

PERSONNEL POLICY SUMMARY  
FOR  
WHITMAN COUNTY  
COLFAX, WASHINGTON

Human Resources  
May 2022

## **Whitman County Orientation Summary Disclaimer**

This orientation summary contains general information about company policies and benefits. As a result, the policies herein are guidelines only, not promises of specific treatment in specific situations, and the summary is not intended to be nor should it be construed as a contract, express or implied. The policies, practices and benefits provided by the County are subject to change, deletion, and exception at any time at the County's discretion. Decisions regarding interpretation and application of the County's policies and practices are also in the County's discretion.

If there is conflicting language between this summary and a bargaining unit agreement, the current bargaining unit agreement will take precedence.

## **WHITMAN COUNTY ORIENTATION SUMMARY**

All departments of Whitman County Government operate to perform the business of and serve the citizens of the County. Such business and service is to be provided promptly, efficiently and courteously to all citizens without regard to race, religion, creed, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, marital or veteran status, or any basis prohibited by local, state, or federal law.

### **AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/ EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY:**

Whitman County is an equal opportunity employer and will not discriminate against any employee in an unlawful manner. All activities related to employment such as recruitment, selection, transfer, promotion, termination, and training shall be conducted in a non-discriminatory manner.

It is the policy of the County to treat all applicants and employees equally and without regard to race, religion, creed, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression/identity, age, disability, marital or veterans status, as prohibited by local, state or federal law. It is also the policy of this County to foster and maintain a harmonious non-discriminatory working environment for all employees. Toward this end, the County will not tolerate racial, ethnic, religious, or sexual slurs or comments demeaning national origin or disability by any employee or about any employee or applicant. Whitman County strives to increase representation of all races, genders and ethnicity groups to better reflect its local labor market. The EEO policy and plan may be found at [www.whitmancounty.org](http://www.whitmancounty.org).

Violations of this policy will be cause for disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Any employee who feels he or she has been a victim of discriminatory treatment in violation of this policy should bring this concern to his/her Department Head/Elected Official or the Human Resources Office for appropriate action.

### **HARASSMENT:**

It is the policy of Whitman County that all employees will be able to work in an environment free from all forms of discrimination. It is the policy of Whitman County that harassment is unacceptable conduct on the job and will not be permitted. Harassment (including, but not limited to, harassment on the basis of gender and sexual orientation) includes any coercive behavior to control or affect anyone's job, or gestures, remarks or contacts of a nature, which are unwelcome. Disciplinary action up to and including termination may result for violations of this policy. This policy does not, however, apply to any relationships freely entered into by Whitman County employees. Therefore unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature, or the displaying of sexually suggestive objects or pictures in the workplace constitute sexual harassment when:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the individual's employment.
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting such individual.

- such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

**HARRASSMENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

- A. An employee who thinks he/she is being subjected to such harassment should make it plain to the offender that such behavior will not be tolerated. The employee is also to take the following actions:
- report the incident(s) to the offender's or employee's supervisor and/or Department Head/Elected Official OR;
  - report the incident(s) to the Human Resources Director.
- B. Supervisors or Department Heads/Elected Officials who receive complaints or become aware of such incidents will:
- notify the Human Resources Office for immediate investigation of the complaint;
  - take action to notify the offender that such action is inappropriate, will not be tolerated, and shall not be repeated.
- C. Each reported incident will be investigated and appropriate action taken. Any supervisor or employee who has been found, after appropriate and thorough investigation, to have sexually harassed another employee will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. An employee who has been found, after appropriate and thorough investigation to have intentionally fabricated a complaint of sexual harassment against another employee will be subject to disciplinary action.

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) COMPLIANCE:**

Whitman County does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disabled veteran status, Vietnam Era Veteran status, or disability in employment or the provision of services. It is the County's goal to assure disabled persons the opportunity to participate in or benefit from County services. Reasonable accommodations for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) will be provided upon request to the appropriate Department Head/Elected Official and/or Human Resources.

**BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS/ EXPOSURE CONTROL PLAN:**

It is the policy of Whitman County to provide a safe environment for employees which is as free as possible of infection from bloodborne pathogens. As such, high risk employees of Whitman County are required to know and follow universal precautions as described by the Centers for Disease Control. Specific infection control policies and procedures have been adopted and implemented in the County and are specified in the County Exposure Control Plan. Employees are required to view an instructional video about Bloodborne Pathogens upon hire and attend training updates as necessary.

**CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION:**

Personnel records are maintained on all County employees and are the property of the County. An employee's records are confidential except as stated by law. Confidential personnel records

shall not be released to any unauthorized individuals except with the written consent of the employee or in response to valid court orders or government requests.

Whitman County considers it a priority to keep confidential information secure and safe from unauthorized access and disclosure. Therefore, employees are required to maintain the privacy of confidential data they may encounter while working at the County.

Violations of someone's private information may result in discipline up to and including termination. Violations must be reported to the Privacy Compliance Officer immediately. The Officer may be found in the Public Health Department.

Employees should note that because the County is a public agency, personnel files are subject to the Public Disclosure Act. Contact Human Resources for details surrounding the Public Disclosure Act.

Employees are entitled to view their files upon request in the presence of their direct supervisor or Human Resources staff and may not remove or copy anything from the file. Requests for copies of personnel file documents should be made through the Human Resources staff.

**PUBLIC RECORDS:**

Whitman County is subject to Public Disclosure Act and other applicable state and federal laws. As such, all employees are expected to provide public records in accordance with legal regulations and County policy. Consult with the Prosecutor's Office and/or your department head/elected official for details on how to provide and document public record disclosure.

**OPEN DOOR POLICY:**

The Human Resources Office maintains an open door policy. If at any time in your employment, you have concerns or questions about practices, procedures, employment status, or benefits, you are encouraged to contact the Human Resources Office for assistance.

**SOLICITATIONS:**

Solicitation is prohibited on County property during working hours. Exceptions may be allowed at the discretion of the Department Head/Elected Official.

**GETTING STARTED**

**PROBATION PERIOD:**

The probation period is an extension of the selection process. It begins at the date of hire and can last up to eighteen months depending on the type of position. When the employee's suitability for the position is determined the evaluation period will end. An appointment to a position shall not be considered to have full-time or part-time status during the evaluation period. Upon completion of the evaluation period the employee shall be considered as having satisfactorily demonstrated qualifications for the position, shall gain full-time or part-time status, and shall be informed of this status by his/her supervisor.

Failure to successfully complete the probation period, as determined by the Department Head/ Elected Official, does not carry with it any right of appeal. Employees whose performance and/or qualifications for the position are inadequate or in violation of County policies or procedures will be informed and discharged at any time during the probation period.

**WORK HOURS:**

Hours of County operation are set to allow the accomplishment of work in the most satisfactory manner. Work hours may vary by department depending on the nature of the service provided, workloads, operational efficiency and staffing needs. Department Heads/ Elected Officials will establish specific starting and quitting times for the employees within the department. The County reserves the right to assign employees to jobs other than their usual assignment when required. In addition, employees may be required to work overtime or hours other than those normally scheduled when necessary. Punctual and consistent attendance is a condition of continued employment.

**TELECOMMUTING:**

Elected Official/Department Heads are allowed to implement telecommuting arrangements when it is necessary to accomplish County business. The telecommuting option is not an employee benefit – it is a management right that provides an alternative means to fulfill work requirements.

Telecommuting is not appropriate for all positions. No employee is entitled to, or guaranteed the opportunity. Offering the opportunity to work at home is a management option based on the discretion of the employee's Elected Official, Department Head and/or designee.

