



**EMPLOYEE POLICIES**  
**AND BENEFITS**  
**HANDBOOK**





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## NOTICE TO ALL EMPLOYEES

This Employee Policies and Benefits Handbook (“Handbook”) neither implies nor establishes a contract between the Connecticut Forest & Park Association, Inc. (“CFPA” or the “Association”) and the employee. The contents of this Handbook summarize current CFPA policies and programs and are intended as guidelines only. CFPA retains the right to change, modify, suspend, interpret, or cancel in whole or in part any of the published or unpublished personnel policies or practices of CFPA, without advance notice, in its sole discretion, without having to give cause or justification to any employee. Recognition of these rights and prerogatives is a term and condition of employment and continued employment. As such, the contents of this Handbook do not constitute the terms of an employment contract. Nothing contained in this Handbook should be construed as a guarantee of continued employment, but rather, employment with CFPA is on an at-will basis, as further explained below.

This Handbook will discuss your rights and benefits. CFPA wishes, at the outset, however, to discuss some of its rights, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Management of CFPA;
- Directing, hiring, discharging, and recalling employees;
- Establishing wages, hours, working conditions, allocating and assigning work, introducing new work methods, and reducing workloads or the work force in general, in compliance with applicable law;
- Fixing the quantity and quality of work to be performed;
- Elimination and interruption of work;
- Selecting and assigning new employees;
- Requiring employees to follow directives;
- Abolishing any past work customs, procedures, and practices; and
- Establishment of all work rules and operating procedures.



## WELCOME

Welcome to CFPA! You are now part of an organization that has successfully protected forests, parks, and trails as well as promoted outdoor recreation in Connecticut for more than 125 years.

CFPA provides an excellent opportunity for you to learn and develop a career as you make a valued contribution to the quality of life enjoyed here in Connecticut. We want you to feel comfortable and proud of your affiliation with us. We also want you to know that you are a valued member of the team.

There are many things to learn. This document will help to explain the privileges you will enjoy as a staff member and the duties and responsibilities we all share. Please contact me should you have questions or comments about any of this information.

Welcoming new employees is always a pleasure. We hope you will enjoy the sense of excitement that exists here. Our members, donors, and allies all recognize the strong tradition of conservation advocacy, education, trails, and land stewardship that has been provided by CFPA's staff. Thank you for doing your part to uphold that tradition.

Sincerely,

Eric Hammerling  
Executive Director



## SECTION 1: EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

### 1.1 Equal Opportunity

CFPA is committed to providing equal employment opportunity in all of our employment programs and decisions. Discrimination in employment on the basis of any classification protected under federal, state, or local law is a violation of our policy and is illegal. Equal employment opportunity is provided to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, creed, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, age, gender, gender identity or expression, marital status, civil union status, domestic partnership status, sexual orientation, genetic information, military service, past or present disability, pregnancy, physical or mental handicap, sexual orientation, witnesses to or victims of crime, registration as a qualifying patient or status as a caregiver of a qualifying patient under the Palliative Use of Marijuana Act, smoker status, filer of workers' compensation claim, service on a jury, learning disability, homelessness status, intellectual disability, or any other status protected by local, state, or federal law.

This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including, but not limited to, recruitment and hiring, classification, placement, promotion, termination, reductions in force, recall, transfer, leaves of absences, compensation, and training.

All CFPA employees are responsible for complying with CFPA's Equal Opportunity Policy. CFPA is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our staff, volunteers, subcontractors, vendors, and clients. Every employee is to treat all other employees equally and fairly. Violation of this policy may subject an employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### 1.2 Hiring Procedures

CFPA hires on the basis of qualifications, promotes on the basis of merit, and, in instances when an employee must be terminated, terminates on the basis of performance. We maintain and adhere to our strong Equal Opportunity Policy.

**Relatives.** While we appreciate all referrals for employment, no relative of an employee or director can be hired *if there is a direct or indirect reporting relationship*. At the discretion of the Executive Director, exceptions to this policy can be made for short-term contracted workers, vendors, volunteers, and interns. This policy is intended to minimize conflicts in performance evaluation or dismissal situations.

**Interviews and Reference Checks.** CFPA will interview those applicants who are under consideration for immediate employment. Rarely will CFPA interview for unanticipated openings. Consideration will be given to all applicants in accordance with CFPA's Equal Opportunity Policy. The evaluation of the applicant may include a consideration of the applicant's job-related experience and ability. CFPA may also conduct reference checks on any or all applicants.

**Internal Promotions.** There are positions at CFPA that require highly specialized training, education, or experience. For these positions, it is sometimes necessary for CFPA to employ persons whose academic background and employment history especially qualify them for such assignments. However, CFPA desires to seek out and promote its own employees whenever possible. Promotions will be based primarily on performance, knowledge, training, and a demonstrated capability to perform the responsibilities of the job.



### **1.3 Immigration Law Compliance and Eligibility for Employment**

CFPA is committed to employing only U.S. citizens, residents, and foreign nationals who are authorized to work in the United States. In compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, as amended, each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility. Former employees who are rehired must also complete the form if they have not completed an I-9 with CFPA within the past three years or if their previous Form I-9 is no longer retained or valid. If you at any time cannot verify your right to work in the United States, CFPA may be required to terminate your employment and take such other action as required by law.

### **1.4 Employment at Will**

Absent a written agreement to the contrary, all CFPA employees are employees “at will.” As a result, both the employee and/or CFPA are free to terminate the employment relationship at any time, for any lawful reason or no reason at all, with or without cause.

CFPA’s policies and procedures, including those stated in this Handbook, are not to be interpreted as promises or contracts of any kind, real or implied, between CFPA and its employees. CFPA maintains the right to change or terminate these policies or procedures at any time, with or without notice.

CFPA’s benefits plans and programs may be referenced briefly in this Handbook. Each benefit plan or program shall be subject to the terms of the specific documents by which it is governed, and CFPA (or its designee) shall have complete discretion to determine benefit eligibility and interpret the terms of each plan or program. CFPA reserves the right to amend, modify, or terminate, in whole or in part, any of these benefit plans or programs at any time.

### **1.5 Introductory Period**

Each new employee will have a 90-day introductory period. During this time, CFPA will make every effort to help you achieve a satisfactory job performance. During the introductory period, employees should learn their responsibilities and become acquainted with the policies, procedures, and services of CFPA. Questions regarding responsibilities or policies and procedures should be directed to the employee’s supervisor or the Executive Director. An employee whose performance is not satisfactory may be terminated at any time during the introductory period. Further, CFPA reserves the right to extend the introductory period at its discretion.

### **1.6 Workplace Free from Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying, and Retaliation**

CFPA is committed to providing a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to work in an atmosphere that promotes equal employment opportunities and prohibits unlawful discrimination and harassment. Therefore, we expect that all relationships among persons will be business-like and free of bias, prejudice, and harassment.

It is our policy to ensure the workplace is free of harassment and discrimination based on race, creed, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, age, gender, gender identity or expression, marital status, civil union status, domestic partnership status, sexual orientation, genetic information, military service, past or present disability, pregnancy, physical or mental handicap, sexual orientation, witnesses to or victims



of crime, registration as a qualifying patient or status as a caregiver of a qualifying patient under the Palliative Use of Marijuana Act, smoker status, filer of workers' compensation claim, service on a jury, learning disability, homelessness status, intellectual disability, or any other status protected by local, state, or federal law.

