a Request for Authorization to Travel on County Business form. For other travel expenses, a Request for Authorization to Travel on County Business form and any accompanying information (i.e. conference materials, etc.) must be submitted to your supervisor or director at least six weeks prior to the date of travel. Authorizations to travel with less than six weeks prior notice may be approved by the Chief of Staff.

The following guidelines should be used when booking your travel and submitting documentation after travel occurs for reconciliation and reimbursement. This is not intended to address every issue, exception, or contingency that may arise in the course of travel. Please check with directors, Deputy Chiefs of Staff, and/or Chief of Staff for guidance when needed.

### Things to Consider:

- I. Deputy COS and Directors should review upcoming conference agendas to see what opportunities would be useful for their teams. This will allow for a smoother pre-travel process.
- II. Once it has been determined who is traveling and when, a Purchase Order can be requested. This process can be started any time but should be started no later than six weeks prior to the departure date.
  - a. The process is started by the Request for Authorization to Travel on County Business which can be found at <https://www.franklincountyauditor.com/fiscally-speaking/> under Form Center>Payroll>Travel Authorization
- III. Individuals are responsible for their own travel arrangements if they are the only employee from the office traveling for that event. For travel with more than one employee, a travel lead will be designated on a trip-by-trip

basis. This should be a manager, and if possible, should be someone who already has a travel card in their name. If eight or more employees are traveling, a second travel lead should be designated, and the responsibilities should be divided equally.

- IV. All costs associated with travel and lodging should be considered before making a selection.
- V. All forms are to be completed to the best of the employee's ability prior to submission to Fiscal. Incomplete forms will be sent back to the traveler/travel lead.

#### Travel P-Cards:

- I. Travel p-cards may be issued for individual and group travel upon approval. Cards are issued in an employee's name and meant to be used by that employee only but may be used to pay for other travelers.
- II. Cards may be used to cover the cost of conferences, lodging, and required transportation only. Under no circumstances should meals be paid for with the travel cards.
- III. Please note, travel cards cannot be used until the PO has been approved and the funds have been loaded.
- IV. Employees issued a travel p-card must go through training before the card can be used. The County P-Card Program Administrator with Purchasing should contact you to set up this training when a new p-card is requested.
- V. If using the p-card is overly burdensome, please discuss options with the Fiscal Specialist. Final approval by Deputy Chiefs of Staff/Chief of Staff is required.

#### Ground Transportation:

- I. A Fleet pool vehicle is the preferred option to be used when required to travel outside of Franklin County. When a Fleet pool vehicle is not practical, travel by privately owned vehicle is permissible, please review the FCAO Vehicle Policy before travel occurs. Reimbursement of mile expenses incurred on County business is authorized at a rate established by the Franklin County Commissioners as set forth in the Franklin County Travel Policy for privately owned vehicles. For in-county conferences, no mileage will be reimbursed. Reimbursement is also authorized for parking charges, highway tolls, and other reasonable travel expenses directly related to the authorized travel.
- II. In planning transportation needs, please check if a free shuttle service from the airport to the hotel and from the hotel to the conference is available. If unavailable, the average cost of other transportation options should be included on the Request for Authorization to Travel form.
- III. Transportation cost can be paid with the travel cards. For ride share apps, please set up a business profile to lower the risk of County card misuse. Only travel necessary to the approved travel may be paid for with County funds.

Air-Travel:

- I. Travel by commercial air transportation is authorized at the lowest total available rate, taking advantage of early reservation and government discounts whenever possible.
- II. Upgrades such as pre boarding or early check in will not be paid for by the County.
- III. Please consider baggage and other added fees when selecting the lowest total rate.

Lodging:

- I. When available, conference connected hotels are the preferred lodging accommodations.
- II. Always ask for a government rate. If the government rate is not available, you should submit documentation showing that for reconciliation purposes.
  - a. Example of documentation would be an email from the hotel stating the rate is not available.
- III. If you are not staying at the conference hotel, documentation showing the available hotels in the area, with rates, should be included when submitting the Request for Authorization to Travel form/
  - a. This could be accomplished by visiting a hotel aggregator and printing the first page of the results to show you are staying within the government rate or that government rate was not available. Please review <http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem> to check current rates as it is updated periodically.

Meals:

- I. Per Diem reimbursement for meals is authorized only when overnight stay is required.
- II. Meal per diem reimbursements are at the set rate of \$40 per full day of travel and \$30 for the first and last day of authorized travel.
- III. Meal per diem reimbursement will be included in the reimbursement check received after travel occurs.
- IV. Receipts are not required to be submitted for this reimbursement.

# Franklin County Travel Policy

## A. AUTHORIZATION TO TRAVEL

1. Each County agency, court, board, and/or commission should ensure that all requests for travel are necessary and essential before authorizing travel on County business. Managers should make every effort to limit both in-county and out-of-county travel when other alternatives are available (e.g. conference calls, video conferencing, webinars, carpooling, use of county-owned vehicles, etc.). The employee's management is responsible for ensuring that the expenses listed are appropriate for the travel and meet the travel policy requirements contained herein.
2. Requests for travel requiring an overnight stay, approved by the employee's management, should be submitted on a "Request for Authorization to Travel on County Business" form (copy attached). Every effort should be made to take advantage of early or advance registration discounts. The conference brochure or a similar document must accompany the travel authorization form, as well as any request for payment associated with the trip.
3. The Board of Commissioners shall routinely approve all travel requiring an overnight stay, where expenses are anticipated to be incurred by Franklin County officials or employees. All such travel expenses shall be encumbered in accordance with the County's purchase order policy, and except for emergency travel the purchase order must be approved prior to the date of travel. The purchase order must include all of the costs associated with the travel, including any conference registration fees.
4. In the event a purchase order cannot be approved prior to the overnight travel event, emergency travel may be temporarily authorized by a Commissioner or the highest-level administrative person available at the time the travel is deemed necessary. This authorization is evidenced by the signature of a Commissioner, County Administrator, or Deputy County Administrator on the travel authorization form and must be obtained prior to the date of travel. The Board of Commissioners must approve subsequent reimbursement for these expenses.
5. As used in this policy, references to reimbursement and payment in advance includes use of a procurement card for the payment of the applicable expenses. Please refer to the Procurement Card Program Policy and Procedures for additional detail and requirements.

## B. PROHIBITIONS

1. No employee or official of Franklin County shall solicit or receive travel expenses, or accept payment of registration fees and/or lodging for their attendance at a

conference, from a party that is interested in matters before, regulated by, or doing or seeking to do business with the particular department or agency involved.

2. Employees or officials of Franklin County are prohibited from accumulating, for personal use, “frequent flyer” miles earned on official travel that is paid for or reimbursed by the government. Any employees or officials of Franklin County must use such miles earned for future official travel for that employee or another employee of Franklin County or forfeit such miles. This ruling is mandated per Ohio Ethics Commission Advisory Opinion No. 91-010 and cited in the Auditor of State’s Ohio Compliance Supplement Manual.
3. Under no circumstance will entertainment or alcoholic beverages be reimbursed. If a charge for alcoholic beverages is included in the event’s registration or conference fee, that cost must be deducted from the fee.

### **C. TRAVEL WITHOUT AN OVERNIGHT STAY**

1. Expenses that are eligible for reimbursement without an overnight stay are registration or conference fees, mileage, fuel for a County-owned vehicle, parking, and tolls.
2. While a “Request for Authorization to Travel on County Business” form is not required to be completed for travel reimbursements that do not involve an overnight stay, it is recommended that County offices use the form or other appropriate documentation to monitor and approve these types of travel reimbursements.
3. Registration or conference fees may be paid directly by the County in advance of the event. The payment of the fee may be made through a purchase order, or by direct voucher if the payment qualifies under the guidelines set forth in the Franklin County Purchasing Policy.
4. A separate blanket purchase order may be opened for the purpose of paying for registration fees associated with travel without an overnight stay. However, in no event may such a blanket purchase order be used for the payment of a registration fee that does involve an overnight stay.
5. Some seminars and conferences include the price of a meal as part of the program. In those cases, meal purchases as part of the registration are allowable. When the meal is being provided by the conference, but the employee chooses to eat elsewhere, reimbursement will not be made for the other meal.
6. Employees are encouraged to contact Fleet Management at 525-3412 for the use of a pool vehicle. When use of a pool vehicle is not practicable, travel by privately-owned vehicle is permissible if the owner is insured under a policy of liability insurance, and the driver has a valid driver’s license.

