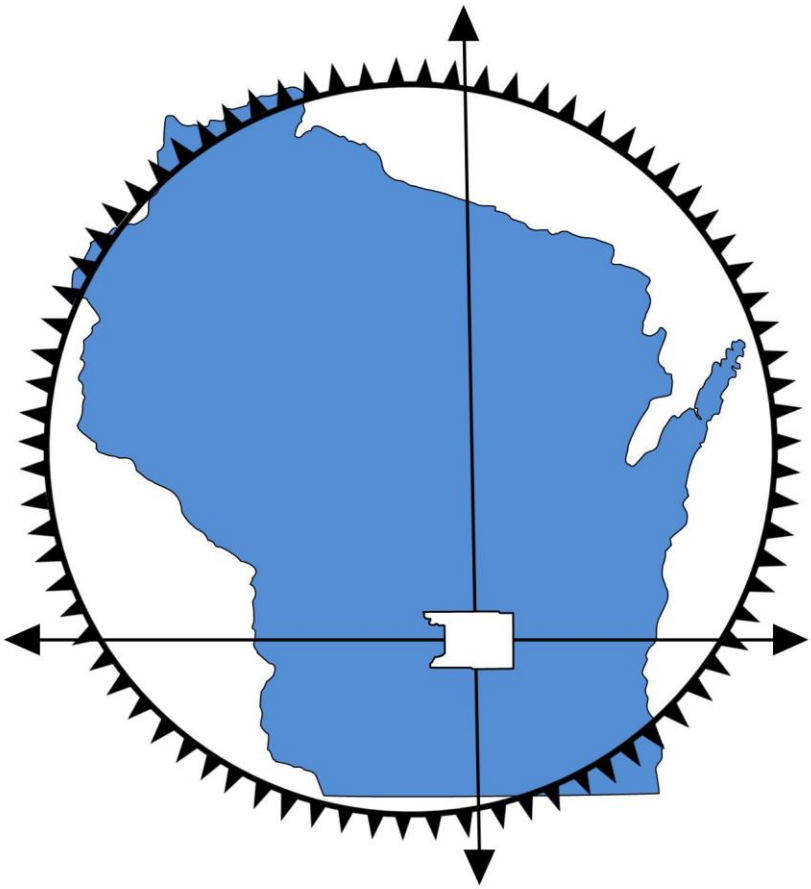
Personnel Manual for Management
Columbia County, Wisconsin



The employees of Columbia County, the Columbia County Board of Supervisors and the committees appointed by the Board, are responsible for delivering services to the citizens of the County in a cost effective and efficient manner.

Approved by the Columbia County Board of Supervisors on March 17, 2021 – Updated July 12, 2024

Table of Contents

I. Introduction

This Personnel Manual for Management has been developed to augment the Employee Handbook. It is designed to help department heads and others of those in management and/or supervisory positions to effectively implement the ways that the County to manage its business.

No manual of this type can anticipate every circumstance or question about policy. As Columbia County continues to grow and as applicable laws change, the County Board of Supervisors reserves the right to revise, supplement or rescind any policies or portions thereof as it deems appropriate in its sole discretion.

In addition to this manual and the Employee Handbook, some departments may have their own department-specific manuals and/or Standard Operating Procedures. Department heads are responsible for maintaining and updating those materials as needed. Employees will be informed of, and provided access to, the location of these manuals.

Throughout this Personnel Manual, the term "County" shall designate Columbia County, Wisconsin. The term "management" refers to department heads and supervisory personnel.

II. County Department Leadership

In order to ensure there is a clear managerial structure in every department, each department head is required to designate a second and third. The second designee will ensure County operations will remain effective whenever the actual department head is unavailable and unreachable due to trainings, vacation, personal days, sick leave, and/or any other legitimate reason. Each department head is responsible for determining the amount of authority that their designee is given to ensure County operations remain effective. The third designee will serve the same function when both the department head and their second are unavailable.

Department heads are required to notify the County Board Chair when they will be out of the office for three (3) days or more.

In the event that a department head position is vacant, or a suspension of the department head has occurred, the County Board Chair, in consultation with Corporation Counsel and the Human Resources Director, will appoint an Interim Department Head. The person appointed may or may not be the department head's designated second or third. This process applies to all department head positions that become vacant for any reason, unless superseded by a different ordinance, statute, or hiring procedure adopted by the County.

III. The Hiring Process

A. Authorization to Fill New or Vacant Positions

All new or vacant positions will be subject to the following requirements, except for vacancies at the Columbia Health Care Center, which are filled based on resident population.

1. **New Positions.** Requests for new positions will be made by July 1, prior to the fiscal year in which such position is to be filled. If the request is approved, that position will be filled after January 1 of the following year. The following provisions shall apply:

a. A Position Request Form will be submitted to the Human Resources Director by the department head after approval by the governing committee.

b. The department head and/or the Chair of the governing committee will present the request to the Executive Committee and Human Resources Committee, which shall include the position request, fiscal estimate, and job description. The Executive Committee and Human Resources Committee will review new position requests to create a priority list of new hires.

c. The funding for the new position may be approved by the Finance Committee as part of the budget preparation.

d. Departmental Annual Reports will include information as to new positions and the funding sources for those positions.

e. New positions which are one hundred (100%) percent funded through non-County sources can be requested at any time during the year by a department head but must receive governing committee, Human Resources Committee, Finance Committee, and Executive Committee approval. The governing committee must approve the request before it moves onto any of the other committees for approval.