CFPA will not tolerate unlawful harassment of employees by supervisors, co-workers, or volunteers. Moreover, CFPA will not tolerate harassment of its employees by nonemployees with whom CFPA has a business, service, professional, or volunteer relationship. CFPA will ensure that all supervisory personnel understand and effectively implement this policy.

### 1.7 Prohibited Conduct

Unlawful harassment includes verbal, physical, written (including electronic communications), and visual conduct that creates an intimidating or hostile working environment, based on one or more of the above-protected categories. Such conduct constitutes harassment when (a) submission to the conduct is made either as an explicit or implicit condition of employment, (b) submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for an employment decision, or (c) the harassment interferes with an employee's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. Specific types of unlawful harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Physical harassment, which refers to pushing, hitting, or unwanted physical touching;
- Verbal abuse, which refers to verbal comments regarding, or made because of, an individual's membership in a protected class, to include but not be limited to race, creed, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, age, gender, gender identity or expression, marital status, civil union status, domestic partnership status, sexual orientation, genetic information, military service, past or present disability, pregnancy, physical or mental handicap, sexual orientation, witnesses to or victims of crime, registration as a qualifying patient or status as a caregiver of a qualifying patient under the Palliative Use of Marijuana Act, filer of workers' compensation claim, service on a jury, learning disability, homelessness status, intellectual disability, or any other status protected by local, state, or federal law.
- Written harassment, which refers to derogatory or degrading written comments regarding, or made because of, an individual's membership in a protected class. Specific examples include, but are not limited to: e-mail, text messages, memos, notes, graffiti, and other visual depictions or pictures; and
- Inappropriate, unwelcomed behaviors, such as whistling, not giving someone enough physical space, and blocking behaviors.

Unlawful harassment, whether it is physical, verbal, or written in nature, is a form of employee misconduct that undermines the integrity of the employment relationship within CFPA. CFPA will not tolerate unlawful harassment of employees by supervisors or co-workers.

### 1.8 Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of unlawful employment discrimination and is prohibited under CFPA's anti-harassment policy outlined above. Sexual harassment can include all of the prohibited actions listed



above, as well as other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, such as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and conversations containing sexual comments.

Sexual harassment may take different forms. The following examples of sexual harassment are intended to be guidelines and are not exclusive when determining whether there has been a violation of this policy:

- Verbal sexual harassment includes innuendoes, suggestive comments, jokes of a sexual nature, sexual propositions, lewd remarks and threats, requests for any type of sexual favor (this includes repeated, unwelcome requests for dates), and verbal abuse or “kidding” that is oriented toward a prohibitive form of harassment, including that which is sexual in nature and unwelcome.
- Nonverbal sexual harassment includes the distribution, display, or discussion of any written or graphic material, including calendars, posters, and cartoons, that are sexually suggestive or show hostility toward an individual or group because of sex; suggestive or insulting sounds; leering; staring; whistling; obscene gestures; content in letters and notes, facsimiles, e-mail, photos, text messages, tweets, or Internet postings; or any other form of communication that is sexual in nature and offensive.
- Physical sexual harassment includes unwelcome, unwanted physical contact, including touching, tickling, pinching, patting, brushing up against, hugging, cornering, kissing, fondling, and forced sexual intercourse or assault.
- Sexually harassing conduct can include conduct toward a person of either the same or opposite sex.

CFPA will not tolerate unlawful sexual harassment of employees, volunteers, or supervisors, by any co-worker, volunteer, or supervisor. Additionally, all employees will be required to take two hours of sexual harassment training as provided by the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights.

### **1.9 Reporting Discrimination and Harassment**

Discrimination or harassment of an employee will not be tolerated. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. There will be no adverse action taken against employees who report alleged violations of this policy in good faith or participate in the investigation of such violations. Any incident of discrimination or harassment should be reported promptly to any of the following: (a) the Executive Director, (b) your supervisor, or (c) a member of the CFPA Board of Directors. Employees are encouraged to report behavior that they reasonably believe is harassment, even if the behavior is directed to someone other than themselves.

An investigation of any complaint, information, or knowledge of suspected harassment will be prompt and thorough, commenced immediately, and completed as soon as possible. The investigation will be kept confidential to the extent possible. All persons involved, including complainants, witnesses, and alleged harassers will be accorded due process to protect their rights to a fair and impartial investigation. While the process may vary from case to case, CFPA will conduct a prompt review of the allegations, take any appropriate interim actions, conduct a thorough investigation, document the investigation process, and implement any corrective action as necessary.

In Connecticut, the state agency responsible for complaints of harassment is the Connecticut Commission



on Human Rights and Opportunities (“CHRO”), which can be reached at 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 2, Hartford, Connecticut 06103 or by calling (860) 541-3400 or (860) 541-3459.

The deadline for filing a charge of discrimination with the CHRO is three hundred (300) days if the harassment occurred after October 1, 2019. This pertains to any claim of discrimination or harassment, not just sexual harassment. Remedies for sexual harassment include: cease and desist orders, back pay, compensatory damages, hiring, promotion or reinstatement, and/or emotional distress damages.

### **1.10 Corrective Action and No Retaliation**

CFPA emphasizes that it will not tolerate retaliation against any employee for making a good-faith complaint about discrimination or harassment under this policy or for cooperating in an investigation of discrimination or harassment. It is the policy of CFPA that any reporting employee or employee participating in the investigation of a discrimination or harassment complaint will not be retaliated against in any way. Employees who feel that they have been retaliated against for reporting a complaint or participating in an investigation of a complaint should contact the Executive Director or a member of the CFPA Board of Directors.

If a discrimination or harassment complaint is found to be valid, immediate and appropriate corrective action will be taken. Employees who violate this policy, including the provision against retaliation, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Additional action may include: referral to counseling, withholding of a promotion, reassignment, temporary suspension without pay, or financial penalties. This determination will be based on all the facts of the case.

### **1.11 Whistleblower Policy**

This policy is adapted from CFPA’s whistleblower policy approved by CFPA’s Board of Directors on September 15, 2010. If an employee has knowledge of or a reasonable concern of illegal, dishonest, or fraudulent activity by another CFPA employee or volunteer, the individual is to contact the Executive Director, the Board of Directors through its President, or another Board Officer if the concern involves the President.

All reports of illegal and dishonest activities will be promptly investigated by the Executive Director or CFPA Board Members, as applicable, with documentation kept of such investigation. The whistleblower is not responsible for investigating the activity or for determining fault or corrective measures. This policy applies to any matter that is related to the conduct of CFPA’s activities and does not relate to private acts of an individual not connected to such activities.

Whistleblower protections are provided in two important areas — confidentiality and against retaliation. Insofar as possible, the confidentiality of the whistleblower will be maintained. However, identity may have to be disclosed to conduct a thorough investigation, to comply with the law, and/or to provide accused individuals their legal rights of defense.

CFPA will not retaliate against a whistleblower. The right of protection against retaliation does not include immunity for any personal wrongdoing that is alleged and investigated, including, without limitation, intentionally filing a false report of wrongdoing.



## 1.12 Disciplinary Actions and Concerns

*Whenever possible*, four graduated steps — warning, probation, suspension without pay, and dismissal — are followed until a problem of conduct or performance is resolved. There will be circumstances, however, in which the severity of an infraction requires that one or more steps be bypassed. Guidelines for these infractions appear below. It must be emphasized that these are illustrations and are not intended to be complete, nor should it be inferred that every supervisor would follow the procedures in an identical manner under similar circumstances.