7. Reimbursement for mileage, parking, fuel for a County-owned vehicle, and tolls is made through the employing agency's payroll department, does not require a purchase order, and does not need to be submitted to the Auditor's Office. Effective January 1, 2012, mileage is reimbursable at the standard mileage rate established by the IRS for business expenses or fifty cents (\$0.50) per mile, whichever is less. Reimbursement shall be made to only one of two or more County employees traveling in the same privately-owned automobile. The names of all persons traveling in the same privately-owned automobile should be listed on the Employee Reimbursement Request form.
8. Travel during on-duty hours must utilize the most direct route unless an alternate route would be less time consuming and/or more effective. During on-duty hours, employees shall not deviate from the route of travel or stop along the route of travel to conduct personal business or engage in any activity that is not within their assigned or required duties.
9. For travel outside of the County, the total reimbursable mileage for the trip is equal to the lesser of:
  - a) The distance from the individual's workplace to the destination, and back to the individual's workplace.
  - b) The distance from the individual's place of residence to the destination, and back to the individual's place of residence.
10. When it is necessary for an employee to travel from his/her normal work location to any other location for purposes of conducting assigned or required duties, the mileage reimbursement rate shall apply for the actual miles driven. Employees must maintain a record of daily travel documenting the locations and the distance between, for which reimbursement is being sought.
11. When assigned or required duties make it necessary for an employee to travel from his/her home to any other location which is not his/her normal work location, or when assigned or required duties make it necessary for an employee to travel from his/her normal work location to any other location prior to proceeding home, then  
  
The employees will be reimbursed only for the mileage in excess of that which would have been incurred by the employee's normal commute. Under no circumstances will an employee be reimbursed for mileage attributable to the employee's normal commute, regardless of the day's business travel requirements.

#### **D. OVERNIGHT TRAVEL – TRAVEL STATUS**

1. Authorized travel status generally begins when the employee departs to the event from the employee's normal work location or start of the workday if departing from the employee's place of residence. However, employees arriving up to two hours prior to a plane's departure are considered to be on authorized travel status.
2. Authorized travel status generally ends upon the earliest of a) the return of the employee to Franklin County, or b) the return of the employee to the county of the employee's place of residence.
3. In some instances, a lower fare for travel by airplane may be obtained with extended or weekend travel, but which will result in additional lodging, meal, or other travel costs. An employee may request approval of such extended or weekend travel arrangements where it can be demonstrated that the fare savings exceed the additional travel costs incurred for lodging and meals. Such travel time is on the employee's own time and may not be credited towards overtime or compensatory/administrative time calculations. If additional travel time is needed due to the above extended personal layover, then this time must be charged to the employee's accrued leave balances (excluding sick leave) when the travel time occurs during the workday.
4. If the first scheduled event of a conference or seminar is scheduled to begin at or before 11:00 A.M. (Eastern Time), an employee may depart the day prior to the event. If the first scheduled event begins after 11:00 A.M. (Eastern Time), an employee is expected to depart that same day unless the employee can document either a) the savings as required by the requirements for extended travel above, b) that no flight was available that same day, or c) a reasonable justification that is approved by the employee's supervisor at the time the travel is authorized. The documentation should be prepared at the time the travel is authorized or flight reservation is made and must be provided to the Auditor's Office at time of submission for reimbursement.
5. If the last scheduled event of a conference or seminar is scheduled to conclude by 5:00 P.M. (Eastern Time), an employee is expected to return that same day unless the employee can document either a) the savings as required by the requirements for extended travel above, or b) that no flight was available that same day, or c) a reasonable justification that is approved by the employee's supervisor at the time the travel is authorized. The documentation should be prepared at the time the travel is authorized or flight reservation is made and must be provided to the Auditor's Office at time of submission for reimbursement.

## **E. OVERNIGHT TRAVEL – REGISTRATION FEES**

1. Reimbursement is authorized for registration fees associated with a conference or event associated with travel. Registration fees may also be paid directly by the County in advance. These fees must be included in the purchase order requesting authorization for travel and reimbursement of expenses and is not to be paid prior to this authorization. A separate purchase order shall not be opened solely for the purpose of paying registration fees associated with overnight travel without providing the detail of the other expenses associated with the travel.
2. In addition to the receipt submitted for reimbursement under this section, the proper evidentiary matter submitted to the Auditor's office must include the agenda or itinerary of the conference or event.
3. If a charge for alcoholic beverages is included in the registration fee for the conference or event, that cost must be deducted from the reimbursement request.
4. Both the employee and the employee's management are responsible for ensuring that no alcoholic beverages are purchased and consumed under this section. The signatures on the Employee Reimbursement Request form certify that no alcoholic beverages were included in the registration fee for the conference or event.

## **F. TRAVEL BY AIRPLANE**

1. Out of County travel by airplane is authorized at the lowest logical rate, taking advantage of early reservation discounts wherever possible, and includes reimbursement of any reasonable baggage fees (no more than two bags each way). The determination of the lowest rate can include the savings associated with the reduction in travel time in selecting a nonstop flight. The purchase of a ticket through a travel agent shall be deemed to be at the lowest available rate and includes reimbursement of any associated service fees.
2. The County will allow payment directly to travel agents or airlines in advance of the travel date. Reimbursement to employees may also be made prior to the travel date if the employee has paid for the tickets in advance and can provide documentation to that effect.
3. In cases where a trip is cancelled and the airline processes a travel voucher/airline credit in lieu of a refund, the employee may still be reimbursed for the expenses incurred in purchasing that ticket. The travel voucher/airline credit should only be used on a subsequent business trip authorized by agency management and the Board of Commissioners. If the employee desires to use the travel voucher/airline credit for personal use, the employee may purchase the travel voucher/airline credit by reimbursing the County for the original amount of the ticket. Agency

management is responsible for the managing and tracking of proper use of travel vouchers/airline credits.

4. Requests to travel by personal vehicle where travel by airplane is the most efficient means may be authorized only where the employee can document a cost savings over the lowest available fare or is willing to accept reimbursement of travel costs equal to those that would have been incurred by the lowest advance purchase fare. Where such travel arrangements result in additional travel time, the employee shall charge this additional time to his/her vacation or other accumulated leave balances (excluding sick leave).

#### **G. OVERNIGHT TRAVEL – TRAVEL BY VEHICLE**

1. County-owned Vehicles - Employees who are authorized or required to operate a County-owned vehicle must have a valid driver's license. For travel in a County-owned vehicle, the total cost of gasoline and oil shall be reimbursed upon the submittal of receipts, after the employee's management verifies the reasonableness of the costs incurred. A copy of the Fleet Management logbook indicating the odometer readings supporting the miles driven shall be completed for all trips and shall accompany requests for reimbursement of gasoline.
  2. Employees are encouraged to contact Fleet Management at 525-3412 for the use of a pool vehicle. When use of a pool vehicle is not practicable, travel by privately-owned vehicle is permissible if the owner is insured under a policy of liability insurance, and the driver has a valid driver's license.
  3. Mileage is reimbursable at the standard mileage rate established by the IRS for business expenses or fifty cents (\$0.50) per mile, whichever is less. Reimbursement shall be made to only one of two or more County employees traveling in the same privately-owned automobile. The names of all persons traveling in the same privately-owned automobile should be listed on the "Request for Authorization to Travel on County Business" form. The total reimbursable mileage for the trip is equal to the lesser of:
    - a) The distance from the individual's workplace to the destination, and back to the individual's workplace.
    - b) The distance from the individual's place of residence to the destination, and back to the individual's place of residence.
- "Proper evidentiary matter", such as MapQuest Directions, will need to be submitted with the Employee Reimbursement Request form to the Auditor's Office.
4. Travel during on-duty hours must utilize the most direct route unless an alternate route would be less time consuming and/or more effective. During on-duty hours, employees shall not deviate from the route of travel or stop along the route of travel

to conduct personal business or engage in any activity that is not within their assigned or required duties.

