

Cullman County Employee Handbook, Approved February 23, 2016

Changes Effective February 1, 2020:

- Change section **I-C. Equal Employment Opportunity / Employment Grievance Procedures**. Replace the third sentence in paragraph 6 with the following; “In the event the complaint is against the County Administrator or if the County Administrator recuses himself/herself due to personal reasons, the HR Specialist will submit his or her recommendation to a Department Head not associated with the complaint, who will decide whether to approve the HR Specialist’s recommendations, dismiss the complaint or order further investigation.”
- Change section **I-F. Workplace Rules of Conduct**. Under paragraph 2, remove Item 1; “Insubordination or lack of cooperation.”
- Change section **I-Y. Rehire**. Remove the following sentences from paragraph 1; “Employees who leave employment with Cullman County and later wish to return are eligible for consideration for rehire after six (6) months provided an appropriate position is available. This restriction does not apply to employees who leave County employment and are rehired in a part-time or temporary/seasonal position.”

Add the following sentence to paragraph 1; “Employees who leave employment with Cullman County and later wish to return are eligible for consideration for rehire provided they left employment in good standing, and are otherwise qualified for re-employment, provided an appropriate position is available.”

- Change section **II-I. Wage and Salary Administration**. Add the following sentence to paragraph 2; “Effective March 16, 2019 Cullman County has established \$10.25/hour as the minimum starting pay for all full-time/permanent employees.”
- Add section **II-W. Incentive Pay**.
“Cullman County recognizes the value in recruiting and retaining knowledgeable employees qualified and committed to public service. To that end the county has established an incentive program to reward those individuals who have served in the military and/or received a college degree. Ala. Const. Amend. 909(c) states that “nothing in this amendment shall authorize the county commission to limit, alter, or otherwise impact the constitutional, statutory, or administrative duties, powers, or responsibilities of any other elected officials or to establish, increase, or decrease any compensation, term of office, or expense allowance for any elected officials of the county.” Accordingly, this incentive program specifically excludes elected officials from participation herein.

Military Service – Any employee who is currently serving or who has served in any branch of the US military and has received an honorable discharge shall be entitled to a 2.5% pay incentive. To be eligible for this military incentive the employee must present a copy of their military service documents (DD Form 214, 215, 256, NGB Form 22, Military ID Card, etc.) which document dates of service and/or discharge status.

Associate Degree – Any employee who has received an Associate Degree from an accredited college or university shall be entitled to a 2.5% pay incentive.

Bachelor’s Degree (or higher) – Any employee who has received a Bachelor’s Degree (or higher) from an accredited college or university shall be entitled to a 5% pay incentive.

To be eligible for the education incentive the employee must present an official transcript received directly from the issuing institution documenting the degree obtained or a copy of the original degree from the college or university. Professional, technical, administrative, etc. certifications do not qualify for the education incentive. Incentives will become effective at the beginning of the first pay period following verification of documents presented.

Employees will be entitled to only one incentive pay amount. For example, if an employee has served in the military and also received an Associate Degree or a Bachelor's Degree, only the highest incentive will be recognized for incentive pay. This also applies to an employee who has received multiple degrees.

Employees who serve in a professional position with the county are not eligible for education incentive pay if their degree is a requirement of the position held by the employee. Presently, those positions include the County Administrator, County Attorney, County Engineer and Assistant County Engineer. Employees who are disqualified from the education incentive may be eligible for the military incentive if they meet the military service qualifications (listed above).

Incentive Pay will not add to an employee's base pay. It will be calculated as a percentage of the employee's total pay and will be reflected separately on the employee's pay notice. Incentive pay will not be added to any Vacation and/or Sick Payout that is paid at the end of employment.

Part-Time and Temporary/Seasonal Employees are not eligible to receive incentive pay.

All funding for incentive pay must be approved in the fiscal year budget by the Cullman County Commission, in its discretion, and may be suspended and/or frozen at any time and for any reason deemed appropriate by the Cullman County Commission."

- **Change Section III-E. Terminations.** Replace item 1.a with the following; "Insubordination or lack of cooperation."
- **Change section IV-C. Sick Leave.** Replace the second sentence in paragraph 6 with the following; "Employees may donate sick leave to an employee who has exhausted all of their sick leave and annual leave and their absence does not qualify for short-term disability or long-term disability."
- **Change section IV-K. Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).** Add the following to section 7; "Employees receiving compensation from short-term or long-term disability will be required to take a minimum of sick and annual leave that when combined with their short-term or long-term disability would replace 100% of their wages. (i.e. Employee is receiving 60% of their base pay from short-term disability. They would be required to take a minimum of 40% of their base pay in sick or annual leave). Employees may take up to 100% of their base pay in sick or annual leave and still receive their short-term or long-term disability, however 40% is the minimum they must take while on FMLA leave."
- **Change section IV-P. Political Leave Without Pay.** Add the following sentence to paragraph 4; "For employees intending to engage in political activities, this provision should be read in conjunction with Section VI-C. Political Activity."
- **Change section V-A. Benefits Eligibility.** Add the following to paragraph 1; "Cullman County reserves the right to amend or terminate any of its benefit programs or to require or increase employee premium contributions toward any benefits with or without advance notice at its discretion. Whenever an amendment is made to any of Cullman County's benefit programs, the respective plan administrator will draft and submit the amendment for review and approval. The respective plan administrator will notify plan participants of all approved amendments or plan terminations, in accordance with the requirements of applicable federal law."
- **Change section V-B. Benefits Effective and Termination Dates.** Add the following to paragraph 3; "Employees who are not actively working due to short-term disability, long-term disability, or a leave of absence approved by the Cullman County Commission may continue health insurance coverage provided all employee contributions for such coverage are paid in a timely manner. At the end of this period of extended coverage employees will be offered COBRA continuation of health coverage in accordance with applicable law."