2. **Vacant Positions.**

a. When a department head becomes aware that a position will open due to staff leaving Columbia County employment, a Position Request Form will, if the position is to be refilled, be submitted to the Human Resources Director by the department head.

b. At the time a request is received for replacement hiring, the Human Resources Committee may: (1) conduct a hiring analysis; (2) approve the job description, in conjunction with the department head and governing committee; and (3) determine whether it is imperative that the position be filled.

c. Once approval to refill the vacant position has been received from the governing committee, Human Resources Committee and Finance Committee (required only if there is a fiscal impact) recruitment will be instituted to fill the position. Executive Committee reserves the right to review and act on all vacant position requests.

d. If/when Committees are not available to timely meet and review/approve replacement requests, then the County Board Chair can authorize immediate hiring with Committee review to follow.

e. Recruitment will include both internal and external sources. Any current County employee is eligible to apply for any vacant position, but will be subjected to the same employment process as external candidates. This will include the submission of an application or resume, applicable skill testing, drug screening for some positions, interviews and background/employment history checks.

f. The candidate whose knowledge, skills, abilities, education and experience best match the need of the hiring department will be selected to fill the vacancy.

g. The successful applicant will be given a letter of employment, furnished by the Human Resources Department. It will include the individual's job title, rate of pay, employment date and the length of the probationary/trial period for the position he/she is filling.

h. During the recruitment process to refill a vacant position, Departments are authorized to hire a qualified Limited Term Employee to temporarily refill the position, if necessary, upon request of the department head to the Human Resources Director provided there is sufficient funding in the department budget to pay the costs of the Limited Term Employee and the approvals of the governing committee, Human Resources Committee, Executive Committee and Finance Committee have been obtained.

i. If an employee does not complete the introductory period, the department head may utilize the eligibility list created by the original vacancy to refill the position without following the approval process set forth in steps (a) through (f) above up to a year.

IV. Uniform Selection and Replacement Process of Department Head Positions

The County has established a uniform procedure for selection and placement of individuals to fill vacant department head positions. This process applies to all department head positions that become vacant for any reason, unless superseded by a different ordinance, statute, or hiring procedure adopted by the County.

It is the policy of the County to fill all vacant positions consistent with all fair employment laws and practices. The employment process will be consistent with all laws prohibiting the discrimination of any individual for a position with the County.

When a department head position becomes vacant, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The Human Resources Director will seek approval to fill the position from the governing Committee and the Executive Committee to include the review of the position description and salary range.

2. After approval to fill the position is granted by the governing committee and the Executive Committee, the Human Resources Department will conduct a recruitment to fill the position. Both internal and external sources will be utilized to identify qualified candidates.

3. Everyone who applies for a department head position must provide a completed County employment application, current resume, and the names and contact information for at least three (3) professional references. The failure of any candidate to provide a completed County employment application, current resume, and three (3) professional references will automatically disqualify him/her from consideration for the position. The County is under no obligation to request that the required material be submitted after the County receives the initial application.

4. After all applications for the position have been received, or the time period established for the submission of applications has expired, the Human Resources Director will review all applications and identify those

applicants who do not meet the established minimum qualifications for the position. Thereafter, the Human Resources Director will meet with the Interview Committee to review all submitted applications and select a list of candidates to interview.

5. When a department head position becomes vacant and it has been approved to be filled, an Interview Committee will be created. The Interview Committee will consist of the following individuals:

   a. The County Board Chair;
   b. The Chair of the Human Resources Committee;
   c. The Chair of the Finance Committee;
   d. The Chair of the governing committee;
   e. The Vice Chair of the governing committee; and
   f. The Human Resources Director, who will serve as a non-voting staff member.

   The representatives from the governing committee must be County Board Supervisors and no County Board Supervisor may represent more than one (1) committee on the Interview Committee.

   If any of the above individuals are unable to participate in the selection process due to a conflict of interest, or for any other reason, then the County Board Chair will designate a replacement participant from the applicable committee. If the County Board Chair is unable to participate in the selection process, then the County Board First Vice Chair will act as Chair of the Interview Committee.

   Members appointed to the Interview Committee are responsible for interviewing the applicants for vacant department head positions as scheduled by the Human Resources Director.

   No individual will be appointed to fill a department head position until the complete hiring process as described has been completed.

6. The Human Resources Director or his/her designee shall make the necessary arrangements for the County Interviewing Committee to interview the selected candidates. At the interviews, the Human Resources Department will provide each member of the Interview Committee with the application, resume, qualifications, and any other information deemed relevant about each of the selected candidates. The Interview Committee will interview the selected candidates, and upon the conclusion of each interview, each voting member of the Committee will prepare an independent evaluation of each individual.

7. At the conclusion of all of the scheduled interviews, the Interview Committee will either:

   a. Choose the candidate deemed to be most qualified by at least 80% of the committee; or

   b. If, following the interview process, the majority of the Interview Committee agrees to not recommend any candidate from the panel of those interviewed to fill the vacant position, they may direct the Human Resources Director to recommence the recruiting process consistent with the procedures established in this section.

8. The Interview Committee reserves the right to schedule more than one (1) interview with each selected candidate, to deliberate the selection of a candidate during multiple Committee meetings, and to hold

multiple votes prior to reaching a decision on either choosing the most qualified candidate or directing the Human Resources Director to recommence the recruiting process.