5. Reimbursement is authorized for parking charges, highway tolls, and other reasonable travel expenses directly related to the authorized travel.
6. Reimbursement for mileage and other travel by vehicle expenses associated with overnight travel is to be processed by the Auditor's Office rather than the employing agency's payroll department.

#### **H. MEALS AND INCIDENTALS**

1. Reimbursement for meals and incidentals is authorized only when overnight lodging is required while the employee is on official travel status (see Section D). The reimbursement of meals and incidentals is designed to offset the additional cost of travel, and not to entirely pay for the employee's meal and incidental expenses while on authorized travel status.
2. Reimbursement for meals and incidentals shall be made based on a \$40 "per diem" or allowance for each full day of travel, which is considered reasonable.
3. Reimbursement for the first and last day that an employee is on authorized travel status will be \$30, which is 75 percent of the full per diem amount.
4. The per-diem allowance cannot under any circumstances be used to pay for entertainment or alcoholic beverages, nor any tax or gratuity associated with such purchase.
5. Reimbursement for meals shall be made on the Employee Reimbursement Request form. Receipts are not required to be submitted to the Auditor's office for the employee to receive reimbursement, however a copy of the flight schedule, conference agenda, or other document demonstrating the dates of travel are required as proper evidentiary matter.

#### **I. LODGING**

1. Reimbursement for lodging shall be at the actual cost for the lowest available room rate. Every attempt should be made to reduce the cost of lodging, such as requesting the government rate, membership, or conference discounts, room sharing when appropriate, etc. Lodging accommodations should be appropriate for the proposed trip.
2. The maximum reimbursement for lodging to cities in the Continental United States is limited to the Federal per-diem rates listed on the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) website (<http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem>) which is updated periodically. In addition, reimbursement is authorized for any associated hotel, lodging, or other taxes associated with the lodging.

3. Notwithstanding the limitation above, reimbursement may be authorized above the Federal per-diem lodging rates if the room is a) located at or proximate to the event site, or b) purchased through a travel agent, including reimbursement of any associated service fees. This does not preclude selection of an alternative location that would result in a lower cost of lodging to the County.
4. Approval is also given for direct payment to the lodging facility; an employee must present a bill from the facility in order to pay for the lodging in advance. Reimbursement to employees may also be made prior to the travel date if the employee has paid for the lodging in advance and can provide documentation to that effect.
5. Lodging costs will not be reimbursed when incurred at a lodging facility located within sixty-five (65) miles of the closer of either the employee's normal work location or official residence. Exceptions to this policy may be made in cases of severe inclement weather, or when the employee has provided a reasonable justification that is approved by the employee's supervisor at the time the travel is authorized.

## **J. TRANSPORTATION**

1. Reimbursement is authorized for transportation expenses, such as public transportation, shuttle service, or taxi fares. Every attempt should be made to reduce the cost of transportation, such as sharing taxi fares when appropriate. Transportation expenses should be appropriate for the proposed trip.
2. Eligible transportation expenses authorized under this section include:
  - a) Travel between the airport and the place of lodging, conference, or another event;
  - b) Travel between the place of lodging and the conference or event when the conference or event is not on the same premises as the place of lodging;
  - c) Travel between a business-related meeting and the place of lodging, conference, or another event;
3. The amount of reimbursement may include a tip or gratuity associated with the transportation expense, which is expected to be reasonable. A tip or gratuity of approximately 20% is generally accepted as reasonable but may vary depending on the situation.
4. Each County agency, court, board, and/or commission shall be responsible for determining whether the transportation expenses submitted for reimbursement are reasonable and appropriate.
5. All receipts submitted for reimbursement under this section shall include the point of origin and the destination. For travel to or from a business-related meeting at a

restaurant, the proper evidentiary matter submitted to the Auditor's office must include either an agenda or confirmation from the official of attendance at the meeting with the employee.

6. Reimbursement for rental cars is permissible when the out-of-county lodging is not proximate to the conference location, more economical than any other type of transportation, public transportation is not available, and transportation between facilities is not provided by the conference. Reimbursement shall not be made at the luxury or large vehicle rate (i.e., reimbursement shall be made for a compact, standard, or mid-size sedan), except that a large vehicle may be reimbursed if the number of travelers accommodated warrants a larger vehicle. The names of all persons traveling in the same rental vehicle shall be listed on the "Request for Authorization to Travel on County Business" form.

## **K. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

1. Reimbursement is authorized for other reasonable and business-related expenses, such as internet access at the place of lodging and telephone expenses, including one safety/arrival long distance phone call upon arrival at the destination (not to exceed two minutes). However, employees should make their best effort to minimize the expense by using calling cards or cell phones rather than using hotel room phone rates.
2. Since it is not possible to anticipate every travel potentiality that might arise, either before or during authorized travel, requests for reimbursements that vary from the above guidelines will be addressed on a case-by-case basis by the County Administrator or Deputy County Administrator. However, it is anticipated that such cases will be rare.

## **L. REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS**

1. Requests for reimbursement of travel expenses shall be documented on the "Employee Reimbursement Request" form. A copy of that form is attached for agency convenience, but please refer to the Auditor's Fiscally Speaking website (<http://www.franklincountyauditor.com/fiscally-speaking/>), for the most current copy of that form as it may change from time to time.
2. The Employee Reimbursement Request form must be accompanied by proper evidentiary matter as determined by the Auditor's Office. Please refer to the Auditor's Office procedure for employee reimbursements for specifics.
3. Each County agency, court, board, and/or commission shall be responsible for the submission of a voucher for reimbursement of the travel expenses of their employees. The employee's management is responsible for ensuring that the

expenses listed are appropriate for the travel and meet the travel policy requirements contained herein.

4. Except as mentioned in this policy, no payments will be made for expenses in advance of the trip.
5. The employee's management authorizing the travel expenses is responsible for reviewing these requests and ensuring that the travel expenses are reasonable and appropriate before approving the reimbursement.
6. The Employee Reimbursement Request form must be submitted to the Auditor's Office within 90 days from when the authorized travel status ends. However, due to the schedule for processing travel reimbursements or the need to provide additional evidentiary matter, reimbursement may be made after the 90 days from when the authorized travel status ends.





### EMPLOYEE REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST

ALL PERTINENT DOCUMENTATION MUST BE ATTACHED SUCH AS AUTHORIZATION TO TRAVEL FORM, ITEMIZED RECEIPTS, DETAILED INVOICES, CONFERENCE BROCHURE, MAPQUEST OR GOOGLE MAP TO DOCUMENT MILEAGE, GSA PER DIEM RATES FOR DESTINATION CITY, OR GRADE REPORT FOR TUITION REIMBURSEMENT.