**Disciplinary Action.** While few actions of employees lead to termination without notice, there are specific progressive procedures that, at your supervisor’s discretion, may be followed.

If a problem exists, a supervisor may informally discuss it with the employee involved. A written notice of such a discussion will be placed in the employee’s file. If the problem continues, the supervisor may formally counsel the employee with a written notice that will be placed in the employee’s personnel file. The employee will be given the opportunity to submit comments. If the employee does not comment, it will be assumed that they agree with the reason for the disciplinary step(s). Further, the employee should sign the report.

There are some offenses for which an employee may be counseled and/or suspended, even upon a first violation. As an example, if an employee were absent from work for one day without notifying CFPA, and that employee had the ability to inform CFPA of the absence, they would be suspended for a period of not less than two days. Three consecutive days of unexcused absences without notifying a supervisor would lead to immediate termination.

**Concerns.** CFPA will attempt to maintain and preserve a positive working environment. In any working environment, however, there will be occasions when problems and concerns arise. Such problems will never be resolved without communication. Therefore, CFPA has adopted a procedure to handle problems, concerns, and suggestions.

- Concerns, suggestions, or any other matter pertinent to work or CFPA must be first taken up with a supervisor.
- If the immediate supervisor does not satisfactorily resolve the concern or problem, the supervisor may arrange for you to speak with the Executive Director or President of the Board of Directors, as applicable.

There should be no assumption that all disagreements, problems, or concerns will or can be resolved or that there will be agreement that an individual’s perception that a problem exists is correct or accurate. This procedure has been adopted to give an individual a method for *privately* airing their “grievances.”

## 1.13 Disability Accommodation

Individuals with disabilities may make requests for an accommodation to the Executive Director. CFPA will work with employees requesting an accommodation in order to determine whether an accommodation is available. If a requested accommodation is not available, CFPA will attempt to provide an alternative, effective accommodation. This policy does not guarantee that CFPA will be able to provide an accommodation.



#### 1.14 Religious Observance

CFPA will consider an employee's or applicant's request for a religious accommodation and will grant a reasonable religious accommodation, if it does not impose an undue hardship, in accordance with applicable law. CFPA allows unpaid time off for religious observances so long as an employee requests the time off at least two weeks in advance and CFPA's operational requirements permit the absence without an undue hardship. Employees who have an accrued form of paid time off available are permitted, but not required, to use it for this purpose.

#### 1.15 Travel Expenses

It is the policy of CFPA to reimburse employees for reasonable and necessary *authorized* expenses incurred during the course of their employment. When it is necessary for an employee to use their personal automobile for CFPA business, they will be reimbursed at the current deductible rate as per the IRS code. All employees who may use an automobile for CFPA business must, on an annual basis, furnish CFPA with a copy of their current driver's license.



## SECTION 2: WAGE POLICIES AND SCHEDULING PRACTICES

### 2.1 Employment Classifications

- **Full-time employees** are employees who have successfully completed the “Introductory Period” and who work 30 - 35 hours per week.
- **Part-time employees** are employees who work less than a regular 30-hour workweek and are normally paid on an hourly basis.
- **Exempt Employees** are those employees who are exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act and generally are in a managerial or supervisory position at CFPA.
- **Nonexempt Employees** are those employees who are not exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act and whose jobs are primarily “clerical” in nature at CFPA.
- **A Regular Employee** is one who has satisfactorily completed the “Introductory Period” and is either full time or part time.
- **A Temporary or Seasonal Employee** is one who is hired for a specified period of time (usually six months or less) to complete a given assignment.

A determination of employee status will be made at the time of employment with CFPA. Questions regarding assignments should be directed to the Executive Director.

### 2.2 Work Schedule

CFPA’s typical, open hours at CFPA headquarters are Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Work schedules for employees vary throughout CFPA. Operational demands may make it necessary for occasional changes in starting and ending time. Supervisors determine each employee’s work schedule. A full-time work schedule consists of seven hours per weekday for a total of 35 hours per week. A workday generally includes one hour of lunch and/or break time, not included in the 35 hours per week. Breaks are generally scheduled with the consent of the employee’s supervisor, keeping in mind the workloads of fellow employees.

To maintain efficiency, you are expected to be ready to start work at the established starting time and remain at work for the entire work period, excluding meal periods. Should an unavoidable circumstance cause you to be late, notify your supervisor of your anticipated arrival time. If it is necessary for you to leave work because of a personal emergency, you must notify your supervisor before leaving.



## 2.3 Time Keeping and Compensation

Nonexempt employees are required to record time worked for payroll purposes. Employees must record their own time at the start and the end of each work period. Employees also must record their time out and back in whenever they take an unpaid meal period or leave CFPA's premises for any reason other than CFPA business. Exempt employees are not required to record their time.

Employees are responsible for the accuracy and completeness of the information on their time records. CFPA strictly prohibits "off-the-clock" work — i.e., work performed for CFPA by a *nonexempt* employee that is not recorded and for which the employee is not paid for the time worked. This means that:

- if you are a *nonexempt* employee, you must not perform any off-the-clock work; and
- regardless of whether you are *exempt* or *nonexempt*, you must never ask or require a *nonexempt* employee to perform any off-the-clock work.

Any violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment. Entering time for another employee, tampering with time reports, destroying time reports, or falsifying your own time report are acts of dishonesty, and each is grounds for discipline, up to and including discharge. Any questions or problems with your time record should be reported immediately to your supervisor or the Executive Director.

Overtime will be paid to any nonexempt employee who works in excess of 35 hours in a week. Overtime will be paid at one and one-half times the employee's hourly pay. An employee's supervisor must approve overtime. No employee may work overtime of their own accord or unilaterally choose to work through a lunch period or come to the office prior to the start of the work day without consent from a supervisor or the Executive Director.

To meet deadlines, attend night meetings and conferences, or participate in hearings, exempt employees are often expected to work irregular hours, without additional compensation. When these hours extend well beyond the standard hours of operation, an exempt employee may obtain a "time-off award" from the Executive Director or your direct supervisor. Time-off awards are intended to give the employee personal time in compensation for extraordinary service, but they are not intended as a precise one-to-one exchange of hours off for extra hours worked.

## 2.4 Payroll

Paychecks include direct and indirect compensation in terms of contributions made by CFPA on the employee's behalf in the following areas:

- Health Insurance
- Unemployment Insurance
- Social Security
- Workers' Compensation Insurance



As of February 8, 2001, paychecks are distributed to employees every other Thursday. If payday falls on a holiday, paychecks will be distributed on the last business day prior to the holiday. Paycheck errors should be reported to the Executive Director immediately.

Except under unusual circumstances and at the total discretion of CFPA, there are *no* pay advances at CFPA. At the end of the calendar year, a “Withholding Statement” (U.S. Treasury Department Form W-2) will be prepared and forwarded to each employee for use in the preparation of income tax returns. The W-2 Form shows Social Security information, taxes withheld, and total wages.