9. The Human Resources Director will negotiate the terms and conditions of employment with the selected candidate. The County Board Chair or his/her designee, on recommendation from the Human Resources Director, may approve a starting payroll step above Step 6 for an exceptionally qualified candidate.

10. Upon final selection of the department head, the Human Resources Director will advise all candidates not selected for the position.

11. No offer of employment will be made until all background checks have been completed, including contacts with professional references. The background and reference checks will be conducted by the Human Resources Department.

12. A letter that specifies all the terms and conditions of employment with the County will be prepared by the Human Resources Director for the signature of the Chair of the County Board of Supervisors and sent to the candidate who has been selected to fill the department head position. This written employment offer will include the following:

    a. Position title;
    b. Reporting relationship;
    c. Salary;
    d. Fringe benefit information; and
    e. The County's termination procedure.

    Copies of this employment offer are to be sent to the Chair of the governing committee and the Chair of the Human Resources Committee, with a copy retained in the department head's personnel file.

13. The candidate who is selected to fill the department head position will attend the first County Board of Supervisors meeting following his/her appointment and will be introduced to the Board by the Chair of the department's governing committee.

14. Since Wisconsin is an at-will employment state, individuals hired under the provisions of this policy shall serve at the pleasure of the County, except as otherwise provided by law. Individuals will serve an eighteen (18) month introductory period, during which the governing committee may terminate him/her at any time after consultation with the Executive Committee. Any time after the introductory period, the Executive Committee, upon the recommendation of the governing committee and/or the Human Resources Committee, may terminate a department head effective immediately upon delivery of the termination letter. This termination procedure is to be communicated to the individual selected at the time the offer of employment is extended by the County. A department head who voluntarily resigns his/her position with the County must provide the County Board Chair, his/her Governing Committee(s) Chair, and the Human Resources Committee Chair with at least thirty (30) days written notice. If the Department Head wishes to utilize benefit time during the thirty (30) days' notice, they must receive approval from their Governing Committee Chair or the County Board Chair.

15. No individual will be appointed to fill a department head position until the hiring process as described

above has been completed. It is the responsibility of all County executives and officials involved in hiring department heads to follow the provisions and procedures contained herein. In the event the Human Resources Director is unavailable to perform the duties as set forth in this section, the County Board Chair will designate the individual responsible for carrying out those duties in place of the Human Resources Director.

V. Senior Department Leadership Position Replacement Process

The process described in Section III may be utilized for senior department leadership positions, at the discretion of the governing committee, Human Resources Committee, and/or Executive Committee. The Human Resources Committee shall be included in the replacement request process for senior department leadership positions.

VI. Pre-employment Physicals

After an employment offer has been made, an applicant who has been chosen to fill a position may be required to have a health screening. More extensive testing may be required for prospective employees for Solid Waste, Highway and Sheriff's Departments as well as the Columbia Health Care Center.

VII. Introductory Periods

For all other employees, the introductory period shall be eighteen (18) months.

VIII. Citizenship

United States citizenship is not a requisite for employment with the County, except for positions within the Sheriff's Office. However, aliens must be in full compliance with prescribed federal law, in particular the Immigration Act of 1986, and an alien in the employ of the County must move with the utmost dispatch to become naturalized citizens within the minimum time period prescribed by federal law. Proof of the employee's action in this regard may be required by the County. If at any time the employee is not in compliance with the federal law, he/she will be subject to dismissal by the County. Potential employees must provide proof of citizenship or legal alien status.

IX. New Employee Orientation

All new employees will, in their letter of employment, be told when and where to report for his/her first day of employment with the County. Before beginning work in his/her department, every employee will participate in an Orientation Program.

A. Human Resources Department Orientation

On the first day of employment, all new employees, except for CHCC and Highway and Transportation Department employees, will meet with the staff of the Human Resources Department to:

1. Sign necessary payroll forms.

2. Be advised of general conditions of employment, such as: county rules, fringe benefits, hours of work, pay, privileges, and responsibilities.

3. Receive a copy of his/her job description, the Columbia County Employee handbook that applies to his/her department, and other relevant literature.

4. Be provided with a receipt to sign acknowledging that he/she has read and fully understands the Columbia County Employee Handbook that pertains to his/her department. The signed acknowledgement of which is to be retained in the employee's personnel file.

5. Be provided with a copy of the Personal Computer Software Acquisitions and Usage, Internet Access, and E-Mail Policies, and sign a statement indicating that he/she has read and understands the policies.

6. Be provided with written safety policies as required by the County Board and sign acknowledgment of reading and understanding said policies.

7. Sign a statement indicating that his/her hiring by Columbia County does not represent a guarantee of employment or contract for employment.

B. Departmental Orientation Programs

After the Human Resources Orientation, the new employee will report to his/her work station and participate in a program designed to introduce him/her to the department in which he/she will be working and that will include information regarding the conditions related to his/her job and work site, introductions to fellow workers, the department's work standards, safety regulations, break periods, attendance standards, the length of the introductory period for that employee's position, the basis on which the employee's work will be evaluated during the probationary period, a short tour of the workplace, and a discussion about the department's policies and procedures.

If the department has developed its own Policies and Procedures manual, that information should also be discussed with the new employee and the employee shall be provided access to a paper-copy or directed to its location online. The employee's supervisor should also review the County's Policy and Procedures manual applicable to his/her department given to the employee during the Human Resources orientation program.

Topics that are relevant to the departmental orientation include the department's dress code, confidentiality, performance standards, attendance standards, department policies and procedures, the organizational structure of the department and the County in general, compensation, policies regarding the use of County property and resources, internet access and e-mail policies. All forms that are signed by the new employee are to be sent to the Human Resources Department for retention in the employee's personnel file.