Employee #: [Enter Employee ID#] Employee Name: [Enter Employee Name]  
 Purchase Order #: [Enter PO#]  
 Destination: [Enter Destination] Purpose: [Enter Conference Name/Purpose]  
 Travel Dates From: [Enter From Date] To: [Enter To Date]

**TO BE COMPLETED BY EMPLOYEE AND AGENCY REVIEWER/APPROVER.**

	Completed by Employee	Completed by Authorized Personnel	Difference	Reason for Difference/Explanation for Other Expense
	Receipt Amounts OR Per Diem	Eligible for Reimbursement		
<b>Registration Fee</b>	\$ -	\$ -	-	
<b>Travel</b>				
Airfare	-	-	-	
Mileage	-	-	-	
Baggage	-	-	-	
Ground Transportation	-	-	-	
Car Rental	-	-	-	
Gas for Rental Car	-	-	-	
Airport Parking	-	-	-	
<b>Total Travel</b>	\$ -	\$ -	-	
<b>Lodging (Rate x Nights)</b>	\$ -	\$ -	-	
<b>Meals and Incidentals (\$40.00 per diem for each full day; \$30.00 for first and last day of travel)</b>				
[Enter Date] Daily Total	-	-	-	
[Enter Date] Daily Total	-	-	-	
[Enter Date] Daily Total	-	-	-	
[Enter Date] Daily Total	-	-	-	
[Enter Date] Daily Total	-	-	-	
[Enter Date] Daily Total	-	-	-	
[Enter Date] Daily Total	-	-	-	
<b>Meals Total</b>	\$ -	\$ -	-	
<b>Other Expenses (list individually &amp; explain purpose)</b>				
	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	\$ -	\$ -	-	
<b>Grand Total</b>	\$ -	\$ -	-	

\_\_\_\_\_  
 EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE\* DATE  
 \*Your signature certifies that the expenses listed on this request were incurred and are claimed in accordance with your agency's reimbursement policies.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 AUTHORIZED BY\*\* DATE  
 \*\*Your signature certifies that you have reviewed the expenses listed on this request for reasonableness, proper public purpose, and compliance with your agency's reimbursement policies.

## **6.9 Vehicle Usage Policy**

### **FRANKLIN COUNTY AUDITOR'S VEHICLE USAGE POLICY**

#### **I. AUTHORIZATION TO USE COUNTY VEHICLES ASSIGNED TO AUDITOR**

- A. The Franklin County Auditor's office has access to a County vehicle for official work purposes only. Proper procedures must be followed to ensure that the vehicle is used properly and for the proper business purposes. The usage of the vehicle assigned to the Auditor's Office must be for a necessary business purpose of the Auditor's Office. No County vehicle is to be driven outside of County boundaries without supervisory approval.
- B. Nothing in this policy is intended to contradict the Franklin County Commissioners' Vehicle Use and Driving Policy or Travel Policy incorporated in this section. If a term of the Auditor's Policy contradicts the Franklin County Commissioners' policies, then the Commissioners' policy shall control.
- C. Failure to follow the Vehicle and Travel policies of either the Auditor or Commissioners may result in loss of driving privileges for County vehicles and/or discipline up to and including termination.

#### **II. REQUEST TO USE FCAO VEHICLE**

- A. The employee must place a vehicle request through their Supervisor, Manager, or Director by completing the Request Form for Franklin County Auditor Office (FCAO) Vehicle. See the Administrative Assistant (AA) for the form. The form must be completed fully with detailed reasons for the use of the vehicle. The request is made when the AA has received the completed request form. Requests are granted on a first come first serve basis.
- B. The Request Form for a FCAO Vehicle must be submitted to the AA at least twenty-four hours prior to using the vehicle. Requests in advance are preferred, but requests can be made the day of the scheduled trip if a vehicle is available.
  - i. Vehicle use is approved by obtaining proper signature of a Supervisor, Manager, or Director on the Request Form for County Vehicle and submitting the signed form to the AA.
- C. For the FCAO vehicle, the employee must sign out the vehicle keys on the Key Log located at the Administration front desk held by the AA.
- D. A request for the use of a vehicle for multiple days for the same reason can be included in one request form.

- E. The Request Form will need to be fully completed, approved, and submitted to the AA. The AA will reserve the vehicle. Employees driving PFM vehicles must attend a fuel card training session. Contact the AA to sign up for the training.

### **III. MAINTAINING AND OBTAINING THE KEYS TO THE VEHICLE**

- A. When the County vehicle assigned to the Auditor's Office is not in use by an employee, the keys of the vehicle shall be placed with the AA. The AA will place them in a secure place until they are needed again for FCAO business.
- B. If the use of the vehicle is approved, then the employee will receive the keys from the AA on the day(s) of vehicle usage. A Vehicle Key Log will be signed by the individual receiving the keys. The Vehicle Key Log shall reflect each day that the keys are utilized, even if the days are consecutive. The AA will maintain these forms.
- C. Keys are to be returned to the AA on the same day as the vehicle is used.
- D. All efforts should be made to return the keys of the vehicle to the AA on the day the vehicle is utilized. However, if this is not possible, then the employee will return the keys to the AA as soon as possible on the next business day.
- E. The employee shall keep the vehicle keys secure while in their possession.

### **IV. RESTRICTIONS AND REQUIREMENTS**

- A. County vehicles are not to be used for personal matters.
- B. County vehicles assigned to the Auditor's Office are not to be taken to the employee's residence.
- C. County vehicles shall be returned to their designated parking spaces in the designated lot by the close of business on the day of use, unless otherwise authorized by management.
- D. A parking pass is included in the vehicle and is to remain with the vehicle at all times. The pass permits the employee to enter and exit the lot where the vehicle is located.
- E. An employee operating the vehicle is responsible for filling the vehicle's fuel tank if the fuel gauge falls below a quarter of a tank. The employee must use the gas card which is kept inside the vehicle at all times. The vehicle may be taken to any gas station in accordance with the County Fuel Card policy, incorporated in this section. Fuel receipts should be given to department managers and kept in accordance with the retention policy for a period of four years. If a vehicle requires maintenance, the vehicle can be

taken to Fleet Management at Fleet's request or if an employee notices that a vehicle is approaching the requisite mileage for an oil change, after which, they should notify the AA.

- F. Drivers must abide by all traffic safety laws and always be courteous.
- G. Smoking is not permitted in County vehicles.
- H. Cell phones shall not be utilized while driving County vehicles. If a call or a text is received or needs to be made by the driver, the vehicle must be pulled safely out of traffic and brought to a complete stop prior to placement or receipt of a call or text.
- I. An employee who drives County vehicles must have had a driving check completed, a current valid Ohio driver's license and safe driving record.
- J. The County is self-insured for automobile liability. If an employee drives a County vehicle on County business, then the employees is covered under this self-insurance program. However, whether a particular activity would be deemed County business is a factual issue to be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- K. If an employee is driving their own vehicle on County business, the employee must have liability insurance with minimum coverage levels of \$100,000 per injury / \$300,000 per property damage incident.
- L. If the County vehicle suffers a flat tire, then the employee must change the tire and bring the vehicle to Fleet Management. The employee is not to use any kind of "fix-a-flat" remedy to alter the damaged tire.
- M. If an employee is involved in any accident with a County vehicle or with an employee's own vehicle used on County business, then the employee must call the police and file a report. There is a card in each vehicle that specifies how to proceed if an accident occurs. When filling out the police report, the employee shall use the current address of Fleet Management as the address on the report.
- N. All accidents involving County vehicles must also be reported immediately to the AA and the employee's Supervisor, Manager, or Director. A requisite Field Incident Reporting Form must be filled out and turned into the employee's Supervisor, Manager, or Director. See the AA for the form. The accident must also be reported immediately to Fleet Management. The vehicle must be taken to Fleet Management as soon as possible.
- O. If an employee is driving a County vehicle, then the employee must immediately inform the FCAO HR, and the employee's Supervisor, Manager or Director of:

- i. Any circumstances that negatively impact the employee's driving privileges or ability, including but not limited to, a license suspension, outstanding traffic warrants, physical or psychological impairment, or any effects of medication.
- ii. Any traffic citation for charges of being under the influence of alcohol or any other controlled substance while operating any motor vehicle.
- iii. If the employee receives points on their license.
- iv. Traffic citations received while operating a County vehicle.  
(Employee is responsible for paying the cost of all citations received while operating a County vehicle.)