The following are deductions from an employee’s gross pay as specified by law or as an employee may specify at time of hire:

- Federal Income Tax Withholding: The amount varies with the number of exemptions you claim and, of course, the amount of your gross pay.
- State Income Tax Withholding: The same factors apply to state as federal withholding.
- Social Security: The Federal Insurance Contribution Act (listed on your paycheck as “FICA”) requires that a certain percentage of your earnings be deducted and forwarded to the federal government, together with an equal amount contributed by CFPA.
- Medicare taxes are withheld every pay period and, as with all other taxes, the cumulative amount paid will be listed on your “Pay Statement.”
- Contributions to a 403(b) retirement plan may be deducted from your paycheck if you choose and in accordance with CFPA retirement policy.
- Health insurance premiums for yourself may be deducted from your paycheck if you choose.
- The premiums for any dependent insurance coverage that you have chosen will also be deducted from your pay.
- Other deductions from your paycheck may occur if authorized by CFPA and authorized by law.

## 2.5 Attendance

Every employee is important to CFPA. Frequent absences or episodes of tardiness decrease an employee’s effectiveness, lower office morale, and impose on those co-workers who must cover for an absent employee.

**Notice of Absences.** Employees who cannot report to work due to an emergency or illness must notify their supervisor personally no later than 30 minutes prior to that employee’s regular starting time so arrangements can be made to take care of their workload. An employee’s spouse or relative living in the same household may report in for the employee only if the employee is *physically unable* to do so. If the supervisor is unavailable, the employee must leave a message with a colleague. Failure to notify CFPA in accordance with this policy can result in a loss of compensation for the absence and may be grounds for a written reprimand.



It is the policy of CFPA to encourage good attendance habits in all employees. Management recognizes that circumstances beyond an employee's control may cause them to be absent from work for all or part of the day. However, unauthorized or excessive absences and tardiness will not be tolerated and may be grounds for disciplinary action.

**Recognized Reasons for Absences.** Personal illness, illness in the immediate family, other forms of emergency, or routine doctor or dental appointments (for which the employee should make prior arrangements with his or her supervisor) are all approved reasons for excused absences. Personal business appointments are not considered a form of excused absence. Employees who are absent for three or more days may be required to present a letter from their physician. Employees must keep their supervisors informed about the necessary length of the absence on a daily basis during each absence. After five consecutive days of absence, an employee will be required to furnish CFPA with a doctor's certificate stating that they have sufficiently recovered to resume normal duties.

We are truly sympathetic to the many reasons that may lead to an absence. However, excessive absenteeism creates hardships on your fellow employees, on CFPA, and cannot be permitted. Frequent absences, even though justified and excused, can be cause for dismissal. Tardiness is also subject to disciplinary action.

## **2.6 Lactation Breaks**

CFPA will provide lactation breaks in accordance with applicable federal and state law. Employees who are nursing mothers are eligible to take unpaid breaks up to 30 minutes for expressing milk for up to three years after childbirth. An employee should notify her supervisor or the Executive Director to request time to do so. CFPA will provide a room or other private accommodations, appropriate for the expression of milk. Eligible employees can choose to use paid break time or meal time instead. In addition, CFPA will allow the employee to work before or after her normal shift to make up any time used during unpaid break time if the additional time requested falls within CFPA's normal work hours.

CFPA will not discriminate against employees who express breast milk at work or retaliate against employees who exercise their rights under applicable state breastfeeding laws.



## SECTION 3: TIME AWAY FROM WORK

### 3.1 Holidays

CFPA observes the following paid holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Presidents Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Juneteenth
- Labor Day
- Indigenous Peoples' Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day

Holidays falling on a Saturday will normally be observed the preceding Friday. Holidays falling on a Sunday will normally be observed the following Monday. Additional paid holidays may be added at the sole discretion of CFPA's management.

### 3.2 Discretionary Days

Two discretionary days (AKA "personal days," or "floating holidays") are given each year to all employees of CFPA. They may be taken with a supervisor's approval.

### 3.3 Vacation Days

Annual vacations are scheduled by employees with due consideration for "peak traffic periods" at CFPA. If conflicts in scheduling arise and cannot be resolved by employees, such scheduling will be done on the basis of seniority.

**Eligibility.** All regular employees working a minimum of 30 hours a week are eligible to take annual paid vacation after having completed at least six months of continuous service with CFPA.

Eligibility is determined by the employee's current status and is not retroactive. For example, if an employee started with CFPA as an hourly or part-time employee and is later "hired" as a full-time



employee, that employee would be eligible for “full-time” paid vacation after six months of service as a full-time employee.

**Vacation Term.** Regular full-time employees are entitled to vacation terms based upon *date of hire as a full time employee*, length of service, and status with CFPA. Subject to applicable legal restrictions, some part-time employees may be eligible for vacation time on a *pro rata* basis.

#### **Length of Service – Regular Employees Vacation Term**

Absent certain conditions, vacation time is awarded to regular employees as follows:

- Year 1 through year 4 – 2 weeks (10 days)
- Year 5 through year 9 – 3 weeks (15 days)
- Year 10 or more – 4 weeks (20 days)

Unused vacation leave time will not be paid to employees when they leave CFPA.

**Vacation Requirements.** The following requirements are in effect for all employees (except as specified above):

- While vacations may be scheduled during any month of the year, employees will be asked to state their preference for vacation dates during the first calendar quarter.
- All eligible employees must take a minimum of two weeks earned vacation and no more than three weeks consecutively during any calendar year unless approval is received from the Executive Director.
- All allotted vacation time should be taken in a given calendar year except as noted above. Carrying over vacation time is discouraged. Unused vacation time expires within six months of the next calendar year. Exceptions may be made under extraordinary circumstances and at the discretion of the Executive Director.
- Unused earned vacation days may be applied toward medical or parental leaves if the employee wishes and if the Executive Director agrees.

#### **3.4 Sick Leave**

Sick leave is defined as any absence from work due to illness for one or more days. Full-time employees receive 10 sick leave days in each calendar year. Sick leave time is credited on the first day of employment. Borrowing against future allotments of leave time is not permitted. Accrued and unused paid sick leave benefits shall carryover from year to year up to a maximum accrual cap of 40 hours. When an employee uses paid sick leave and falls below the maximum accrual cap, the employee will resume earning paid sick leave until the maximum accrual is again reached.

- In the event of a catastrophic illness, and in consideration of (a) an employee’s performance, (b) previous use of sick leave, and (c) length of service, CFPA may, in its sole discretion, elect to pay for sick leave beyond that accrued.



- Sick leave should be used only for personal or family illness. Any illness of more than three days may require a physician's certificate.
- Employees should notify their supervisor immediately if they intend to take sick leave or must be away from work for a day or more. If an employee is using sick time for routine doctor or dental appointments, he or she should inform their supervisor as to the date and time of the appointments. All non-emergency appointments should be scheduled at the convenience of the office during nonpeak hours.
- An employee injured in an accident while on CFPA's premises or implementing CFPA business outside the premises will normally be covered by Workers' Compensation Insurance and will be granted pay according to CFPA's sick leave schedule. Additional sick leave under such circumstances may be granted by CFPA.
- Every opportunity will be made to find a position comparable to the one the employee left if the leave of absence does not exceed time allotted within CFPA's established guidelines.
- Unused sick leave time will not be paid to employees when they leave CFPA.

### 3.5 Paid Parental Leave

Paid parental leave is provided to employees who need time off due to the birth or adoption of a child, placement of a foster child in the home, or a temporary disability caused by pregnancy or childbirth. Maximum parental leave is 16 weeks in total as described below. To be eligible for compensation during parental leave, the employee must be employed by CFPA beyond the Introductory Period. Employees must let their supervisor know of their intention to take parental leave as soon as practicable.

