

Personnel Policy Manual for Volunteers
of the Unitarian Universalist District of Metropolitan New York

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I. POLICIES AND PRACTICES

A. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This Personnel Policy Manual (Manual) is not a contract and can be modified or changed at any time. The relationship between the District and paid employee is legally defined as "employment at will," which means that such employment may be terminated without penalty by either party unless reasons for such termination are specifically prohibited by federal or state law. The District may not be compelled to pay wages to persons no longer in their service, and employees may not be compelled to render their labor without their consent.

The Manual applies to all staff, whether full-time, part-time, exempt or nonexempt, except where otherwise stated. This Manual does not apply to staff who are co-employed by the District and the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), as they are covered by UUA Policy.

The phrase "District Executive" is used to refer to the person with primary administrative responsibilities for the District under policy governance.

We have prepared this Personnel Manual to help you to understand some of the policies and procedures of The Unitarian Universalist District of Metropolitan New York (referred to herein as "District"). Employees/volunteers should familiarize themselves with the Manual, as it will provide answers to some questions they may have about their employment. Nothing in this Manual or in any other written or unwritten policies and practices of the District creates an express or implied contract, promise or representation between the District and any specific employee/volunteer. The District's policies generally will be applied consistently. However, the District reserves the right to deviate from normal policy in certain situations. Since every employment/volunteer situation cannot be anticipated, this Manual provides a general overview only.

From time to time, changes in the Manual may become necessary. Therefore, the District reserves the right to amend, supplement or rescind any provisions of this Manual as necessary.

Section I of this Manual also applies to volunteer staff of the District, specifically those policies regarding equal opportunity and protection of work environments, resolution of complaints, and goal setting/evaluation.

This Manual supersedes all previous employment policies, whether written or oral, expressed or implied. If any provisions of this Manual are found to be invalid or unenforceable, the remaining provisions will remain in full force and effect. If you have any questions or comments about this Manual, or if you need more information, please ask your supervisor or the District Executive. Your comments and suggestions are genuinely encouraged.

B. DISTRICT MISSION AND HISTORY

As stated in the Ends Policies, the District is committed to the following:

GLOBAL ENDS COMMITMENT:

Guided by our living faith, The Unitarian Universalist District of Metropolitan New York exists to be a source of connection and transformation for our congregations and our larger world. Therefore, the District policies, resources, and actions will result in:

- Congregations that are healthy and effective.
- Congregations that are beloved communities: multi-cultural, diverse, loving, and justice seeking.
- Congregations that have empowered professional and lay leadership.
- Congregations that cooperate and act together on areas of common concern.
- Greater awareness and understanding, in our congregations and our region, of the potential of our Unitarian Universalist religion to transform individual lives, our communities, and the greater world.

C. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The District affirms its commitment to equal employment opportunity for all individuals. Decisions about recruiting, hiring, training, promotions, compensation, benefits, and all similar employment decisions must be made in compliance with all federal, state and local laws and without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability or any other classification protected by law. Any discrimination in the workplace based upon any protected classification is illegal and against policy.

Employees/volunteers who have questions about discrimination in the workplace, or who believe this policy has been violated, should report their concerns immediately to the District Executive. Retaliation against individuals who make a claim of discrimination or participate in the investigation of such a claim is prohibited by this policy and will not be tolerated.

D. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is prohibited and will not be tolerated. This policy applies to sexual harassment by members of the same gender as well as opposite genders. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when:

- submission to the conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment;
- submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as a factor in employment decisions affecting an individual; or
- the conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's employment or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive employment environment.

Some examples of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment, depending on the circumstances, include but are not limited to, the following.

- repeated and unwelcome suggestions regarding, or invitations to, social engagements or social events; or
- any indication, expressed or implied, that any aspect of employment conditions depends or may depend on the granting of sexual favors or on a willingness to accept or tolerate conduct or communication of a sexual nature; or
- unwelcome or coerced physical proximity or physical contact that is of a sexual nature or sexually motivated; or
- the deliberate use of offensive or demeaning terms that have a sexual connotation; or
- inappropriate remarks of a sexual nature.