If the above issues are not reported immediately, then the employee could be disciplined and permanently barred from operating a County vehicle. An employee will be barred from driving a County vehicle until a full adjudication of the matter, if the matter is required to be adjudicated, with a finding of "not guilty." Employees may be disciplined up to and including termination for violation of the Vehicle Use or Travel policies.

- P. If an employee has the following violations or circumstances, while operating a County vehicle, they may permanently lose their County driving privileges or be subjected to further discipline up to and including termination.
  - i. Operating a Vehicle Impaired (OVI).
  - ii. Reckless Operation.
  - iii. Fleeing Scene of an accident.
  - iv. Passing a school bus.
  - v. Accrual of six points within one year.
  - vi. Refusal to submit to breath, urine, or blood test.
  - vii. Driving with a suspended, seized, cancelled, or expired license.
  - viii. Driving without a license.
  - ix. Driving without sufficient insurance coverage.
  
- Q. Only employees of FCAO are permitted to drive the FCAO vehicle. FCAO employees and individuals in the care of FCAO employees may be transported in FCAO vehicle.

## VEHICLE USE AND DRIVING

County vehicles and vehicle equipment are provided exclusively for official use. Drivers must abide by all traffic safety laws and always be courteous.

Whenever possible, use County vehicles for County business. However, if a County vehicle is unavailable or not provided and you choose to use your personal car on County business, your mileage will be reimbursed at the rate established by the Board of Commissioners, based upon proper documentation. Go to Franklin County Auditor's website under Fiscally Speaking.  
[www.franklincountyauditor.com/fiscally-speaking/](http://www.franklincountyauditor.com/fiscally-speaking/)

All drivers must have a current valid Ohio driver's license and personal liability automobile coverage at the established minimum levels described below.

All County owned vehicles are subject to have a vehicle telematics device installed. The telematics technology provides vehicle data to Fleet Management. These telematics devices operate using global positioning satellites (GPS) and transmit location data. If any office believes they have justification to be omitted from the telematics program, the Agency Director must submit their reasoning and full justification in writing to the County Administrator for review and consideration.

### Authorization to Drive a County Vehicle Home

Authorization must be in writing by the agency or department head and filed with the County Commissioners.

It may be granted:

- when you are subject to call on an emergency basis;
- if your regular duties require frequent use of a county vehicle overnight and your responsibilities involve emergency or after-hours response, evening and weekend duties, public meetings, or other business activities; or
- if driving directly to variable work sites is more efficient than to a central office.

*(more) Revised April 2017*

### Tax Status

Personal use of the car provided by the County to you is usually viewed by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as a taxable noncash fringe benefit whose value must be reported as taxable compensation.

Currently, there are two methods for determining the value of this benefit:

- general valuation rule (fair market)
- cents-per-mile rule

Law enforcement and utility repair vehicles as defined in the IRS regulations are excluded from this provision.

Check with your payroll clerk to determine:

- if your County car use constitutes a benefit for tax purposes, and
- which method of valuation you should use (and how to complete the process).

### Insurance Coverage

The County is self-insured for automobile liability. So, if you drive a County vehicle on County business, you are covered under this self-insurance program.

If you are assigned a County vehicle on a regular basis, you should purchase an insurance coverage rider to your personal auto insurance policy.

If you are driving your own car on County business, you must have liability insurance with minimum coverage levels of \$100,000 per injury / \$300,000 per property damage incident. Annually you will be required to provide verification of current coverage.

However, whether a particular activity would be deemed County business (“acting within the scope of your employment”) is a factual issue to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

This will cover possible liability resulting from an accident in that vehicle when you are not deemed to be “on the job.”

Be aware that if you are the cause of an accident while on County business, your personal liability coverage is in effect first. The County could possibly have some liability dependent upon the circumstances.

### Accident Reports

Any accidents involving County vehicles or County employees using their own vehicles for County business must be reported immediately to your supervisor or department manager.

Fleet Management must be promptly notified if the accident involves a County owned vehicle.

Clearly, the best approach is to avoid accidents.

- Drive defensively.
- Improper driving can result in disciplinary action.

(more)

When Your Job Classification Requires You to Drive a County Vehicle

Immediately (not more than 24 hours) make supervisor or director aware:

- of any circumstances that negatively impact driving privileges or ability.
- of a traffic citation received while operating a County-owned vehicle.
- any traffic citation (license seizure, etc) for charges of being under the influence of alcohol or any other controlled substance while operating any motor vehicle (County-owned or otherwise).
- if you receive four or more points on your license within any six-month period.
- if you have the following violations or circumstances:  
(These may result in a loss of your driving privileges - and possibly your job - whether or not they occurred while driving a County-owned vehicle.)

Failure to notify could result in removal.

- License status, outstanding traffic warrants.
- Physical/psychological impairments, medication effects.

You must pay the full cost.

- You will be barred from driving until full adjudication with finding of “not guilty.”
- If convicted, you may be disciplined and/or required to satisfactorily complete a drug/alcohol program.

- OMVI
- Reckless operation
- Fleeing scene of an accident
- Passing a school bus
- Accrual of 6 points within 1 year
- Refusal to submit to breath/urine/blood test
- Suspended, seized, cancelled, expired license
- Driving without a license
- Driving without sufficient insurance coverage.

**Franklin County Commissioners  
Department of Fleet Management  
Fuel Credit Card Policy and Procedures**

**Fueling Franklin County Commissioners' owned vehicles**

Fleet Management will provide access to fuel for all vehicles owned by the Franklin County Commissioners. Fuel will be provided through fueling facilities owned and operated by Fleet Management or other fueling facilities as operations deem necessary. Fuel credit cards may be issued for use when needed. Fleet Management's Fuel Credit Card Policy shall conform to the guidelines of the Ohio Revised Code Section 301.27.

**Appropriations and Encumbrances**

Appropriations will be obtained by Fleet Management for work related fuel expenses as outlined in Section 301.27(E)(2). The use of fuel credit cards shall be limited to the amount appropriated and encumbered for such use. Fleet Management will adhere to the Franklin County Auditor's office guidelines for organization and object codes to accurately reflect these fuel costs.

**Required: Fuel Credit Card User Acknowledgement**

Prior to Fleet Management issuing a Personal Identification Number (PIN), which is required in order to use a fuel credit card, the user must first sign the Fuel Card User Acknowledgement Form. Among other topics, the Acknowledgment Form confirms that the individual has a copy of and understands the Fleet Management Fuel Credit Card Policy, including prohibitions on misuse of the card that can lead to discipline, including termination as well as possible criminal charges and prosecution.

**County Fuel Card Purchasing Requirements**

- a. Be certain the county fuel card is accepted before services are obtained.
- b. The fuel card is for use only with its assigned vehicle, identified by the door number in the card's lower left corner. The card cannot be used in conjunction with, or in lieu of, another vehicle's card to complete a purchase.
- c. Personal use of the fuel card is prohibited. Cigarettes, tobacco, food and alcohol purchases are prohibited.
- d. Purchase fuel from self-service pumps equipped with card readers which accept county fuel cards.
- e. Personnel shall use 87 octane gasoline with all county vehicles, unless the vehicle is

authorized for use of a different fuel. If the vehicle is flexible fuel (E85 compatible) and alternative fuel is available, it should be obtained.

- f. Should you encounter a problem using the county fuel card, contact Fleet Management Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. through 4:30 p.m. at (614) 525-3412.
- g. Use of the county fuel card for purchasing fuel at a particular location and obtaining a personal benefit is prohibited. Some fuel stations provide premiums or points to be redeemed for merchandise for purchasing fuel at their locations. An example of this would be Speedway SuperAmerica, LLC, which currently offers Speedy Rewards.
- h. The credit card should not be placed next to other magnetized items or stored in a manner that may damage the card.

### **Fuel Transaction Verification Process (new, effective April 1, 2015)**

The fuel credit card vendor provides a detailed report of all fuel transactions made with the fuel credit cards. This report will detail vehicle number, date, time, gallons, cost per gallon, total cost of the transaction, location the fuel was obtained (full and complete address), the employee authorizing the fuel transaction, the type of fuel obtained, and any other data that is available.