It is wise to prepare a training plan for each new employee. This will ensure that the training covers all of the essential functions of the job and also serves as a tool to judge the speed at which a new employee is learning his/her new responsibilities.

X. Employee Classifications

Regular Full-Time. Those employees who work a minimum of one thousand nine hundred fifty (1,950) hours per calendar year and whose positions qualify them to participate in the Wisconsin Retirement Fund and all County benefits.

Regular Part Time. Employees who work less than one thousand nine hundred fifty (1,950) hours in a calendar year; they are eligible for pro-rated County benefits.

Student Interns. Those who perform work for the County on a part time or temporary basis with or without compensation in order to gain work experience. Paid Student Interns are eligible for Social Security benefits; unpaid interns receive no benefits.

Limited Term Employees (LTEs). Those hired on a temporary basis to work not more than twelve hundred (1200) hours in a twelve (12) month period. All LTEs receive the same hourly wage. They are hired to replace employees who are on a leave of absence or for peak seasonal work. They are eligible for Social Security benefits, but no other benefits. If an LTE is subsequently hired to fill a permanent position, his/her service date would be the date he/she began employment as a Limited Term Employee if there is no break in service between the LTE status and the conversion to permanent status.

Huber Employees. Incarcerated individuals who are employed by the County under the State's Huber Law work release program. They are paid an hourly wage but receive no benefits.

Casual Employees. People on-call or on stand-by to work at the Columbia Health Care Center when there is a significant staff shortage. Casual Employees are entitled to retirement benefits after working more than twelve hundred (1200) hours in a year.

Volunteers. Individuals who offer to perform specific services for the County without remuneration or benefits, but who may receive community credits of some sort.

Seasonal Employees. Most frequently hired by the Highway and Transportation Department to work less that twelve hundred (1200) hours in a year during peak work periods such as summer highway projects and winter snow plowing; the pay is a flat hourly rate. Seasonal Employees are eligible only for Social Security benefits.

XI. Departments May Share Employees

It may be fiscally advantageous for departments to share employees. Regular full time and regular part time employee may work in two separate departments with different job classifications and rates of pay. Benefits will be split between the departments.

Limited Term Employees (LTEs) can work in various departments because the rate of pay and the job classification remains the same across County lines. However, the departments in which the LTEs work must have budgeted funds available and the arrangement must be approved by the governing committees involved.

Part time employees may not also serve as an LTE in a different department.

Some Columbia Health Care Center employees are specifically hired to float between positions and/or departments. They, as well as Columbia Health Care Center employees who are working on an emergency basis, are permitted to work in different departments.

XII. Classification and Compensation Plans

The County will maintain a job classification plan to provide a system of standardized titles and job descriptions for effective planning and budgeting, standards of job performance, valid recruitment and selection programs and fair and equitable pay.

With the leadership of the Human Resources Director, the Human Resources Committee is responsible for the overall development and administration of the classification plan, in cooperation with the governing committees, department heads and key staff employees.

Department heads, working with his/her governing committee, are responsible for recommending to the Human Resources Committee the elimination of classifications that are no longer useful or appropriate for the department. The Human Resources Committee will then approve or deny the recommendation. This action should be initiated by the department head, in consultation with his/her governing committee. A written request that outlines the reasons for the elimination of any specific job title/classification should be sent to the Human Resources Director, asking that the Human Resources Director and the Human Resources Committee approve the elimination of the job title.

It is also the responsibility of the department head, in conjunction with the governing committee, to bring to the attention of the Human Resources Committee situations in which a position is improperly assigned to its given classification. This action may also be initiated, in writing, by an employee who has data/facts that substantiate his/her request that the employee's department's governing committee review the request and forward it to the Human Resources Committee for consideration. The Human Resources Director is responsible for auditing the duties and complexities of the job and providing a written analysis of his/her findings to the Human Resources Committee which will then decide on the proper classification of the job.

The County maintains a compensation plan for all employees that includes the schedule of pay ranges, consisting of the minimum and maximum rates of pay for all classes of positions within the County. The objective of the compensation plan is to provide an appropriate salary structure for the recruitment and retention of qualified, competent employees, and to provide appropriate pay incentives to encourage employee productivity and proficiency.

The Human Resources Director is responsible for the development and administration of the compensation plan through periodic reviews and comparative studies of pertinent factors affecting the levels of pay. When appropriate, the Human Resources Director will recommend necessary amendments to the compensation plan to the Human Resources Committee which shall become effective upon approval of the Committee and the County Board.

The Compensation Plan is directly linked to the classification plan and based on the principal of equal pay for equitable work. Pay ranges within the Compensation Plan shall be determined with regard to such factors as, but not limited to: (1) uniformity of pay for each class; (2) the knowledge, skills and abilities required to

competently perform the responsibilities of each position; (3) the difficulty and complexity of the work; (4) the availability of qualified applicants; (5) prevailing rates of pay for similar jobs in the public and private sectors; (6) changes in cost of living indices; and (7) the financial position of the County.

