

Nonprofit Employee Handbook

This template is a general starting point for information only — it is not legal advice. Employment, wage, leave, and at-will rules vary by country, state, and city and change over time. Have a qualified employment attorney review and tailor this handbook before you distribute it, and delete any policy that does not apply to your organization.

1. Welcome

Welcome to {{Organization Name}}. We exist to {{state your mission in one line}}, and the people who work and volunteer here are how that mission gets done. This handbook explains how we work together and the policies we all follow — on conduct, the people we serve, our donors, and the funds entrusted to us. {{Add a line or two about your values and the impact you want every team member to feel part of.}} It is not a contract and does not cover every situation; when you are unsure, ask your {{supervisor / Executive Director}}.

Open with a short, genuine welcome and one or two lines on your mission and values. This sets the tone before the policies begin.

2. Employment Basics

- Equal opportunity: {{Company Name}} is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of any characteristic protected by applicable law.
- Employment relationship: {{Describe your employment relationship — e.g., employment is at-will where permitted by law, meaning either party may end it at any time, with or without cause}}.
- Employee classifications: {{Define full-time, part-time, temporary, and exempt vs non-exempt as you use them}}.
- Probationary / introductory period: {{Length and what it means, if you use one}}.

At-will employment is not valid everywhere — outside the US, and in some agreements, different rules apply. Confirm the correct wording for every location you employ people with your attorney.

3. Code of Conduct

- Treat staff, volunteers, donors, partners, and the people we serve with dignity and respect; we do not tolerate harassment, bullying, or discrimination of any kind, including conduct based on any characteristic protected by applicable law. Report concerns to {{your supervisor / the ED / the board}}, and we {{do not tolerate retaliation}} for a good-faith report.
- Act in the organization's and our mission's best interest, not personal gain. Disclose any conflict of interest — a financial interest, a related party, or a competing loyalty — to {{the ED / board}} and recuse yourself from related decisions, per our conflict-of-interest policy.

- Do not accept gifts, favors, or personal benefits from donors, vendors, or grantees beyond {{a nominal value you define}}; never solicit anything for personal benefit.
- Keep our nonpartisan status: do not use organization resources or your role for political campaigns or prohibited lobbying, consistent with our tax-exempt status. {{Note any limits on personal political activity on work time or channels.}}
- Represent {{Organization Name}} honestly and protect its reputation; follow our policy on who may speak to the media or make public statements on the organization's behalf.
- Be a good steward of our resources — supplies, equipment, and funds — and follow our whistleblower policy to report suspected fraud, misuse of funds, or wrongdoing without fear of retaliation.

Cover professional behaviour, anti-harassment and anti-discrimination, attendance, dress, and conflicts of interest. Say how to report a concern and state a clear no-retaliation commitment.

4. Working Hours, Pay & Timekeeping

- Record all time worked accurately using {{the timesheet / system}}; many of us also {{allocate time across grants and programs}}, so charge your time to the correct {{program / grant / cost center}}. Only record your own time, and only time you actually worked.
- Non-exempt employees earn overtime as required by {{the law where you work}}; get {{supervisor}} approval before working over {{the overtime threshold}}. Off-the-clock work is not allowed, even when you are passionate about the work.
- We pay {{every two weeks}} on {{payday}} by {{direct deposit}}. {{Note how grant-funded positions, stipends, or reimbursements are handled.}}
- Standard hours are {{e.g. Mon–Fri, with flexibility}}; some programs and events require evenings or weekends. {{Describe any time-off-in-lieu or flexibility policy for event work.}}
- Take the meal and rest breaks {{required where you work}}. We care about sustainability — protect your time and avoid burnout in mission-driven work.
- If your hours, grant codes, or pay look wrong, tell {{the office / finance}} that pay period so we can correct it.

State the standard schedule, pay periods, how overtime is handled for non-exempt staff, and how time is recorded. Wage-and-hour rules are heavily regulated — match them to your jurisdiction.

5. Time Off & Leave

- Paid time off: {{describe PTO or vacation, how it accrues, and how to request it}}. We encourage you to take it — rest sustains the mission.
- Sick leave: {{describe paid or unpaid sick time and how to notify your supervisor; sick-leave rules vary by location — follow what applies where you work}}.
- Holidays: {{list the holidays the organization observes, including any office closures around year-end}}.