This transaction report will be provided to Fleet Management at a minimum once per month.

### **Record Keeping / Completion of Fuel Receipt (changes, effective April 1, 2015)**

- a. When at the pump to purchase fuel, do the following:
  - i. Swipe the card.
  - ii. Two prompts will appear. Enter the vehicle's current mileage and driver ID # (employee four-digit PIN number).
  - iii. Obtain a receipt from the pump or attendant.
  - iv. Complete receipt accurately and completely. Receipts generated by card readers vary in information printed. Review receipt and add missing information:
    - Date of purchase
    - Vehicle Door number
    - Odometer reading
    - Full details of the purchase such as gallons of gas (including tenths), unit price, and total purchase price.

- Signature of purchaser (also legibly print name)
  - Badge number (if applicable)
  - Name of the issuing station
- b. Retain the fuel card receipt in accordance with your departments policy.
- c. Each month Fleet Management will email a statement to every employee authorizing use on the fuel credit card. The Employee will review each of their transaction details and confirm such by signing the verification statement and returning the signed statement to Fleet Management within 7 days.
- d. Those employees that do not return the statement within the 7 days will have their fuel PIN number suspended until the statement is verified, signed, and submitted to Fleet Management. Repeat delays in returning the monthly statement in a timely manner will be reported to the individual departmental/agency fuel card coordinator. Continued and/or repeated negligence in returning the statement in a timely fashion will result in cancellation of the individual's fuel PIN number.

### **Fuel Transaction Reconciliation (new, effective April 1, 2015)**

Fleet Management and the Franklin County Data Center have developed an automated process to download all fuel transactions reported by the vendor into the Fleet Management system.

Fleet Management will verify that each transaction reported/billed to Franklin County is accounted for in the Fleet Management system and attributed to the correct vehicle number.

### **Fuel Transaction Checks and Balances (new, effective April 1, 2015)**

Fleet Management will monitor and check for suspect fuel transactions. Fleet Management will monitor miles per gallon, frequency of fueling, as well as other transaction data to look for suspect uses. The information provided by the credit card vendor, as well as the reporting capabilities of the Fleet Management system, will allow for close monitoring of information and tracking of data.

Any suspect transactions will be logged and reported to the Director of Fleet Management for review and investigation.

### **Fuel Card Account Assignments**

Fuel cards are permanently assigned to a motor vehicle by Door Number. Fuel cards remain with the same vehicle, stored in the glove box, for the life of the vehicle. Drivers should check the vehicle for the fuel card prior to starting the shift to ensure the card is present. If the card is absent contact Fleet Management immediately.

## **Damaged or Worn Cards**

Notify Fleet Management by phone or email if a fuel card is worn or damaged. Worn or damaged cards are still valid for purchases, but may need to be taken to the service station attendant for processing. Cards are not to be destroyed by users, but must be returned to Fleet Management upon receipt of replacement.

## **Lost Cards**

If a fuel card is lost, immediately notify Fleet Management by phone or email. Fleet will cancel the fuel card and request a replacement.

## **6.10 Volunteer Policy**

### **Community Outreach**

The FCAO encourages staff to volunteer to assist the Community Outreach team in promoting the services and functions of the office. The FCAO Community Outreach team are the first team members that will be assigned to staff community events. It is when the Community Outreach team is unable to cover all scheduled events that management will ask employees for assistance. Staff are not required to participate in community engagement opportunities.

All FCAO employees are eligible to volunteer for community outreach events. Overtime eligible and bargaining unit employees must receive approval from their direct supervisor to volunteer. These employees are eligible to earn compensatory time or overtime for volunteer activities in accordance with the Overtime policy. Exempt unclassified employees must also receive the approval from their direct supervisor to volunteer at community events and will receive administrative time earned per the Overtime policy. In lieu of earning administrative leave earned, exempt unclassified employees are eligible to flex their time within the pay period with the approval of their supervisor.

The Director of Community Outreach or a designee will provide initial training to new volunteers on an as needed basis. Volunteers may be required to take an annual training thereafter.

Volunteer opportunities will be sent out to all employees by email. Employees will choose the date and time slot they want to volunteer. Choosing a time to volunteer is a commitment on the part of the employee to fulfill the volunteer obligation. Employees are not permitted to volunteer for two consecutive shifts in the same weekend unless approved by their supervisor and the Director of Community Outreach.

In the event an employee is unable to volunteer, the employee should find another employee to fill in as soon as possible. If the employee is unable to identify a replacement volunteer, the employee must notify the Director of Community Outreach as soon as possible. If an employee volunteers to participate in a community outreach event and does not participate at their chosen time more than twice in a season (two no-shows or call-offs within 24 hours of a scheduled shift ) the employee will not be permitted to volunteer for outreach events during that season. If the employee is sick and can't participate on their scheduled day, the employee must call the Director of Community Outreach or the outreach coordinator on-call for the event.

Volunteers will be asked to provide emergency contact information in the event of an emergency when participating in an outreach event. These emergency contacts will be kept by the Director of Community Outreach. The Director will also provide their contact information to all volunteers for emergency purposes.

Employees who participate in outreach events are responsible for parking and will not be reimbursed for mileage.

### **Non-Paid Volunteer Service Opportunities**

Employees may be asked to serve in the community (e.g., clean up day). These service opportunities enrich and inspire the lives of employees and the community. These service opportunities may be scheduled outside of regular work hours and will not be paid or count towards hours worked for the employee. Employees are not required to participate in these volunteer service opportunities.

## **7.0 Compensatory Time & Overtime**

Overtime is defined as time worked in excess of forty (40) hours in a week beginning at 12:01am on Monday and ending at 11:59p.m on Sunday. All forms of leave will be credited towards actual hours worked except compensatory time.

Before working overtime, an employee must obtain approval from their supervisor. Employees who fail to obtain approval prior to working overtime are subject to discipline. Overtime hours earned must be entered into Employee Self Service.

Compensatory time is paid time off earned and used by nonexempt staff in lieu of receiving pay for hours worked over 40 hours during a given work week. An employee who wants to use compensatory time off must submit the request for leave through Employee Self Service. Employees will be paid for any unused compensatory time upon separation of employment at either the employee's average rate of pay for the last three years of service or the employee's final rate of pay, whichever is greater. A maximum of 100 hours of compensatory time may be accumulated and carried over to the next year. After the accumulation of 100 hours of compensatory time, subsequent hours earned will be paid out as overtime.

### **Non-Exempt Employees**

Non-exempt employees have the choice to earn compensatory time or overtime, both of which are paid or earned at a rate of one and one-half times the employee's regular rate of pay over 40 in a workweek or 80 in a pay period.

### **Exempt Employees**

Executive, professional, and administrative employees are exempt from earning overtime; however, they will earn administrative hours for hours in excess of 40 hours in a workweek. Administrative hours earned must be entered into Employee Self Service. An employee who wants to use administrative leave time off must submit the electronic request for leave through Employee Self Service. Exempt employees may earn administrative leave as set forth below:

1. Receive 1 hour of administrative leave for each hour worked over eighty (80) hours in a pay period.
2. May accumulate and carry up to 100 hours.
3. May take administrative exempt leave.
4. Upon separation of employment, will not be paid for and will not maintain, hours that are not utilized.

### **Bargaining Unit Employees**

All Bargaining Unit employees who are in active pay status for more than forty (40) hours in a work week, will be paid overtime at the rate of one-and-one-half times their regular straight time rate. All overtime must have prior approval unless circumstances prevent the obtaining of approval. All employees have the right to choose to take overtime pay or compensatory time up to a maximum of one hundred (100) hours. However, after the accumulation of 100 hours, such time will be paid out as overtime. Compensatory leave shall be scheduled at a mutually agreeable time and shall not be unreasonably denied. "Active pay status" shall include hours actually worked by the employee and time spent on an approved paid leave, except compensatory time shall not be included in calculating active pay status for overtime.