The entrance or starting pay rate will normally be the minimum rate of the pay range prescribed for each class. A department head may negotiate a particular appointment be made above the entrance pay rate, up to Step 6 of the Compensation Schedule. If a department head wishes to go above Step 6, the department head must get prior approval from the County Board Chair. In the alternative, a department head can negotiate an additional week of vacation and pay rate up to Step 3 of the Compensation Schedule. If a department head wishes to offer an additional week of vacation and compensation above Step 3, the department head must get prior approval from the County Board Chair. When recruiting for an exceptionally qualified and experienced candidate, a department head and the Human Resources Director may recommend a starting rate above Step 3 and up to three (3) weeks of vacation subject to approval by the County Board Chair. All such decisions shall be based on the education and experience of the candidate. If additional vacation or pay above step 6 is granted under this paragraph, the Human Resources Committee and the Executive Committee shall be informed.

In-range increments are based on satisfactory work performance and length of service in a class. Such increments shall not be granted automatically. The employee shall have a written overall performance evaluation of "good" or higher in order for an in-range increment to be granted. This shall be submitted to the Human Resources Department before the increment will be granted.

XIII. Compensatory Time

In some departments, employees who work more than forty (40) hours in a week may earn compensatory time off in lieu of overtime pay. Compensatory time may not be accrued by part time employees.[*] The accrual of compensatory time may not exceed forty (40) hours. Management has the discretion to direct employees to use the compensatory time he/she has earned. Management's scheduling of compensatory time must be done in such a way that the time off will not result in overtime for any other employee and will not have an impact on the efficient operation of the department. Ideally, this time off should be scheduled to coincide with days that are known to be less busy. (For example: days on which mail is not delivered, such as Federal Holidays which are not recognized by the County.)

Management is responsible for ensuring that compensatory time is controlled and that no employee exceeds the forty (40) hour limit. Each department head's control of compensatory time will be a major factor in his/her evaluation because of its impact on budgetary matters. While some elected officials have opted to not participate in the Management Performance Evaluation System (which is their right), all department heads, including elected officials, will be subject to a budgetary performance evaluation which will be done in conjunction with the annual Budget Review, conducted by each Governing Committee and reviewed by the Executive and Finance Committees.

XIV. Management Rights

[*] Part-time CHCC employees can accrue compensatory time, for holidays worked and/or if they work more than 40 hours in one week.

The County and its management have the right to determine the number of employees, the duties of each employee, the nature and place of the work, and all other matters pertaining to the management and operation of the County, including the hiring, promoting, transferring, demoting, suspending or discharging an employee. This also includes the right to assign and direct employees, to schedule work and to establish and enforce policies and procedures.

XV. Staff Reductions

Should the County find it necessary to implement cost saving staffing measures, both short-term furloughs or employee lay-offs will be considered. However, each employee's knowledge, skills, abilities and value to the department as a whole must be the determining factors in managements' decision on which employees will be impacted by the implementation of the cost-saving measures that have been decided upon. It is imperative that each employee's knowledge, skills and abilities be addressed in the annual evaluation that is given to each employee. This will ensure that the staffing decisions are based on consistent and objective factors that are defensible and justifiable.

XVI. Performance Evaluations

Management should complete performance evaluations every six months during an employee's introductory period. If appropriate, management may conduct evaluations more frequently.

After the introductory period, performance evaluations must be conducted on an annual basis; however, evaluations may be done at any time to ensure that each employee is aware of any situations that may be impacting the quality of his/her performance.

The Human Resources Department is responsible for notifying department management when Performance Evaluations are to be conducted, and the forms that are used are available on the County's intranet.

The purpose of the annual review is to help each individual maximize his/her performance by focusing on the employee's knowledge, skills, abilities, dependability, reliability, safety record, attendance, productivity, initiative and creativity (if applicable to the position), adherence to policies and the quality/quantity of work. The evaluation is designed to identify opportunities for enhanced effectiveness and to provide a forum for the employee and his/her supervisor to discuss career goals as well as additional training that would be beneficial.

Since staffing decisions will be increasingly based on the employees' knowledge, skills and abilities, these elements need to be defined and explained to each employee. Should reductions in force become necessary, the County must be in a position to justify its retention of its most valuable employees.

- **Knowledge:** The body of information an employee must have to competently perform the job's tasks; some knowledge is inherent in fields of study, such as accounting, social work, secretarial sciences, technology programs, etc., while other knowledge is gained through experience on prior jobs or learned as new policies and procedures are incorporated into one's responsibilities.

- **Skills:** Usually measurable: i.e.: typing 55 word per minute accurately; the number of program applications an employee is able use; dexterity, strength, etc.

- **Abilities:** Observable traits: ability to communicate effectively either orally (enunciation, tone of voice, proper grammar, selection of material to be communicated and or method of presentation) or in writing (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, clarity of material, etc.); ability to effectively listen to ascertain a client's needs or desires; ability to make others feel comfortable; ease in adapting to new situations.

XVII. Performance Improvement Programs

If an employee does not meet the requirements of his/her position at any point after they have completed their introductory period, Management has the option to institute a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). A PIP is designed to communicate and document the situation, and to help the employee meet the expected levels of achievement.

The situation might be the employee's inability to perform certain tasks, in which case additional training may be necessary. The employee may not be able to build effective working relationships or is not following County policies and procedures, or does not take initiative if a job must be done or a problem arises. In most cases, the resolution of the situation will depend on the cooperative effort of both the employee and his/her supervisor to ensure that the employee has had all of the training and counseling necessary in order for him/her to meet the expected performance levels and understands the consequences of not meeting the established performance standards.

In other cases, only the employee can ensure that he/she will meet the expected standard. For example, an employee who has established an unsatisfactory attendance record must assume responsibility for correcting the pattern. An individual who refuses to respect the established dress code or ignore County policies is responsible for his/her own actions, and Management is not responsible for correcting that individual's behavior, once the problem has been clearly communicated to the employee.