If you are eligible for paid parental leave (i.e., employed beyond 90 days) you will be entitled to receive eight weeks of salary and benefits. During the eight weeks of paid parental leave, you will receive the same pay rate and benefits as you would have received if you were actively employed, subject to the terms and conditions of the applicable employee benefit plans.

Following the eight-week paid period, unpaid parental leave for up to an additional eight weeks may be granted to employees who need additional time off due to the birth or adoption of a child, placement of a foster child in the home, or a temporary disability caused by pregnancy or childbirth. Employees may elect to use any accrued but unused paid leave time during the unpaid leave period.

In compliance with the Connecticut Fair Employment Practices Act, CFPA will provide reasonable accommodations to applicants or employees who have medical needs arising from pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions once the employee requests an accommodation, unless providing an accommodation would be an undue hardship for the employer. Reasonable accommodations mean being permitted to sit while working, more frequent or longer breaks, periodic rest, assistance with manual labor, job restructuring, light duty assignments, modified work schedules, temporary transfers to less strenuous or hazardous work, frequent and longer bathroom breaks, modifying a food and drink policy; time off to recover from childbirth, or break time and appropriate facilities for expressing breast milk.



### 3.6 Bereavement Leave

Bereavement leave provides paid time off for employees in the event of a death in their immediate family. An immediate family member for purposes of CFPA's bereavement leave policy includes the following:

- Spouse
- Child (including foster children and stepchildren)
- Parent (including legal guardian and stepparent)
- In-laws (including mother and father-in-laws and brother and sister-in-laws)
- Grandparent
- Grandchild
- Sibling
- Same-sex partner

Employees are entitled to three days' paid time off for a death in the immediate family. Because of the deep impact that death can have on an individual or a family, additional unpaid time off may be granted on a discretionary basis.

Additionally, bereavement leave provides one day of paid time off for employees in the event of a death of a domestic animal companion.

Requests for bereavement leave must be submitted to the Executive Director as soon as possible. In addition, CFPA may require verification of the need for the leave.

### 3.7 Jury Duty

Employees who are called to jury duty must give immediate notice to their supervisor. While CFPA recognizes the civic responsibility of employees called upon to perform jury duty, scheduling conflicts may require that the employee request a postponement. By Connecticut law, CFPA compensates full-time employees for the first five days they serve on jury duty.

### 3.8 Military Leave Policy

An employee who is inducted into the Armed Forces of the United States shall be granted a military leave of absence. Upon completion of the period of active service, if the former position is not available, the employee will be restored to a position of like seniority, status, and pay provided that the employee has received a certificate attesting to the satisfactory completion of their military service, is still qualified to perform the duties of their former position, makes application for re-employment within 90 days after their discharge from military service, and that CFPA's circumstances have not changed so as to make it impossible or unreasonable to rehire the employee. An employee on military leave will receive vacation



pay equal to the amount of vacation allotment. Upon reinstatement, continuous service will date from time of original employment in determining all benefits.

Employees who are members of the National Guard or Active Reserves will advise the Executive Director, as soon as possible, of any mandatory or annual training dates. Employees may opt to use other forms of eligible paid leave time during the training dates, or they may take the time without pay or penalty. Employees or a designee of the employee must notify the Executive Director as soon as possible if they are activated to serve.

### **3.9 Family Violence Leave**

An employee who is a victim of family violence may receive up to 12 days of unpaid leave during any calendar year in which such leave is reasonably necessary: (a) to seek medical care or psychological or other counseling for physical or psychological injury or disability for the victim, (b) to obtain services from a victim services organization on behalf of the victim, (c) to relocate due to such family violence, or (d) to participate in any civil or criminal proceeding related to or resulting from such family violence.

Leave under this section shall not affect any other leave provided under state or federal law. Employees may substitute other accrued but unused forms of paid leave in lieu of unpaid leave.

If the employee's need for leave under this section is foreseeable, he or she must notify CFPA at least seven days prior to the date such leave is to begin. If the employee's need for leave is not foreseeable, he or she must give CFPA notice as soon as is practicable.

An employee who takes leave under this section shall provide CFPA with a signed written statement certifying that the leave is for a purpose authorized by this section. The statement may be a police or court record related to the family violence or a signed written statement that the employee is a victim of family violence from an employee or agent of a victim services organization, an attorney, an employee of the Judicial Branch's Office of Victim Services or the Office of the Victim Advocate, or an licensed medical professional or other licensed professional from whom the employee has sought assistance with respect to the family violence.

CFPA will keep all information provided by an employee concerning leave under this section confidential, including the employee's request and approval for leave, the fact that the employee or employee's family member was involved in a domestic incident, and verification documentation for leave. CFPA will only disclose such information if requested or consented to by the employee, ordered by a court or administrative agency, or otherwise required by state or federal law.

### **3.10 Witness and Crime Victim Leave**

CFPA will grant reasonable and necessary leave from work, without pay, to employees to (a) appear as a witness in any criminal proceeding as required by a legal subpoena to appear before any court of this state, (b) attend a court proceeding or participate in a police investigation related to a criminal case in which the employee is a crime victim, or (c) attend or participate in a court proceeding related to a civil case in which the employee is a victim of family violence. Employees should notify their supervisor or the Executive Director for need to take such leave as far in advance as is possible. CFPA will compensate full-time employees for the first five days of leave taken under this policy. Employees charged with a crime, who are required to attend a judicial proceeding, are not covered by this policy.



### 3.11 Emergency Response Leave

Employees who serve as a volunteer firefighter or member of a volunteer ambulance service are entitled to an unpaid leave when late or absent from work in order to respond to an emergency call received prior to or during the employee's regular hours of employment.

To be eligible for leave under this section, an employee must:

- Submit to CFPA a written statement signed by the chief of the volunteer fire department or the medical director or chief administrator of the ambulance service or company no later than thirty (30) days after the date on which the employee is certified as a volunteer, notifying CFPA of the employee's status as a volunteer;
- Make every effort to notify CFPA that they may report to work late or be absent from work in order to respond to an emergency fire or ambulance call prior to or during their regular hours of employment;
- When necessary, submit to CFPA a written statement signed by the chief of the volunteer fire department or the medical director or chief administrator of the volunteer ambulance service or company explaining why the employee was unable to provide prior notification of a late arrival to work or an absence from work in order to respond to an emergency fire or ambulance call;
- Submit a written statement from the chief of the volunteer fire department or the medical director or chief administrator of the volunteer ambulance service verifying that the employee responded to a fire or ambulance call and specifying the date, time, and duration of such response; and
- Promptly notify CFPA of any change to the employee's status as a volunteer firefighter or member of a volunteer ambulance service, including the termination of such status.

### 3.12 General Assembly Leave

Employees will be granted an unpaid leave of absence to perform to duties of the following elected offices: the office of representative or senator in the General Assembly. In order to receive such leave, the employee must give CFPA written notification within 30 days of being nominated.

### 3.13 Municipal/ State Official Leave

Employees elected to a full-time municipal or state office will be granted an unpaid leave of absence for not more than two consecutive terms of office. In order to receive such leave, the employee must provide CFPA notice that they are a candidate for a full-time municipal or state office within thirty (30) days of being nominated for the office.