- Legally required leave — family, medical, jury duty, military, voting, and any volunteer/civic leave — {{describe what applies to an organization your size; some laws cover only larger employers, so confirm what applies}}.
- Report a work-related injury to {{your supervisor / the office}}; workers' compensation and any related leave are handled per {{applicable law}}.

List paid time off, holidays, sick leave, and any legally required leave (such as family, medical, or jury duty). Required leave varies widely by location — verify each entitlement before you publish.

6. Benefits Overview

This section summarizes the benefits {{Company Name}} offers, including {{health insurance, retirement plan, and any others}}. Official plan documents govern in all cases; where this summary and a plan document differ, the plan document controls. {{Describe eligibility and enrolment.}}

Keep benefits descriptions short and point to the official plan documents for detail. Never let the handbook contradict an insurance or retirement plan document.

7. Workplace Health & Safety

- Keep our workplaces, program sites, and events safe for staff, volunteers, and the people we serve; follow safety procedures and report hazards to {{your supervisor / the office}}.
- Know the emergency and evacuation plan for each site, where the first-aid kit is, and what to do in a medical or security emergency at a program or event.
- If your work involves home visits, field work, or serving vulnerable populations, follow our safety protocols: {{e.g. check-in procedures, working in pairs, and mandatory-reporting and safeguarding duties}}.
- Complete any required screening and training for your role — {{e.g. background checks and safeguarding/abuse-prevention training for staff and volunteers who work with children or vulnerable adults}}.
- Report any incident, injury, or safety or safeguarding concern promptly so we can respond and meet our obligations; you will never be in trouble for raising a concern in good faith.
- Look after your wellbeing in emotionally demanding work — use {{the EAP / supervision / peer support}} and talk to your supervisor if you are struggling.

Cover how to report injuries and hazards, emergency procedures, and any safety rules specific to your workplace. Reference the safety regulations that apply to your industry by name.

8. Technology & Acceptable Use

- Protect the confidentiality of donor and beneficiary information above all: donor records, gift amounts, and the personal data of the people we serve are private. Access them only as your role requires, never share them, and follow our data-protection rules ({{e.g. and any donor-privacy or HIPAA-style obligations that apply}}).

- Use organization devices, email, and systems for mission work; log in under your own account, do not install unapproved software, and follow our acceptable-use and security policies (strong passwords, MFA, locked screens).
- Steward funds and accounts honestly: follow {{the approval, expense, and reimbursement process}}, keep receipts, code spending to the right program or grant, and never use organization funds or accounts for personal expenses.
- Respect restricted and grant funds: spend them only on what the grant or donor designated, and follow {{finance's}} rules for documentation and reporting, since funders rely on it.
- Represent the organization carefully online; do not share donor, beneficiary, client photos, or program details on social media without consent, and follow our social-media and photo-release policy.
- Report a lost device, a phishing attempt, or any suspected data breach to {{IT / the office}} immediately — fast reporting protects the people who trust us.

Set expectations for company devices, accounts, email, and data. Be clear about what is monitored and what is private, and reference your data-protection obligations.

9. Confidentiality & Company Property

Employees are expected to protect {{Company Name}} confidential information, customer data, and intellectual property during and after employment, and to return all company property on departure. {{Reference your confidentiality or IP agreement where one applies.}}

Tie this to any separate confidentiality, IP-assignment, or data-protection agreement employees sign, rather than restating it all here.

10. Discipline & Leaving the Company

This section describes how {{Company Name}} addresses performance and conduct issues and what happens when employment ends — including notice expectations, final pay handled per applicable law, return of property, and any exit steps. {{Describe your progressive-discipline approach, if you use one, and keep it consistent with the at-will language above.}}

If you describe a progressive-discipline process, add that the company may depart from it at its discretion — otherwise it can be read as a promise that undercuts at-will employment.

11. Acknowledgement of Receipt

I acknowledge that I have received and read the {{Company Name}} Employee Handbook. I understand it summarizes current policies and is not a contract of employment, that employment is {{at-will, where permitted by law}}, and that {{Company Name}} may update these policies at any time. I agree to follow the policies it describes.

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Employee Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____	Date Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____
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Have every employee sign and date this page, and keep the signed copy on file. It is your record that the handbook was received and understood.