Any employee/volunteer who believes he or she has been sexually harassed by another employee/volunteer, a supervisor, or any other person encountered in the course of their work should report that conduct immediately to his or her supervisor or the District Executive. If the report or complaint involves the District Executive, or if the District Executive is unavailable, the individual receiving the report or complaint should immediately report it to the President of the District.

Every complaint or report of sexual harassment will be promptly investigated. Although investigations will be conducted with sensitivity to confidentiality issues, investigative information will be communicated as appropriate to those with a need to know. If the investigation indicates that a violation of this policy may have occurred, timely and appropriate action will be taken. Retaliation or reprisal against employees/volunteers who report sexual harassment claims is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Any violation of this policy will be treated as a serious matter and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

E. HARASSMENT

The District prohibits conduct that shows hostility or an aversion toward an individual because of his or her race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation or any other classification protected by law, and that:

- has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment; or
- has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or
- otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

Some examples of conduct that may constitute harassment, depending on the circumstances, include but are not limited to, the following:

- epithets or slurs; or
- threatening or intimidating acts; or
- written or graphic material; or
- written, verbal or physical acts that purport to be jokes or pranks.

Any employee/volunteer who believes he or she has been harassed by another employee/volunteer, a supervisor, an agent of the District, or any other person who the employee/volunteer encounters in the course of employment should report that conduct immediately to his or her supervisor or the District Executive. If the report or complaint involves the District Executive, or if the District Executive is unavailable, the individual receiving the report or complaint should immediately report it to President of the District.

Every complaint or report of harassment will be promptly investigated. If the investigation indicates that an act of harassment has occurred, timely and appropriate action will be taken. Retaliation or reprisal against employees/volunteers who report harassment claims is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Any violation of this policy will be treated as a serious matter and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

F. RESOLUTION OF COMPLAINTS

Effective communication is essential for productive working relationships. To that end, employees/volunteers are encouraged to discuss any concerns about work or suggestions for improving operations in the following manner.

The employee/volunteer should present any complaint or grievance to his/her supervisor and together discuss the problem, applicable rules or policies, and possible resolution.

If discussion with the supervisor does not resolve the matter to the employee/volunteer's satisfaction, the employee/volunteer should submit the complaint or grievance in writing to the District Executive who shall gather the evidence necessary to complete an investigation. The District Executive may interview the employee/volunteer, involve the appropriate committee, or appoint an ad hoc committee to advise him/her. The District Executive shall then recommend a resolution of the problem to the supervisor and employee/volunteer.

If the District Executive's recommendation does not resolve the matter to the employee/volunteer's satisfaction, or if the immediate supervisor is the District Executive, the employee/volunteer may then seek a review by the governing board. The resolution recommended by the board will be binding upon the District and employee/volunteer.

G. INTERNET POLICY

The District provides computer equipment to and reimburses for internet access (including email) for its full-time staff members to assist and facilitate business communications and work-related research. These services are for legitimate business use only in the course of assigned duties. All materials, information, and software created, transmitted, downloaded or stored on the District's computer system are the property of the District and may be accessed only by authorized personnel.

Inappropriate Internet use includes, but is not limited to:

- transmitting obscene, harassing, offensive, or unprofessional messages; or
- accessing, displaying, downloading, or distributing any offensive or inappropriate messages including those containing racial slurs, sexual connotations, or offensive comments about race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability gender orientation, sexual identity, or any other classification protected by law; or
- transmitting any of the District's confidential or proprietary information, including member/friend data or other materials covered by the District's confidentiality policy.

The District reserves the right to monitor employee/volunteer use of the email system or the Internet at any time. Employees/volunteers should not consider their Internet usage or email communications to be private. Personal passwords are not an assurance of confidentiality, and the Internet itself is not secure.

Any software or other material downloaded into the District's computers may be used only in ways consistent with the licenses and copyrights of the vendors, authors, or owners of the material. Prior authorization from the District Executive is required before introducing any software into a District's computer.