At times non-bargaining and bargaining unit employees may be required to work mandatory overtime based on operational need. It is the sole and exclusive right of Management to determine when overtime is necessary.

## 7.1 Payroll

Employees are paid every two (2) weeks. Required deductions from paychecks include federal, state, and local income and withholding taxes, contributions to the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS) and Medicare contributions for employees hired after March 31, 1986. Mandatory court-ordered deductions will be processed by the fiscal payroll department. All deductions are itemized on the pay advice.

**It is the employee's responsibility** to inform FCAO HR of required withholdings for residence and/or school district income taxes.

Employees are required to be paid by direct deposit. A direct deposit form can be found on the Employee Portal

It is the employee's responsibility to track their attendance on their timesheet via Employee Self-Service (ESS). Employees working offsite/remote will be responsible for tracking their remote/offsite work hours in ESS so that municipal taxes can be properly withheld and remitted.

Human Resources will provide new employees with login instructions on how to access ESS within two weeks of their start date. Directors and/or supervisors will verify the accuracy of the submitted timesheets and leave requests for payroll processing.

If any wages are due at the time of separation, the final paycheck will be released on the next scheduled payday. In the event of death, the payment will be made in accordance with ORC Section 2113.04.

## **7.2 Taxable Fringe Benefits**

According to the Internal Revenue Service, the items listed below can be taxable fringe benefits and would need to be reported as taxable income to employees who receive the benefits, with the respective state and federal taxes withheld. This is not intended as an all-inclusive list.

1. Clothing purchased directly by the FCAO, or paid for through employee reimbursement (except for clothing necessary for the employee's safety, such as steel-toed shoes or boots, safety glasses or work gloves)
2. Meals (except for overnight business-related travel)
3. Tuition payments exceeding \$5,250, if the studies are not job-related (i.e., maintaining or improving skills required by the individual in his/her employment)

Certain work requires (e.g Outreach and Weights & Measures events) wearing a shirt with the FCAO logo. When logo shirts or other specific articles of clothing are required, they will be supplied by the FCAO or an employee will be reimbursed for their purchase. The clothing is required to be worn during working hours or events. Upon separation from employment or job reassignment, the clothing must be returned to the FCAO, if purchased by the FCAO.

## **8.0 Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. An employee who needs an accommodation should contact FCAO HR to start the interactive process.

## **8.1 Background/Driving Checks**

### Background Check

FCAO reserves the right to request and conduct background investigations when deemed warranted, including for pre-employment consideration, or during an internal investigation of alleged misconduct. Background investigations will be conducted by the Franklin County Sheriff's Office and in accordance with federal and state law. It is the responsibility of all employees to self-disclose criminal convictions that occur during the span of employment within three business days of conviction to the HR Director. Self-disclosing individuals must provide accurate information, consent to a background check and provide any requested information and/or documentation in a timely manner. All information provided will be thoroughly reviewed to determine suitability of continued employment. Failure to disclose convictions, falsifications, misrepresentations or material omissions of related information may result in termination of employment.

### Driving Check

The Human Resources Department will run a motor vehicle records check on employees for which driving is an essential job function and verify that employees have personal liability automobile coverage.

An employee without a valid driver's license, safe driving record or personal liability automobile insurance may not be allowed to operate a county vehicle or drive on behalf of the Auditor's Office. Every effort will be made to provide the employee with a reasonable accommodation. Reasonable accommodations may include temporarily having eligible individuals drive in lieu of the ineligible employee, or permanently moving the ineligible employee to a different classification if a position is open, and the employee is qualified. If the employee cannot be reasonably accommodated, the employee may be disciplined, up to and including termination.

## **8.2 Employee Information**

It is important that HR maintains up-to-date employee records. Employees are responsible for completing an Employee Name/Address Change Form when there are changes to an employee's name, address, telephone number, emergency contact, and phone number. The form is located on the Employee Portal. Address changes may require a change to the school district or county on your state tax form. Contact FCAO HR for a state tax form. Marital status, beneficiary designations, and addition or deletion of dependents should be made on the benefits portal. All change notification must be made within seven (7) days of the change.

### **8.3 Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**

The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides eligible employees of covered employers with job-protected leave for qualifying family and medical reasons and requires continuation of their group health benefits. FMLA may be unpaid or used at the same time as employer-provided paid leave. Employees must be restored to the same or virtually identical position when they return to work after FMLA.

FMLA grants eligible employees who have worked for at least 12 months and 1250 hours with the office up to a total of twelve (12) work weeks (intermittently or continuous) of unpaid leave during any twelve (12) month period for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Birth and care of your newborn child;
2. Placement with you of a child for adoption or foster care;
3. Care for an immediate family member (spouse, domestic partner, child, spouse or domestic partner's child, or parent) with a serious health condition;
4. To take medical leave when you are unable to work because of a serious health condition; or
5. For an immediate family member in military service:

FMLA designated leave does not impact an employee from earning the Wellness Incentive.

#### **Military Leave**

Military Family Leave for a family member who is on active-duty status or on notification of impending military active duty for “any qualifying exigency” arising out of the active duty or notified of an impending call to active-duty status of a spouse, son, daughter, or parent. Applies to service members no longer on active-duty status, so long as the injury manifests itself within 5 years of the service member leaving active duty status;

Military Caregiver Leave for a spouse, son, daughter, parent or next of kin who is a “covered service member” who is seriously ill or injured – in the line of duty – rendering him or her unfit for duty. A covered service member for this type of leave includes members of both the regular Armed Forces and the National Guard or Reserves. (This exception permits 26 weeks of FMLA entitlement. Limited to a combined total of 26 weeks. Only 12 of the 26 weeks may be for a FMLA qualifying reason other than to care for a covered service member.)

Qualifying Exigencies may include:

Issues arising from a covered military member's short notice deployment (i.e., deployment on seven or less days of notice);

1. Making or updating financial and legal arrangements to address covered military members absence;
2. Taking up to five days of leave to spend time with a covered military member who is on short-term temporary, rest and recuperation leave during deployment;
3. Any other event that the employee and employer agree is a qualifying exigency.

The entitlement period is calculated by measuring forward from the first date of your FMLA leave. You are expected to keep track of the time you take off under FMLA.

### **Ohio Military Family Leave (OMFLA)**

OMFLA allows eligible employees to take up to 10 workdays of unpaid leave each calendar year. The employee must be the parent, spouse, or legal (current or former) custodian of a uniformed services member who is called into active duty for a period greater than 30 days or is "injured, wounded, or hospitalized" while serving on active duty. An employee may use any available paid time off concurrently with unpaid OMFLA leave.

Unlike FMLA, military personnel serving domestic active duty apply to OMFLA.

Notification for leave use should be two weeks unless the leave is taken because of an injury to a family member.

## **8.4 Nursing Mothers**

A nursing mother is provided reasonable breaks each time the nursing mother needs to express milk for one year after the child's birth. Time spent expressing milk is considered hours worked.

Nursing mothers should submit notice to their supervisors stating the approximate times during the day when nursing breaks are needed. The schedule may need to be adjusted over time, so nursing mothers should make their supervisor aware of schedule changes for expressing milk.

There are two private Lactation Rooms, one on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor near PFM Office (373 S. High) and the other one is located on the 16<sup>th</sup> floor. If there are questions, feel free to contact a member of the FCAO HR team.

## **8.5 Outside Employment**

No employee shall accept or engage in any employment, occupation, or business outside of the FCAO unless an Application for Secondary Employment form has been submitted and approved by both administration and legal. The form can be found on the employee portal. Secondary employment includes volunteer appointments such as sitting on a non-profit board or as an officer in a non-profit. An employee may have outside employment if there is no conflict of interest with their FCAO employment, and as long as it does not impair their performance as a FCAO employee. An employee shall not accept or engage in any employment, occupation, or business outside the FCAO if the activity:

1. Interferes with the employee's job attendance or performance;
2. Is incompatible with the employee's job;
3. Presents a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest with the business of the FCAO;
4. Is regulated by the FCAO.