### 3.14 Quarantine Orders

At all times, CFPA prioritizes the safety and wellbeing of its employees and volunteers. CFPA will comply with federal, state, and local quarantine orders, safer-at-home or shelter-in place orders, social distancing guidelines, curfews, or similar guidance, as applicable to the operations of CFPA.



## SECTION 4: WORKPLACE SAFETY

### 4.1 Smoke-Free Workplace

CFPA provides a smoke-free workplace. Smoking, including the use of e-cigarettes and vaporizers, is prohibited throughout the workplace. We have adopted this policy because we have a sincere interest in the health of our employees and in maintaining pleasant working conditions.

### 4.2 Drug and Alcohol Use

CFPA is committed to maintaining a workplace free of substance abuse. No employee or individual who performs work for CFPA is allowed to consume, possess, sell, purchase, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, as defined by federal law, on any property owned by CFPA or in the performance of duties for CFPA.

The use of over-the-counter drugs and legally prescribed drugs is permitted as long as they are used in the manner for which they were prescribed and provided that such use does not hinder an employee's ability to safely perform his or her job. Employees should inform their supervisor or the Executive Director if they believe their medication will impair their job performance, safety, or the safety of others or if they believe they need a reasonable accommodation when using such medication.

CFPA will not tolerate employees who report for duty while impaired by the use of alcohol or illegal drugs. All employees should report evidence of alcohol or illegal drug abuse to their supervisor or the Executive Director. In cases in which the use of alcohol or drugs creates an imminent threat to the safety of persons or property, employees are required to report the violation. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

As a part of our effort to maintain a workplace free of substance abuse, CFPA employees may be asked to submit to a medical examination and/or clinical testing for the presence of alcohol and/or drugs. Within the limits of federal, state, and local laws, CFPA reserves the right to examine and test for drugs and alcohol at our discretion.

From time to time, CFPA may sponsor social or business-related events at which alcohol is served. This policy does not prohibit the use or consumption of alcohol at such events. However, if employees choose to consume alcohol at such events, they must do so responsibly and maintain their obligation to conduct themselves properly and professionally at all times.

Employees found in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### 4.3 Searches

CFPA reserves the right to inspect the property and person of any individual or vehicle on its property or in the vicinity of the Association's premises. This includes, but is not limited to, work stations and desks, packages, purses, bags, vehicles, and computers. Employees do not have any expectation of privacy in any CFPA property and/or any personal property brought onto or in the vicinity of CFPA's premises.



#### 4.4 Weapons

All employees are prohibited from carrying a weapon while in the course and scope of performing their job duties for CFPA whether they are on CFPA property at the time or not and whether they are licensed to carry a handgun or not. This policy also prohibits weapons at any CFPA-sponsored functions.

Weapons include:

- Guns
- Knives
- Mace
- Explosives
- Any item with the potential to inflict harm that has no common purpose.

This list is illustrative only, and not exhaustive. CFPA prohibits employees from possessing any weapon at the workplace.

Those employees who have valid concealed weapon permits may store firearms locked in their parked vehicles; however, such employees, unless otherwise permitted, may not remove their firearms from their vehicles.

Failure to abide by this policy may result in immediate removal from the worksite, prosecution, and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination. This policy shall not be construed to create any duty or obligation on the part of CFPA to take any actions beyond those required of an employer by existing law. CFPA understands that at times, employees may need to carry on their person an item of personal protection to defend against possible threats including but not limited to wild animals or to navigate natural-occurring environmental obstacles. If an employee intends to use an item of personal protection as part of their job duties, the employee must notify their supervisor in writing prior to bringing the item to work and describe: (1) the type of item; (2) the item's intended use; and (3) how and where the item will be stored when not in use.

#### 4.5 Workplace Violence

CFPA strictly prohibits workplace violence, including any act of intimidation, threat, harassment, physical violence, verbal abuse, aggression, or coercion against any person.

Prohibited actions, include, but are not limited to, the following examples:

- Physically injuring another person;
- Threatening to injure another person;
- Engaging in behavior that subjects another person to emotional distress;
- Using obscene, abusive, or threatening language or gestures;



- Bringing an unauthorized firearm or other weapon onto CFPA property;
- Threatening to use or using a weapon while on company premises, on CFPA-related business, or during job-related functions; and
- Intentionally damaging property.

All threats or acts of violence should be reported immediately to your supervisor or the Executive Director. Employees should warn their supervisor or the Executive Director of any suspicious workplace activity that they observe or that appears problematic. Employee reports made pursuant to this policy will be investigated promptly and will be kept confidential to the maximum extent possible. CFPA will not tolerate any form of retaliation against any employee for making a report under this policy.

CFPA will take prompt remedial action, up to and including immediate termination, against any employee found to have engaged in threatening behavior or acts of violence.



## SECTION 5: EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

### 5.1 Benefit Plans

CFPA is committed to sponsoring a comprehensive benefits program for all eligible employees, including comprehensive health, dental, and vision plans. A good benefits program is a solid investment in CFPA's employees. CFPA will periodically review the benefits program and will make modifications as appropriate based on maintaining a competitive level of benefits as well as CFPA's ability to pay for them. **Actual coverage is determined by the express terms of plan documents.**

### 5.2 403(b) Program

CFPA employees have the opportunity to participate in a CFPA-sponsored retirement plan. **Actual coverage is determined by the express terms of the plan documents.** CFPA encourages employees to review the plan's materials carefully. For details on the specific retirement plans offered through CFPA, as well as copies of the plan documents, contact your supervisor or the Executive Director.

### 5.3 Workers' Compensation

Employees who are injured on the job at CFPA are eligible for workers' compensation benefits. Workers' compensation benefits are provided at no cost to employees and may cover any injury or illness sustained in the course of employment that requires medical treatment.

Lost time or medical expenses incurred as a result of an accident or injury that occurred while an employee was on the job will be compensated for in accordance with workers' compensation policies and applicable laws. This benefit is paid for in full by CFPA. No premium is charged for this coverage, and no individual enrollment is required.

All job-related accidents or illnesses must be reported to an employee's supervisor or the Executive Director immediately upon occurrence. Employees will not be retaliated against for reporting any compensable injury to CFPA; rather, failure to report an injury may delay or result in a denial of a claim.

### 5.4 Unemployment Compensation

Unemployment compensation is designed to provide you with a temporary income when you are out of work through no fault of your own. For your claim to be valid, you must have a minimum amount of earnings determined by the state in which you are employed, and you must be willing and able to work. You should apply for benefits through your state unemployment office as soon as you become unemployed.

### 5.5 Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act ("COBRA")

COBRA is a federal law that requires most employers sponsoring group health plans to offer a temporary continuation of group health coverage when coverage would otherwise be lost due to certain specific events.

Through COBRA, employees and their qualified beneficiaries have the right to continue group health insurance coverage after a "qualifying event." The following are qualifying events:



- Resignation or termination of the employee;
- Death of the covered employee;
- A reduction in the employee's hours;
- For spouses and eligible dependents, the employee's entitlement to Medicare;
- Divorce or legal separation of the covered employee and his or her spouse; or
- A dependent child no longer meeting eligibility requirements under the group health plan.

Under COBRA, the employee or beneficiary pays the full cost of health insurance coverage at CFPA's group rates plus an administration fee.

