theforakergroup
Standing Beside Alaska's Nonprofits

Employee Manual Table of Contents – A Guide

***Disclaimer**: This document is not intended as legal advice. Your organizational goals, purpose, bylaws, and values should drive the creation of this document.*

Each organization must thoughtfully determine how to support its employees in ways that reflect its values and align with its financial resources. Clarifying the policies and procedures that apply to all staff is essential for recruitment, retention, and graceful exit. An employee manual should be rooted in the organization's values and reflect its culture. The depth and breadth of policies should match each organization – there is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all manual. That said, all nonprofits must follow the law so there is minimum language for every manual. Additional sections can be added as needed. No manual can regulate all behavior. Therefore, policies and processes are meant to set the tone and intent for unforeseen situations. The following outline includes both standard and optional sections. The final version is board-approved and is typically reviewed in full every 3-5 years.

While not all-inclusive, the following topics are those that are most often found in employee manuals. Topics are listed in their most frequent order in the employee manual.

Sections and Topics	Type of language	Standard/ Optional
Organizational Position		
Welcome Statement *(Sets the tone for employees)*	Per organization	Standard
Background Information on the Organization (History, Core Purpose, Mission, Core Values, Operating Principle) (*Basis of all policies and procedures)*	Per organization	Standard
General Policy		
Purpose and Intent of the Manual *(Sets expectations)*	Per organization	Standard
Authority and Responsibility *(Establishes roles for leadership/responsibility)*	Per organization	Standard
Equal Opportunity Statement (Required for Federal Contractors)	Standard language	Standard
Age Discrimination in Employment Act Statement (20+ Employees)	Standard language	Standard
At-will Employment Statement	Standard language	Standard
Statement Against Sexual and Other Unlawful Harassment (15+ Employees)	Standard language	Standard
Americans with Disabilities Act Statement (15+ Employees)	Standard language	Standard
Pregnant Workers Fairness Act Statement (15+ Employees)	Standard language	Standard

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Organization's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commitment	Per organization	Optional
Code of Ethics/Code of Ethical Behavior/Confidentiality	Per organization	Standard
Conflict of Interest Statement • Outside Activities and Conflicts of Interest	Per organization	Standard
Employee Protection Policy/Whistleblower Policy	Standard language	Standard
Probationary/Orientation Period	Per organization	Standard
Employee Classifications		
Employment Categories • Full-time Employee • Part-time Employee • Temporary Employee • Non-exempt Employee • Exempt Employee	Standard language	Standard
Standards of Conduct and Expectations		
Safety • Violence and Weapons • Anti-bullying (civility)	Per organization	Optional
Employee Conduct	Per organization	Optional
Attendance/Working Hours/Punctuality	Per organization	Standard
Personal Appearance	Per organization	Standard
Electronic Communications Policy/Social Media Policy • Telephone/E-mail • Bulletin Boards & On-site Solicitation	Per organization	Standard
Media Inquiries	Per organization	Standard
Drug-Free and Alcohol-Free Statement	Standard language	Standard
Weather Event – Natural Disaster Event	Per organization	Optional
Compensation and Payroll Practices		
Workplace Designation Policy/Remote Work	Per organization	Optional
Workweek and Schedule	Per organization	Standard
Meals and Rest Periods	Per organization	Standard
Overtime	Standard language	Standard
Timekeeping/Timesheets	Per organization	Standard
Personnel Records	Per organization	Standard
Paydays	Per organization	Standard
Payroll Advances	Per organization	Optional

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Payroll Deductions	Standard language	Standard
Garnishments	Standard language	Standard
Expense Reimbursement	Per organization	Optional
Employee Benefits		
PTO or Vacation and Sick Leave	Per organization	Standard
Holidays	Per organization	Standard
Disability Leave	Per organization	Standard
Bereavement/Emergency Leave	Per organization	Standard
Jury Duty and Witness Leave *(Witness leave has proven to be a component of equity, gender pay, and employee safety)*	Standard language	Standard
Military Leave/Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Act	Per organization	Standard
Family Leave (50+ employees within a 75-mile radius) *(Defines family and areas covered under leave including illness and death)*	Per organization	Standard
Workers Compensation	Standard language	Standard
Unemployment Insurance	Standard language	Standard
Health Benefits – Medical, Dental and Vision	Per organization	Optional
Long-Term Disability Benefits	Per organization	Optional
Life Insurance and Accidental Death and Dismemberment Benefits	Per organization	Optional
Retirement and Pension Plan	Per organization	Optional
Administrative Leave (with or without pay)	Per organization	Optional
Workplace Wellness *(Establishes parameters of in-person work expectations from an employee who is unwell but able to work without taking leave. Also establishes workplace protocol on sanitizing, masking, vaccines, etc.)*	Per organization	Optional
Employee Assistance Program (EAP)	Standard language	Optional
Employee Matching Gifts Policy	Per organization	Optional
Donated Leave Policy	Per organization	Optional
Call-In/Report-In Pay	Per organization	Optional
Training/Professional Development – Educational Assistance Program	Per organization	Optional
Service Awards	Per organization	Optional
Performance/Conduct Issues and Separations		
Performance Evaluations/Reviews	Per organization	Standard
Performance or Conduct Issues/Corrective Action	Per organization	Standard

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Promotions/Demotions/Transfers	Per organization	Optional
Separation of Employment	Per organization	Standard
Exit Interview Process	Per organization	Optional
Final Pay	Standard language	Standard
Raising Issues and Addressing Complaints		
Complaint Resolution/ Grievance Policy and Process	Standard language	Standard
Compliance		
Acknowledgment of Receipt of Employee Manual	Standard language	Standard
Notation on the process to update the policy in parts or as a whole	Per organization	Standard
National Labor Relations Board Statement	Standard language	Standard

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