The length of a PIP and the frequency of the follow-up or status meetings depend on the situation. If, for example, an employee has become unreliable or undependable, the time frame for improvement must extend over a fairly lengthy period of time, because anyone can improve an attendance record for thirty or ninety days. Attendance standards should be a part of each employee's Departmental Orientation, and the individual should remain on the PIP until he/she has met the attendance standard. If the employee is not able to achieve that in an agreed-upon period of time, it should be understood that termination of employment will be the result.

On the other hand, if the employee is unable to meet the expected levels of performance when he/she has received remedial training, the follow-up check-points should be held as often as necessary to point out the performance problems that have arisen since the last meeting or the training was conducted. In the event of measurable performance problems, the length of the program should be predicated on the average length of time it has taken others to learn the tasks involved.

The Performance Improvement Plan is designed to formally communicate and document situations in which an employee's performance does not meet the expected standards. It is a written document that outlines the level of performance that must be achieved, the period of time by which the desired results must be achieved, the training that will be offered to him/her and the support management will provide. The Plan makes it clear that failure to achieve the desired level of performance will lead to further disciplinary action being taken, up to and including termination of employment. The key to a successful PIP is documentation: the problem, how it must be

solved, by when it must be resolved, the employee's responsibility for improvement, management's support, and the discussions at each follow-up check point meeting.

Status reports will be prepared regularly and discussed with the employee who is on a Performance Improvement Program Plan.

Before an employee is put on a Performance Improvement Plan, a Performance Evaluation that identifies the unsatisfactory performance must be given to the employee; that evaluation must stipulate the expected level of performance, and the time period by which that level must be reached. If the employee is unable or unwilling to meet that level, management or his/her designee should consult with the Human Resources Director before instituting a PIP.

XVIII. Management Responsibility for Creating and Maintaining a Safe and Comfortable Work Environment

An effective policy for creating and maintaining a comfortable and safe working environment requires the support and example of Columbia County personnel in positions of authority. Columbia County agents or employees who fail to cooperate with Columbia County-sponsored investigations of harassment or retaliation may be severely sanctioned by suspension or dismissal. By the same token, officials who refuse to implement remedial measures, obstruct the remedial efforts of other Columbia County employees, retaliate against sexual harassment complainants or witnesses, and/or violate the anti-fraternization policy may be immediately discharged.

A. Creating a Safe and Comfortable Workplace

Federal and State laws prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion or political beliefs, creed, sex, age, disability, national origin or sexual preference. Among these prohibitions is the harassment of fellow employees. The County is committed to maintaining a place of employment and a work environment that is free from discrimination and any form of harassment whatsoever.

Harassment is unlawful and is conduct that exposes both the County and individuals engaging in harassment to significant liability under the law. Employees at all times should treat other employees respectfully, with dignity and in a manner so as not to offend the sensibilities of a co-worker. Accordingly, Columbia County is committed to vigorously enforcing this Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation policy at all levels within the County.

No employee should be subjected to behavior that is personally offensive, which lowers morale or interferes with productivity in the workplace. Each employee has a duty to help maintain a workplace free from harassment. This duty involves refraining from any insulting, degrading, demeaning or exploitative behavior toward other employees, including sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical acts of a sexual nature where (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or a condition of an individual's employment; (2) An employment decision is based on an individual's acceptance or rejection of such conduct; or (3) such conduct interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

It is also unlawful to retaliate or take reprisal in any way against anyone who has articulated any concern about any form of harassment or discrimination against the individual raising the concern or against another individual.

Examples of conduct that would be considered harassment or regarded as retaliation are set forth in the Statement of Prohibited Conduct below. These examples are provided to illustrate the kind of conduct prohibited by this policy and the list is not exhaustive.

Columbia County has an affirmative duty to investigate and eradicate all forms of harassment, discrimination and complaints about conduct in violation of this policy. All employees should be advised that Columbia County will impose strict penalties for all confirmed violations of this policy.

B. Procedures for Making, Investigating, and Resolving Harassment and Discrimination Complaints

The Human Resources Director is responsible for the investigation of harassment and discrimination complaints.

The Human Resources Director may appoint "designees" to assist in handling harassment and discrimination complaints.

The identity of complainants will be revealed only to those persons who have an immediate need to know. It will be made clear to anyone contacted in the course of an investigation will be advised that the parties involved in a charge are entitled to confidentiality that any breach of confidentiality or other act of retaliation or reprisal against the complainant or other individuals involved with the complaint is a separate, actionable violation of this policy. Such violations will be dealt with in accordance with the schedule of penalties above and will be administered consistent with federal and state labor laws.

C. Schedule of Penalties for Misconduct

Harassment is unlawful and hurts other employees. Every incident of harassment creates a negative work environment in which all employees suffer the consequences. Harassment and sexually based conduct has no legitimate business purpose; accordingly, any employee who engages in such conduct will be made to bear the full responsibility for such unlawful conduct.

The following schedule of penalties applies to all violations of the County's Harassment Policy. Where progressive discipline is provided for, each instance of conduct violating the Policy moves the offending employee through the steps of disciplinary action. In other words, it is not necessary for an employee to repeat the same precise conduct in order for more severe discipline to be imposed.

A written record of each action taken pursuant to the Policy will be placed in the offending employee's personnel file. The record will reflect the conduct (or alleged conduct) and the discipline imposed.