The employee, or family member, has the responsibility to inform Human Resources of a divorce, legal separation, or a child losing dependent status. The employee, or a family member, has 60 days after the qualifying event to provide such notice, unless a longer period is permitted under rules of the plan. CFPA has the responsibility to notify the plan administrator of the employee's death, termination of employment, or reduction in hours.

Continuation of coverage is extended from the date of the qualifying event for a period of 18 to 36 months, depending on the type of qualifying event that gave rise to the employee's COBRA rights.



## SECTION 6: BUSINESS CONDUCT AND SAFEGUARDING COMPANY PROPERTY

### 6.1 Standards of Conduct

While working, employees must interact with coworkers, supervisors, and the community in positive, respectful, and cooperative ways. In order to aid employees in avoiding the sort of conduct that might lead to disciplinary action, a list of infractions that may result in such action has been compiled. Since it is impossible to enumerate every act or omission that would justify the imposition of disciplinary action, the list is not intended to be all-inclusive. The following is a non-exhaustive list of impermissible employee conduct that may result in discipline up to and including termination.

- Insubordination, including refusing or intentional failure to follow reasonable directions or do assigned work.
- Gross disrespect toward supervisors, colleagues, or other members of CFPA.
- Unacceptable job performance.
- Disregard of any known policy or procedure or gross negligence that results in a loss to CFPA.
- Causing embarrassment to CFPA that could potentially damage or actually damages CFPA's reputation.
- Abuse, misuse, or stealing of CFPA's or other employees' property or equipment.
- Abuse of e-mail, telephone, and mail.
- Soliciting or promoting support for any cause or organization during working hours without prior approval from the Executive Director.
- Violation of the policies contained in this Handbook.
- Smoking in CFPA facilities.
- Use or sale of alcohol (except as noted) or illegal or nonprescribed drugs on CFPA property or reporting for work under the influence of such substances.
- Carrying firearms or weapons onto CFPA premises at any time.
- Behavior or actions offensive to other employees or patrons, such as abusive vulgar language.
- Excessive absenteeism, tardiness, or patterned absences on a recurring basis.
- Displaying behavior that could endanger the employee or a fellow employee, such as fighting or engaging in violent, disorderly, or disruptive behavior.
- Violations of federal, state, or local laws affecting CFPA or employment with CFPA.



Violation of this Standards of Conduct Policy may lead to corrective or disciplinary action as outlined in this Handbook, up to and including discharge, depending on the circumstances of the individual case. CFPA may consider an employee's job performance, prior violation of work rules, and other relevant circumstances in determining whether to counsel, warn, suspend, or discharge an employee. It is up to CFPA to decide whether corrective action, is appropriate.

## 6.2 Acceptance of Gifts

Employees are not allowed to accept any monetary gratuity, including tips, from patrons or visitors. If an individual presses an employee to accept such a gratuity, the employee should thank him or her but explain that CFPA policy makes it impossible to accept it. Nominal nonmonetary gifts (e.g., a box of candy during the holiday season) may be accepted, but extreme care should be taken to balance the acceptance of such a gift and the possibility of a presumption of a conflict of interest even under such "minor" circumstances. Honoraria for a presentation made on behalf of CFPA can be accepted by CFPA, but not by an employee acting as an individual.

## 6.3 Service Relations

Impressions of CFPA are formed from community contacts with its employees. CFPA expects all employees to exhibit a courteous attitude toward patrons and fellow employees, in person, through electronic communications, and over the telephone,

CFPA's dress code policy is designed to help us all provide a consistent professional appearance and not offend supporters, potential supporters, and colleagues. Our appearance reflects on ourselves and the organization.

Employees are expected to always present a clean, professional appearance. Everyone is expected to be well-groomed and wear clean clothing, unless the day's tasks in the field may require otherwise. Clothing and grooming styles dictated by religion or ethnicity are exempt from this policy, in accordance with our Religious Accommodation Policy.

The Executive Director or supervisors are expected to inform employees when they are violating the dress code. Employees in violation are expected to immediately correct the issue. This may include having to leave work to change clothes. In these instances, the employee will not be compensated for the time required to change and must arrange to make up lost time.

## 6.4 Conflicts of Interest

CFPA insists that officers and employees avoid situations that might make it difficult for them to act in the best interest of CFPA and situations that are inconsistent with the policies of CFPA. In general terms, a conflict of interest exists when an officer or employee or a member of one's immediate family has a financial interest in a patron, supplier, employer, or other person dealing with CFPA that is of such a nature that it might affect judgments or decisions exercised on behalf of CFPA. Any doubts as to the propriety of any existing or contemplated transaction or relationship should be expressed to the Executive Director or to the Board President or another Board Officer, as applicable.



## 6.5 Telephone and Mail Policies

Employees are requested to keep all personal phone calls to a minimum. Friends and relatives should be discouraged from calling during working hours unless there is an emergency. Under no circumstances should you make or charge a long-distance call to CFPA unless it is work related or approved by your supervisor. Employees should not have personal mail sent to CFPA.

## 6.6 Social Media, Internet, and E-mail Use

Every staff member has a responsibility to maintain and enhance CFPA's public image and to use the Internet and social media in a productive manner. To ensure that all employees are responsible, productive Internet users and are protecting CFPA's public image, the following guidelines have been established for using the Internet, and the following updated policy specific to social media was adopted by the CFPA Board of Directors on November 20, 2019.

CFPA recognizes the role social media plays in modern communication. As such, we respect the right of employees to use social networks for self-publishing and self-expression while adhering to our organizational guidelines as well as CFPA's mission and values.

As a CFPA employee or volunteer, your commentary is not only a direct reflection of you personally but also our brand and respected position in Connecticut's conservation community. Commentary that is considered defamatory, obscene, confidential, or libelous by any offended party could subject you to personal liability and damage CFPA's reputation. Once it is on the Internet, it is there forever.

As such, please review and adhere to the following policies:

- We do not distinguish between "personal time" and "work hours" usage or personal devices and organization-provided equipment. You are at all times a representative of CFPA regardless of how or when you are posting on social media.
- Engaging with and sharing content posted by CFPA-branded accounts is encouraged and appreciated.
- Engaging personally with CFPA stakeholders (donors, volunteers, board members, sponsors, vendors, etc.) is encouraged and appreciated.
- Representing yourself as a CFPA employee or volunteer, up to and including the use of our logos and branding, on your personal profiles is encouraged, provided you do not represent yourself as a spokesperson for CFPA. CFPA's Executive Director or his communications designee department can provide you with suggested language, images, and/or guidelines. Please adhere to them.
- Employees or volunteers may not post any trade secrets or confidential or proprietary information about the organization without authorization from the Executive Director or his communications designee. If employees or volunteers have questions about what constitutes trade secrets or confidential or proprietary information, they should contact the Executive Director or his communications designee. Sharing any organization-privileged information, including copyrighted information or organization-issued documents, through social media will not be tolerated.



- The use of social media during “work hours” is left to the discretion of your supervisor. Any social media usage that distracts from work responsibilities will not be tolerated.
- Have a problem at work? Work it out in person. Airing your personal grievances on social media rarely leads to positive outcomes.
- Harassing, threatening, discriminating against, or disparaging any individuals through social media will not be tolerated.
- You are encouraged to seek permission prior to sharing photographs of other employees, clients, vendors, or suppliers through social media.
- Please contact the Executive Director or his communications designee immediately if contacted by the media or press about any post that relates to CFPA business.