Employees shall not use any county-owned or county-leased equipment when engaged in or completing any secondary employment.

If the secondary employment, occupation, or business is approved, the employee is obligated to inform FCAO HR of any changes regarding the outside employment within seven days of the change. FCAO HR may also reevaluate any conflicts or adverse impacts created by outside employment if the FCAO employee changes positions within the agency.

## **8.6 Personnel Files**

Employee files are maintained in the FCAO HR Department. A separate confidential medical file is also maintained. Employees may review their personnel files at a reasonable time after making a request to review the file. However, since it is critical that files and their contents remain in the FCAO HR department, employees need to make an appointment. The file will be reviewed in the presence of HR or another designated FCAO representative.

## **8.7 Prior Service Credit**

If an employee was previously employed with any Ohio government entity, state, county, public school district, public university or college, or city, the employee may receive credit for prior service as applicable under the Ohio Revised Code.

Employees with prior public service is entitled to receive service credit for the purpose of computing the amount of the employee's vacation leave. The previous accumulated sick leave of employees who separated from public service can also be transferred from another public entity provided that the re-employment in public service takes place within 10 years of the date on which the employee was last separated from public service. It is the employee's responsibility to obtain written documentation of prior service by having each previous political subdivision complete a Prior Service Certification form located on the Employee Portal. This form should be returned to FCAO HR within 90 days of hire. Retirees from county, state or city government may be rehired by Franklin County; however, the retiree will not receive credit for prior service.

## **8.8 Probationary Period**

### **New Hires**

The probationary period for classified and bargaining unit new hires, is 6 months (180 calendar days). This period gives the employee an opportunity to adequately learn the job and to demonstrate their ability to do the job and the ability to be dependable and compatible with the FCAO team. The probationary period can be extended up to 3 months (90 days) at the discretion of the FCAO. Time spent on a leave of absence without pay shall not be counted as part of the probationary period. Probationary periods shall be extended by an equal number of days the employee spent in no-pay status.

Newly hired probationary employees may be dismissed at any time prior to the completion of the probationary period and such action that involves a bargaining unit employee shall not be grievable under the terms of the current Collective Bargaining Agreement. Probationary employees are not eligible for promotion or a lateral transfer during the probationary period.

### **Promotion and Transfer Employees**

Employees promoted or transferred shall serve a ninety (90) day evaluation period. This period gives the employee an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to do the job. Time spent on a leave of absence without pay shall not be counted as part of the evaluation period. Evaluation periods shall be extended by an equal number of days the employee spent in no-pay status.

A promoted or transferred employee is subject to being returned to their previous classification and pay grade by the FCAO at any time prior to the completion of their evaluation period. Additionally, the employee may also request to be returned to their previous classification and pay grade; such request may be granted if the position is still available, and no offer has been issued for the position. Employees who have returned to their prior classification will not be subject to an evaluation period.

### **Unclassified Employees**

Unclassified employees serve at the pleasure of the Auditor throughout their appointment and do not serve an evaluation period.

## **8.9 Separation From Employment**

Employees who resign are encouraged to give a minimum two-week notice when possible. All resignations are to be considered accepted at the time the resignation is offered. No resignation can be withdrawn without written approval from the HR Director.

All keys, identification badges, uniforms, work products, parking passes, mobile devices and/or equipment and other property belonging to the County must be returned to FCAO HR in acceptable condition.

## **8.10 Job Postings**

When the FCAO decides to fill a classified vacancy, internal applicants will have a minimum of ten (10) days from the date of the posting to apply. Internal applicants must submit the application and resume by the end of the posting deadline. All applications timely filed will be reviewed by the FCAO for minimum qualifications.

### **Bargaining Unit Positions**

The FCAO will, in its sole discretion, select the most qualified applicant for the position. The FCAO will interview at least two internal candidates so long as they meet the minimum job qualifications. However, FCAO may, in its sole discretion, decline to interview any candidates with active discipline. If the external and internal applicants are equal, then the internal applicant will be selected.

All internal applicants afforded an interview will be notified in writing of their selection or non-selection within seven (7) days after the final selection is made or confirmed by the FCAO.

## **9.0 Accident & Injury Reporting**

The FCAO aims to promote the health and safety of all employees with timely reporting of work-related accidents, injuries, and occupational illnesses. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that you are aware of your responsibility to report any accident, injury, or illness that occurs in the course of work or that arises out of work. Even the slightest injury can become serious if not cared for properly. All FCAO employees are covered by Workers' Compensation insurance for injuries or occupational diseases occurring in the course of and arising out of their employment. If you are injured on the job, you should take the following actions:

1. **Immediate Action** - Seek immediate medical attention, if warranted. To ensure paramedics enter the building in a timely manner, call security services in the courthouse at ext. 6000. Security will contact emergency paramedic services from the Columbus Fire Division by dialing 9-911.
2. **Report** – Report accident or injury to a supervisor as soon as possible, but not later than 48 hours after occurrence of accident or injury unless you are physically incapable of reporting it.
3. **Complete the ARFIE Form** - Complete the Franklin County Accident Report Form for Injured Employees (ARFIE) located on the county employee portal or contact FCAO Human Resources (FCAO HR) and one will be emailed. This report should be submitted to FCAO HR no later than 24 hours after occurrence of the accident/incident. If an injured employee is physically unable to report the accident, the supervisor must complete and submit the ARFIE to FCAO HR.
4. FCAO HR will fax the completed ARFIE Form to Risk Management and alert Risk Management of a new claim filing. FCAO HR shall place the report on file as documentation. If your accident makes you miss work, you must notify your supervisor and share your expected date return. Medical documentation will be needed if out of the office more than three days.

An employee who is injured while performing their work duties for the FCAO may be eligible for workers' compensation benefits. An employee who becomes eligible for lost time workers' compensation disability benefits may choose to use sick leave or accept workers' compensation temporary disability benefits. An employee cannot collect both sick leave payments and workers' compensation temporary disability benefits for the same time period. However, if an employee chooses to use sick leave, the employee may be eligible for replenishment of a portion of sick leave hours used during the period(s) for which lost time benefits would have been paid. An employee must apply for this replenishment within three (3) months of returning to work.

The NEAR-MISS Incident Report Form will need to be completed for incidents that do not result in a workplace injury. A near miss is a potential hazard or incident in which no property was damaged, and no personal injury was sustained, but where, given a slight shift in time or position, damage, or an injury easily could have occurred. The form can be found on the Employee Portal or contact FCAO HR and one will be emailed.

## 9.1 Safety & Security

The safety of you and your fellow workers is one of the FCAO's most important concerns. Please report any unsafe condition or fire hazard to your supervisor or a safety team member immediately (a list of safety team members is posted by the elevators). All employees shall participate in safety drills (i.e., fire drill, tornado drill, evacuation drill, etc.).

Prevent accidents to yourself and to others. Be alert. Never engage in horseplay. Know all safety rules and precautions required for your job. If you do not know them, ask your supervisor. Know where the nearest fire extinguisher is located. Obey all safety regulations regarding smoking or open flames.

There are emergency procedures for each building that address disasters and other emergencies which jeopardize the safety of employees. Contact a member of the FCAO Safety Team for further details regarding these procedures.

Maintaining the security of the FCAO is every employee's responsibility. Develop habits that ensure security as a matter of course. For example:

1. Always keep cash and other valuables properly secured. If you are aware that cash is insecurely stored, immediately inform the person responsible.
2. Notify your supervisor immediately upon discovering that you have lost or misplaced your identification badge or office key(s).

In the event that a theft occurs while at work, notify your supervisor immediately and then complete the County Incident Report.

**You are obligated** to report suspicious or illegal activity to your supervisor, director or to the Chief of Staff.