- **Retaliation for Harassment Complaints:** In the form(s) of disciplining, changing the work assignments of, providing inaccurate work information to, or refusing to cooperate or discuss work related matters with any employee because that employee has complained about or resisted harassment

or discrimination; or intentionally pressuring, falsely denying, lying about or otherwise covering up or attempting to cover up conduct, such as that described in any item above.

- **Assault:** Any employee's first proven offense of assault or threat of assault, including assault of a sexual nature, will result in dismissal.

- **Other Acts of Harassment by Co-Workers:** Acts of harassment, other than assault, will result in non-disciplinary oral counseling for an alleged first offense. A written warning, suspension, or discharge will be imposed for the first proven offense, depending upon the nature or severity of the misconduct. Suspension or discharge will be imposed for the second proven offense, depending on the nature and severity of the misconduct.

- **Retaliation:** Alleged retaliation against a harassment complainant will result in non-disciplinary oral counseling. Any form of proven retaliation will result in suspension or discharge upon the first proven offense, depending upon the nature and severity of the retaliatory acts, and discharge upon the second proven offense.

- **Management Personnel/Supervisors:** Any member of management (including supervisors) who commits any act of harassment (other than assault) with respect to any other County employee will be subject to non-disciplinary oral counseling upon alleged first offense, suspension or dismissal for the first proven offense. The penalty will depend upon the nature and severity of the misconduct, and discharge for any subsequent offense must be assumed.

Other acts of harassment or retaliation or which create a hostile work environment will result in non-disciplinary oral counseling for an alleged first offense.

A written warning or suspension or discharge will be imposed on all employees for the first proven act of harassment or retaliation or creating a hostile work environment; the severity of the discipline will depend on the nature and severity of the misconduct. The second proven incident of any type of harassment will result in suspension or discharge, based on the nature and severity of the misconduct.

Each instance of prohibited conduct will be investigated and the resultant penalty will be dependent on the severity of the situation, its impact on other employees and/or the public, the cost to the County and its taxpayers, and the over-all work record of the employee who has engaged in prohibited conduct. Prior incidents will be a factor in the severity of the penalty.

An employee who brings alcohol. illegal drugs or weapons in to the workplace (except as required by the criminal justice system) will be suspended immediately without pay and an investigation into the circumstances will be conducted. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, the employee will be discharged for misconduct.

An employee who is in possession of, uses or is under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or any controlled substance other than his/her own prescription medication on county time or premises will face immediate dismissal.

Each instance of prohibited conduct will be investigated and the resultant penalty will be dependent on the severity of the situation, its impact on other employees and/or the public, the cost to the County and its

taxpayers, and the over-all work record of the employee who has engaged in prohibited conduct. Prior incidents will be a factor in the severity of the penalty.

D. Non-fraternization Policy

To avoid conflicts of interest, accusations of favoritism, abuse of authority, and sexual harassment, supervisors and managers are strictly prohibited from dating any employee who reports to them. For similar reasons, supervisors and managers are strictly prohibited from supervising their spouse or domestic partner, and cannot serve on any interview panel in which their spouse or domestic partner is an interviewee. Supervisors and managers found in violation of this section will be subject to the same Schedule of Penalties for Misconduct listed above.

XIX. Special Provisions for the Columbia Health Care Center

The Columbia Health Care Center has on staff a Personnel Analyst, whose duties shall be to assist with and coordinate the human resources function for the CHCC with the County's Human Resources Department.

All appointments to positions in the CHCC shall be made by the CHCC Human Resources Manager, upon the recommendation of the department managers or Administrator.

The Administrator of the CHCC has delegated department managers to be responsible for all aspects of employment within their jurisdiction. The Administrator shall hire, fire, and appoint all department managers within the CHCC. The Personnel Analyst develops and conducts active recruitment programs that are designed to meet current and projected CHCC manpower needs. Recruitment is tailored to the positions to be filled and shall be directed to sources likely to yield qualified candidates.

All applications for employment shall be made on forms prescribed and approved by the Administrator, the CHCC Personnel Analyst, and the County Human Resources Office. The Personnel Analyst will require proof of application statements, preferable prior to or just after the interview.

The department manager and Personnel Analyst will select the best qualified applicants (based on prior experience and education) for screening and final consideration.

The hiring pay rate shall normally be the minimum rate of the pay range prescribed for each class, except when an employee has been rehired, at which time the probationary rate may be waived. Licensed nurses have a pay scale that considers experience.

Temporary positions shall be paid at the starting rate and remain at that rate as long as the position is temporary. Student rates apply to individuals in all departments if said individual is in high school. It also applies to individuals who are training to be Nursing Assistants until they become certified.

XX. Special Provisions for Facilities Management

A. On-Call and Call-In Pay for Managerial Employees

Management employees shall receive compensation in addition to regular salary according to the following schedule:

Weekend on-call duty	$100.00 per weekend
Holiday on-call duty	$50.00 for a 1 to 2-day holiday that falls on Monday – Friday
Call-in pay	$25.00 for each event to which managerial employees are required to respond in person. Paid in addition to on-call pay listed above.