Violations of any of the guidelines listed in this policy will be subject to corrective counseling and (a) for employees of CFPA, may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination; or (b) for volunteers of CFPA, may result in CFPA requesting the volunteer not to participate in future CFPA activities. Where necessary, we will advise appropriate officials of any violations of law.

If you become aware of any violations of this policy, (a) for employees of CFPA, you should report the violation to your supervisor, the Executive Director or his communications designee, or the President of the CFPA Board of Directors, as applicable; (b) for volunteers of CFPA, you should report the violation to the Executive Director or his communications designee or the President of the CFPA Board of Directors, as applicable.

Nothing in this policy is intended to create a contract of employment or for the provision of any benefit, and this policy does not in any way alter the “at-will” nature of employment with our organization.

**Acceptable Uses of the Internet.** Communications should be for professional reasons, but minimal personal use of the e-mail system is permitted as long as it does not interfere with job performance. Employees are responsible for seeing that the Internet is used in an effective, ethical, and lawful manner. Internet chat groups may be used to conduct official business or to gain technical or analytical advice. Databases may be accessed for information as needed. E-mail may be used for business contacts.

**Unacceptable Use of the Internet.** The internet should not be used for personal gain or advancement of individual views. Solicitation of non-CFPA businesses or any use of the Internet for personal gain is strictly prohibited. Use of the internet must not disrupt the operation of the CFPA network or the network of other users. It must not interfere with your productivity. Each employee is responsible for the content of all text, audio, video, or images that they place or send over the internet. Fraudulent, harassing, or obscene messages are prohibited. No abusive, profane, or offensive language will be transmitted through the system.

**Security.** All messages created, sent, or received over the Internet are the property of CFPA and should be considered public information. Internet messages are public communications and are not private. CFPA management will not enter into an employee’s personal e-mail files unless there may be a business need to do so. CFPA retains a copy of all passwords; passwords unknown to CFPA may not be used. System



security features, including passwords and message delete functions, do not neutralize CFPA's ability to access any message at any time. Employees must be aware that the possibility of such access always exists.

### **6.7 Personal Letters, Articles, and Endorsements**

Personal letters are not to be written on CFPA letterhead. Employees who are involved in endorsements, testimonials, publications, or who participate in public forums or affairs should make it known when they are acting and speaking in a personal capacity and not as a representative of CFPA. Questions regarding this policy should be addressed to the Executive Director.

### **6.8 Outside Employment**

Employees should refer to Section 6.4 – Conflicts of Interest, when evaluating outside employment and business opportunities. CFPA expects any employees considering outside employment to have a conversation first with their supervisor as a courtesy.

### **6.9 Confidentiality**

Protecting confidential business information and trade secrets is vital to maintain a competitive advantage in our industry. "Confidential Information" means CFPA proprietary or confidential information, technical data, and trade secrets or know-how, including research, product plans, products, services, customer lists and customers, donor lists, markets, software, developments, inventions, processes, formulas, software, hardware, technology, designs, drawings, engineering, marketing, distribution and sales methods and systems, sales and profit figures, finances, and other business information disclosed to employees during their employment with CFPA.

You must not disclose or use CFPA's Confidential Information except as required to perform your job. You must not disclose Confidential Information to anyone who does not work for CFPA or does not have a need to know the information. Anyone improperly using or disclosing Confidential Information is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. You are responsible for knowing what information should be treated as Confidential Information and should consult your supervisor or the Executive Director if you are unsure.

### **6.10 Notice of Immunity Under the Economic Espionage Act of 1996, as Amended by the Defend Trade Secrets Act of 2016**

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Handbook, employees shall not be held criminally or civilly liable under any federal or state trade secret law for any disclosure of a trade secret that: (a) is made (i) in confidence to a federal, state, or local government official, either directly or indirectly, or to an attorney; and (ii) solely for the purpose of reporting or investigating a suspected violation of law; or (b) is made in a complaint or other document that is filed under seal in a lawsuit or other proceeding.

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Handbook, if an employee files a lawsuit for retaliation by CFPA for reporting a suspected violation of law, the employee may disclose CFPA's trade secrets to his or her attorney and use the trade secret information in the court proceeding if the employee: (a) files any document containing the trade secret under seal, and (b) does not disclose the trade secret, except pursuant to a court order.



## SECTION 7: EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

### 7.1 Performance Evaluations

All annual performance evaluations of the previous year are generally conducted before January 31st of the following year. The performance review provides employees with an opportunity to assess their own successes, problems, strengths, and opportunities for growth. It allows supervisors to measure employee performance against job requirements and objectives and provides the basis for merit raises. Employees who disagree with appraisals may ask for a supplemental review.

### 7.2 Personnel Files

Personnel files are kept by the Executive Director and are not accessible to anyone except that officer. However, payroll information is made available to the auditor, bookkeeper, and board members on an as-needed basis.

Included in an employee's file will be his or her employment application, W-4 Form, salary history with CFPA, performance evaluations, and any other permanent records. Any letters received from patrons — whether complimentary or critical — will also be shown to the employee, cited, and placed in that employee's file. An employee may make an appointment to see his or her file and will be given access to his or her file within seven days of a request. However, an employee may only review the file in the presence of the Executive Director. To protect the permanent records, no employee may remove personnel files for private viewing. The Executive Director will ensure that employee files include all current employment data. It is the responsibility of the employee, however, to keep the Executive Director apprised of changes to personal data such as a new address, phone number, or name change.

### 7.3 References

All requests for terms of employment must be directed to the Executive Director. Another manager or supervisor may be authorized by the Executive Director to release references for existing or former employees. CFPA's policy is to release only the dates of employment and position held. If a current or former employee authorizes disclosure *in writing*, CFPA can also provide information on the amount of salary or wage last earned.



## SECTION 8: SEPARATION FROM EMPLOYMENT

### 8.1 Termination of Employment

Unless otherwise provided in a valid, written, and signed employment contract, CFPA operates under the principle of employment at will. This means that neither you nor CFPA has entered into a contract regarding the duration of your employment. You are free to terminate your employment at any time, with or without reason. Likewise, CFPA has the right to terminate your employment, or otherwise discipline, transfer, or change your position at any time, with or without reason, consistent with applicable state and federal law. All employees will be paid for all compensation earned, in accordance with state and federal law, following their termination from employment.

### 8.2 Resignation

Although we do not require two weeks' notice from a resigning employee, CFPA would appreciate such notice. However, CFPA may ask — and has the right to ask — a resigning employee to leave immediately. If such a request is made, the resigning employee may, at CFPA's sole and independent discretion, receive two weeks of severance pay. All employees will be paid for all compensation earned, in accordance with state and federal law, following their resignation from employment.

### 8.3 Job Abandonment

An employee's absence from work for three consecutive days without notification to their supervisor will be considered job abandonment. The employee will be considered to have voluntarily terminated their employment. Any wages due will be sent to the employee's home address based upon payroll records.

### 8.4 Staff Reductions

While CFPA will strive to avoid layoffs, it must reserve the right to initiate layoffs if it determines that such action is warranted based on economic circumstances or other factors that it deems important. Like every other employment decision, it is the policy of CFPA to reduce staff on a nondiscriminatory basis.

### 8.5 Return of CFPA Property

Any property issued to you by CFPA is the property of CFPA and must be returned at the time of your termination. You will be responsible for any lost or damaged items.