- Change section **V-J. Life Insurance.** Replace the first sentence in paragraph 1 with the following; “Cullman County provides Life Insurance in the amount of \$25,000 coverage plus \$25,000 accidental death & dismemberment (AD&D) coverage for all full-time employees effective the first of the month following ninety (90) days of continuous employment. This life/AD&D insurance is provided at no cost to the employee.”
- Add section **V-Q. Short-Term Disability Insurance.**
Cullman County provides short-term disability (STD) insurance that replaces 60% of pre-disability income (up to \$1200/week maximum) for all full-time employees effective the first of the month following ninety (90) days of continuous employment. There is a 14 day elimination period, with an 11 week benefit period. This STD coverage is provided at no cost to the employee.

Employees may purchase an additional 20% of pre-disability income coverage on a voluntary basis. Cost varies based on income. Employee pays 100% of this additional cost.

- Add section **V-R. Long-Term Disability Insurance.**
Cullman County provides long-term disability (LTD) insurance that replaces 60% of pre-disability income (up to \$5000/month maximum) for all full-time employees effective the first of the month following ninety (90) days of continuous employment. There is a 90 day elimination period, with benefit period that continues until Social Security Normal Retirement Age (SSNRA). This LTD coverage is provided at no cost to the employee.

Employees may purchase an additional 6.67% of pre-disability income coverage (up to \$7500/month maximum) on a voluntary basis. Cost varies based on income. Employee pays 100% of this additional cost.

- Add section **V-S. Critical Illness Insurance.**
Cullman County provides critical illness (CI) insurance for all full-time employees effective the first of the month following ninety (90) days of continuous employment. The critical illness benefit amount is a flat \$5000 for employees. Dependent child coverage is a flat \$2000 and is automatically included at no cost for eligible children up to age 26. Covered conditions are listed in the Benefit Guide distributed to employees at time of eligibility. This CI coverage is provided at no cost to the employee.

Employees may elect critical illness coverage for their spouse as well (flat \$5000 benefit). Employee pays 100% of this additional cost.

- Change section **VI-C. Political Activity.** Remove the following sentences from paragraph 1; “However, an employee shall not make, solicit, or receive any assessment, donation, subscription, or contribution for political purpose, or engage in political activities during his or her work time. Without limitation, Cullman County expressly prohibits employees from soliciting political financial contributions, distributing political literature, wearing political buttons or similar insignia during their work time. Employees who are issued uniforms by Cullman County are prohibited from wearing their uniforms while engaging in political activities.”

Add the following sentence to paragraph 1; “In an effort to harmonize the County’s policy on Political Activity of County employees with State law, the Commission adopts Ala. Code § 45-22-120.13 (1975) *verbatim*.”

Add the following sections to paragraph 1;

“(a) In county elections, no employee shall make, solicit, or receive any assessment, donation, subscription, or contribution for any political purpose whatsoever except to exercise his or her right as a citizen to express his or her opinion and cast his or her vote; no employee shall assist any candidate for nomination or election to county office or make any public statement in support of or against any such candidate, or participate in any manner whatever in the campaign of any candidate in any county election; and no employee shall receive any appointment or

advancement as a reward for his or her support of a candidate for office or a political party; nor shall he or her be dismissed, suspended, or reduced in rank or pay as punishment for failure to support any candidate for political office. Any employee who shall desire to become a candidate for county office shall, upon qualifying for such office, take leave of absence without pay to campaign for such office. Upon winning any such election, the employee shall resign from his or her position of employment with the county.

(b) The provisions of this section notwithstanding, nothing herein contained shall be construed as limiting the activities of county employees in city, state, or national elections, nor as prohibiting an employee from being a member, officer, or beat committeeman or committeewoman of a political party; neither shall this article interfere with any duty such employee might have as such member, officer, or beat committeeman or committeewoman.”

In paragraph 4; Replace “HR Specialist” with “County Attorney.”

- Change section **VII-E. Workers Compensation Payments.** Replace the last sentence in paragraph 2 with the following; “The current limits (effective 7/1/2019) are a minimum of \$245/week and a maximum of \$892/week.”
- **Global Change.** Replace all references to HR Specialist with HR Manager.