XXI. Special Provisions for the Highway and Transportation Department

The Highway Commissioner shall have authority to employ, discharge, suspend, layoff, or reinstate such personnel in accordance with Columbia County personnel policy as set forth in this Manual, where such policies are not in conflict with the Wisconsin Statutes, as he/she deems necessary for such purposes; provided, however, that the County Highway Committee may by action recorded in its minutes determine the number of persons to be hired, and may also at any time by action so recorded, order the Highway Commissioner to employ, discharge, suspend, lay off, or reinstate any such person in accordance with this Manual where such policies are not in conflict with the Wisconsin Statutes. The term "personnel" or "person" shall include all patrolmen, laborers, foremen, clerks, stenographers, or other employees necessary to carry on such activities.

A. Management

All employees in management positions are on-call twenty-four (24) hours a day/seven (7) days a week.

To ensure the continued operation of the Highway and Transportation Department in the event of an emergency, the Highway Commissioner or his/her designee will schedule supervisory personnel as deemed necessary for holiday work. Any management employee that is required to work on the County-observed holiday due to weather related concerns or other Department required activity will be allowed to take a floating holiday to make up for the lost holiday. This is subject to confirmation from the Highway Commissioner.

The Highway Commissioner or her/his designee will develop an annual supervisory on-call schedule for emergencies to cover weekends and holidays.

In the event of an emergency or other unforeseeable event, the Highway Commissioner or her/his designee may cancel the scheduled vacation or holiday of any member of the department in order to facilitate and coordinate the services provided by the department.

No department equipment or property will be utilized by any member of management except during emergency on-call periods.

Business-casual attire is required for all management and office work environments. Business casual apparel is the minimum requirement for all business meetings out of the Highway office. However, the hosting county or organization should be contacted to verify the dress code for the meeting, but under no circumstances should a Columbia County Highway and Transportation Department employee attend any meeting in anything less than business-casual attire.

Field supervisors should follow these provisions when a full day in the office or meetings are scheduled. Business-casual is required at all times; however, field supervisors may opt to wear leather work boots due to doing field operation requirements.

B. On-Call and Call-In Pay for Managerial Employees

The Construction Manager, Fleet Manager, Patrol Superintendents (East & West), and the Highway Project/Program Manager shall receive compensation in addition to their regular salaries according to the following schedule:

Weekend on-call duty	$100.00 per weekend
Holiday on-call duty	$50.00 for a 1 to 2-day holiday that falls on Monday – Friday
Call-in pay	$25.00 for each event to which managerial employees are required to respond in person. Paid in addition to on-call pay listed above.

$25.00 for each hour of performance in which managerial employees are required to respond and use their CDL or function in an operator capacity to plow, load or haul winter materials during a winter emergency (November through March). Paid in addition to on-call pay listed above and subject to approval by the Highway Commissioner.

C. Reimbursements for Managerial Employees

Managerial Employees shall receive reimbursement for prescription safety glasses, safety shoes and the cost of renewing the required Commercial Driver's License ("CDL") in a manner equivalent to similar benefits provided to Field Employees of the Highway and Transportation Department.

XXII. Special Provisions for the Sheriff's Office

The Sheriff is empowered to make emergency/temporary appointments for a period to not exceed three (3) months.

Applicants responding to vacancy eligibility advertisements will be required to participate in a written assessment. Those applicants who have received the highest ratings in the examination will be invited to interview with the county. The interview panel will consist of Sheriff's office employees and the Human Resources Director or his/her designee. The results of the written examination will be added to the scores resulting from the interviews to create an eligibility list to be provided to the Sheriff. The Sheriff may review the top three (3) candidates, or, in the event of tied top scores, all of the candidates who received the top three (3) scores. If none of the top three 3 candidates are offered employment, the Sheriff may review the next top three (3) on the list.

A conditional offer of employment may be made to the candidates of the Sheriff's choice, and the candidates will be required to participate in a psychological examination, a physical examination and undergo drug testing. A background check will also be completed, including court records, prior employment verification

and references. Any newly hired deputies must have a valid Wisconsin Driver's license and be legal citizens of the United States at the time of the commencement of employment with the County.

Upon successful completion of the assessments, background investigations, and the testing as outlined above, the selected candidates may be offered employment.

All sworn deputies, if they wish to take home a squad car, must reside within Columbia County, or within a 4-mile radius of the County's borders. However, the Sheriff may permit a newly hired deputy a period of time not to exceed three (3) months to establish residency within County, or within the 4-mile radius indicated above. The Public Safety Committee, upon the recommendation of the Sheriff, may agree to extend the initial three (3) month time period to establish residency to an additional period of time which will not exceed six (6) months from the date of hire.

All appointments to positions within the Sheriff's Office are subject to an eighteen (18) month probation period, except what is otherwise agreed upon in the union contract. Employees promoted or transferred to a different position will be subject to a new twelve (12) month probationary period, lasting at least an additional 12 months.

Sworn Managerial Sheriff's Office employees shall receive fringe benefits, including vacations, holidays, retirement allowances and an annual clothing allowance in a manner equivalent to similar benefits provided to Sworn Sheriff's Office employees.

With the permission of the Sheriff, sworn Sheriff's Office management staff, with a rank of captain or higher, will have off-duty use of their squad vehicle, within the surrounding counties.

XXIII. Special Provisions for the Medical Examiner's Office

A. On-Call and Call-In Pay for Managerial Employees

Management employees shall receive compensation in addition to their regular salaries according to the following schedule:

Weekend on-call duty	$100.00 per weekend
Holiday on-call duty	$50.00 for a 1 to 2-day holiday that falls on Monday – Friday
Weekday on-call duty	$25.00 per day
Call-in pay	$25.00 for each event to which managerial employees are required to respond in person. Paid in addition to on-call pay listed above.