Only authorized staff members or volunteers may communicate on the Internet on behalf of the District. Employees/volunteers may not express opinions or personal views that could be misconstrued as being those of the District. Any violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

H. MEDIA INQUIRIES

All requests for information about the District from newspapers, television, and radio media should be directed to the District Executive. An appropriate response to a media inquiry would be, "I'm not the best person to answer that question. May I contact the appropriate person and have that individual get back to you?"

I. CONFIDENTIALITY

Employees/volunteers may have access to confidential information about the District, including but not limited to information about members, friends, or other staff members. Such information must remain confidential and may not be released to non-authorized persons or entities, copied, transmitted, or in any other way used for any purpose by employees/volunteers outside the scope of their District work. All requests for information concerning past or present employees/volunteers received from organizations or individuals should be directed to the District Executive.

J. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Employees/volunteers are expected to avoid conflicts of interest, defined as any situation where an employee/volunteer may attain personal gain or that may serve as a detriment to the District, either monetarily or to its public image, because of the use of information or personal contact that is not generally available except through working with the District.

Employees/volunteers shall not engage in any business or transaction, and shall not have a financial or other personal interest any business or transaction, that is incompatible with their employment duties or that would impair their judgment or actions in the performance of their duties for the District.

Employees/volunteers who have questions about whether an activity violates this policy should discuss the matter with the District Executive.

K. JOB DESCRIPTIONS

To assist in orienting employees/volunteers to their job and to aid in clear understanding regarding job expectations, the District prepares a job description that contains the major duties and responsibilities for each position. Please keep in mind that supervisors have the authority to assign related duties, responsibilities, or functions, even though the duties have not been included in the past or are not specifically mentioned in the job description. Job descriptions should be reviewed before the annual goal setting and updated as necessary to ensure accuracy. When a job has undergone significant change, employees/volunteers may request of their supervisor or the District Executive that their job description be revised.

L. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Employees are requested to identify goals and objectives in advance so that their work may be evaluated on the basis of clear criteria they have helped to develop. Written job descriptions shall serve to inform this process.

In general, employees will receive a written performance evaluation periodically that will be maintained in the employee permanent personnel file. Factors considered in assessing performance include but are not

limited to quality and quantity of work, dependability, attendance and punctuality, effective interpersonal relationships with the District, and personal conduct.

M. VEHICLE USAGE AND REIMBURSEMENT

Employees/volunteers using their own cars for District-related business may be paid mileage at the current rate per mile as established by Internal Revenue Service. Rates differ for employees and volunteers. Mileage will be reimbursed monthly upon request by the employee/volunteer and approval by the District Executive. Trips must be authorized by the employee/volunteer's supervisor. Employees/volunteers must have a current and valid driver's license and proof of insurance. Employees/volunteers may not take unauthorized passengers on such trips.

All tickets for improper parking and traffic violations are the responsibility of the employee/volunteer. The employee/volunteer must pay all fines promptly and will not be reimbursed by the District. In the case where a parking time limit is unavoidably exceeded because of the employee/volunteer's continued presence at a work-related event, the District will consider reimbursing the cost of the parking ticket.

N. SAFETY AND ACCIDENTS

The safety of employees/volunteers, as well as congregational members and workshop attendees, is of paramount concern. All employees/volunteers are expected to abide by accepted safety standards at all times. They should know the whereabouts of fire extinguishers and the first aid kit, particularly when hosting District events in rented or borrowed facilities.

Any unsafe condition, equipment, or practice observed by an employee/volunteer should be reported immediately to the supervisor or District Executive. All on-the-job accidents or injuries to employees/volunteers, no matter how minor, should be reported immediately to the District Executive. In the event of a fire or other emergency, the fire department and/or police should be called immediately, and all staff and members of the District should leave the premises.

O. PERSONAL PROPERTY

The District cannot be responsible for damage to or loss of personal property, including loss or damage to vehicles or other property unless used in the conduct of business and covered under its insurance policy. Employees/volunteers should report any lost items to the District Executive so that the item can be returned if it is found. If an employee/volunteer finds a valuable item, it should immediately be reported to the District Executive.

P. PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

Employees/volunteers should maintain a professional attitude and appearance that is appropriate to their position and responsibilities. Name badges should be worn when employees/volunteers are representing the District. Personal mail, email and non-essential telephone calls during working hours are discouraged.

Q. BACKGROUND CHECKS

The District is dedicated to providing the safest possible environment for its staff and volunteers, especially children and vulnerable adults. One aspect of this mission is the gathering of information about current and potential employees, a practice that the UUA has recommended to its congregations and districts. To this end, the District reserves the right to conduct background investigations on all current and future employees/volunteers as a condition of employment/volunteer service, particularly those that work with children and/or vulnerable adults.

The District also acknowledges that, while the background investigations may reduce the liability of our congregations and the District, the children, youth, and vulnerable adults in our congregations and District employees are not necessarily safer because of the background investigations. Technology and state-to-state tracking of convictions are not totally reliable.

R. COMMUNICATION POLICIES

We are here to serve congregations and congregational leadership. Our work is relational and is most efficient when we are responsive to those who contact us. When possible, all phone and email messages

shall be returned within two business days. If a full response is not possible, a reply that indicates when the full information will be available is preferred to no response.

Each employee is expected to have a clear voicemail message that:

- identifies him or her by name and title
- says when the caller can expect to have the call returned (especially if the employee is "away.")
- when appropriate, provides options to the caller ("if this matter is urgent, you may reach _____ at _____" or "you may also call me on my cell phone at _____.")

S. RESOLUTION OF GRIEVANCES FROM CONGREGATIONAL LEADERS

As is delineated in the Executive Limitations Policies:

With respect to interactions with District ministers or congregational leaders (those persons who have been identified as leaders by their congregation in the yearly update to the District), the District Executive will not cause or allow conditions, procedures, or decisions that are unsafe, discriminatory, undignified, or unnecessarily intrusive.

Further, without limiting the scope of the foregoing by this enumeration, the Executive will not:

1. Fail to use methods of collecting, reviewing, communicating, or storing information that protect against improper access.
2. Fail to establish a clear understanding of what may and what may not be expected from any service offered.
3. Fail to provide a way to be heard for persons who believe they have not been accorded a reasonable interpretation of their protections under this policy.

Effective communication is essential for productive working relationships between staff and congregational leaders. To that end, congregational leaders are encouraged to discuss any concerns about the work of staff or suggestions for improving operations in the following manner.

The congregational leader should present any concern or grievance to the staff member or adjunct staff volunteer working with their congregation and together discuss the problem, applicable rules, or policies, and possible resolution.

If discussion with the staff member does not resolve the matter to the congregational leader's satisfaction, the congregational leader should submit the complaint or grievance in writing to the Executive who shall gather the evidence necessary to complete an investigation. The Executive may interview the congregational leader and staff involved, involve an appropriate committee, or appoint an ad hoc committee to advise him/her. The Executive shall then recommend a resolution of the problem to the congregational leader and staff member or adjunct staff volunteer.

If the Executive's recommendation does not resolve the matter to the congregational leader's satisfaction, or if the staff member working with the congregational leader is the Executive, the congregational leader may then seek a review by the President of the governing board of the District. The resolution recommended by the board will be binding upon the staff member or volunteer.

In addition to the yearly reminder of these procedures, the Executive and volunteers working with congregational leaders should apprise some of these procedures if a conflicted situation develops.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

I, _____, hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Personnel Policy Manual for Volunteers of the Unitarian Universalist District of Metropolitan New York. I understand that it is my responsibility to read the Manual and to comply with the policies, practices and rules of the District.

I understand that this Manual supersedes all previous policies, written or oral, express or implied. I also understand that this Manual is neither a contract of employment nor a legal document, and that the District reserves discretion to add, change or rescind any policy, practice or rule at any time with or without notice.

I understand that my signature below indicates that I have read and understood the above statements and have received a copy of the Personnel Policy Manual for Volunteers on this date:

Date

Name (print)

Signature