**LUNCH AND BREAKS:**

Employees working a regular shift may be granted an unpaid lunch break unless the nature of the position requires an uninterrupted work shift. The meal break is scheduled by the employee's supervisor. As authorized by the supervisor, meal breaks may be from thirty (30) to sixty (60) minutes in length provided that the employee still works the number of required hours for the day. The department must adhere to County publicized business hours and remain open during the lunch hour.

Work breaks are authorized, but must be arranged so not to interfere with County business. Breaks should be arranged so that the business of the County continues while an employee is on break; work/service shall not be interrupted because it is "break time." Employees are entitled to one fifteen minute break for each four hours worked.

**ATTENDANCE:**

It is expected that all employees will be at their job in accordance with the rules of work, holidays, and leaves of absence. It is part of the employee's responsibility to be at work as scheduled and to arrange personal schedules to accommodate the County's established working hours. Employees are expected to be at their work station, ready to begin work, at the beginning of their assigned shift.

**ABSENCES/TARDINESS:**

Employees are expected to notify their supervisor as early as possible when an absence or tardiness is expected. An unauthorized absence or repeated incidences of tardiness could be reason for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**PARKING:**

Employee parking is available at all County business locations. Some parking is designated for short term parking (i.e. 2 hours). Employees should park in the all day parking areas. There are three parking lots adjacent to the Courthouse and Public Service Building that provide convenient parking in Colfax.

**EATING AREAS:**

Your Department Head/Elected Official or supervisor will inform you as to the specific eating areas in your department.

**TELEPHONES:**

The County's telephone lines are intended solely for business use and should not be used for personal phone calls. You should not make or receive personal phone calls during work hours except in an emergency. Necessary personal calls should be made while on break. No personal long distance or toll calls should be charged to County telephones.

**EMAIL/INTERNET:**

All email/internet hardware and software are the property of Whitman County and may be subject to monitoring. Use of such devices for activities other than County business must be approved by the Department Head/Elected Official. Activities shall not include any of the following: commercial (unless for Whitman County); copyright violations; solicitation; harassment; downloading/uploading unauthorized files or programs; offensive or sexual material; inappropriate language; politics; misrepresentation; confidential information or hacking/ spamming; streaming audio or video for non-work related purposes.

Passwords shall consist of a combination of upper case, lower case, numbers and at least one special character. They shall not contain any part of the employee's name or username. Passwords shall be stored by the Department Head/Elected Official and shall not be shared between employees. If appropriate, email accounts may be accessed via the web. All rules and legal regulations regarding use and privacy apply.

**POLICY MANUAL:**

Much of the information contained in this policy summary is from the Whitman County Personnel Policies and Procedure Guide. A complete copy is located in each department and on Outlook Public Folders. Employees are encouraged to read the policies manual and ask questions about any matters that are not clear. The Human Resources Office is always happy to assist with answering questions.

**PERSONAL APPEARANCE:**

Employees shall wear appropriate attire for their positions and departments. All employees shall be neat and clean in dress and personal appearance. The Department Head/Elected Official may

issue rules regarding necessary, required, or appropriate attire for each department or particular position and employees shall dress in compliance with said rules.

**BULLETIN BOARDS:**

The Human Resource Office maintains an Employee Information Board on the first floor of the Courthouse. Job openings and other information for employees is posted in this area. Each County building has a bulletin board for business purposes, employment posters, etc. These bulletin boards are to inform employees of items of general interest. They are not to be utilized to advertise products or services for private endeavors/enterprises.

**LOST & FOUND:**

The Commissioner's Office serves as the Lost & Found for the Courthouse and Public Service Building. If you should find any articles and are unable to locate the correct owner, the article(s) should be turned in at that office. Departments or shops out of the Colfax area have their own lost & found areas.

**CREDIT UNION:**

Employment with Whitman County entitles you to become a member of the Washington State Employees Credit Union. The credit union has two branch offices in Pullman. Information about the credit union is available through the Human Resources Office.

**IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION FORM (I-9):**

All employees are required to complete an Immigration and Naturalization Form. This form verifies eligibility for employment in the United States. Identification as specified on the form must be presented to verify eligibility. The employee completes the upper portion of the form and the County's representative will complete the remaining section. The I-9 must be completed in the first three working days of employment and will be verified through the U.S. Government E-Verify system.

**W-4:**

Completion of a W-4 is required for tax purposes. If you have questions about your deductions/exemptions the Human Resources Office can answer general questions. Specific questions relating to tax liability should be referred to your accountant or tax specialist.

**IDAHO STATE INCOME TAX:**

If you are a resident of Idaho, the County withholds state income tax for you. Contact Human Resources for further details.

**SUPPLIES:**

Office and other supplies are County property and should be used for County business. Use of County property for personal reasons is not authorized and could lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**DRIVER'S RECORD CHECK:**

If your employment with the County involves driving County vehicles on a regular or semi-regular basis a driving record will be requested from the Department of Licensing of the state



from which you hold a driver's license. An unsatisfactory driver's report may result in termination of employment.

**BACKGROUND CHECK:**

If your employment with the County involves providing direct service to children or adults, or is within law enforcement; including District Court, Superior Court, and the Prosecutor's Office, or requires the handling of County funds, a criminal history check will be performed. If you are such an employee, your employment with the County is contingent upon successfully passing the criminal history check.

**GETTING PAID**

**SALARY/WAGE:**

Your pay is based on either a monthly salary amount or an hourly wage. Most full-time and part-time employees are paid based on a monthly salary. Temporary employees are usually paid on an hourly basis.

**PAY DAYS:**

The County issues paychecks twice per month. Employees may arrange for direct deposit through the Human Resources Office. The Auditor's Office mails hardcopy paychecks and pay stubs to each employee.

**TIME SHEETS:**

Each employee is responsible for completing his/her own time sheet through the automated time system. Your supervisor or Department Head/Elected Official will advise you on the proper completion of the time sheet used in your department. Falsification of the time sheets may be considered fraud, including "buddy bumping" and will be reason for disciplinary action up to and including termination. "Buddy bumping" is when one employee clocks in and out for another employee.

Time sheets are legal documents of the County and are not to be defaced or taken from the assigned area. Any notations, such as vacation time, sick leave or other notation must be made with the approval of and/or signed by the supervisor and/or Department Head/Elected Official.

**OVERTIME; EXEMPT AND NON-EXEMPT EMPLOYEES:**

County employees may be required to work overtime when necessary as determined by their Supervisor. Although employees will be given advance notice when feasible, this is not always possible. For most employees, work in excess of 40 hours in the workweek will be considered overtime.

All overtime worked by employees must be specifically authorized prior to the performance of the work by the Department Head/Elected Official or Supervisor. Employees who work unauthorized overtime may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Overtime shall be paid at 1.5 times the position's hourly rate. Compensatory time may be granted in lieu of overtime pay in accordance with County policy and union contract language.

Compensatory time must be agreed to by the employee and the supervisor prior to the performance of work.

Employees found to be exempt in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act are not compensated for overtime hours. They professionally manage and schedule their own work time to complete their duties. Exempt employees record their actual hours and do not record absences for less than a full workday.

**AUTHORIZATION FOR DEDUCTIONS:**

Payment for health and life insurance is made through payroll deductions. Employees must sign the Payroll Deduction Authorization form to permit the County to deduct the designated amounts for health and life insurance and any other deductions requested by the employee.

Because payroll is processed twice per month, most monthly deductions are equally split between both pay days. Contact Human Resources or the Whitman County Auditor for further information.

**DIRECT DEPOSIT:**

Pay day direct deposits may be made to most banks in Whitman County. Employees choosing to participate in direct deposit must complete the appropriate form and provide a voided check or other eligible document as described on the enrollment form. Direct deposit forms must be received in Human Resources by the 12<sup>th</sup> of the present month to be effective the 1<sup>st</sup> payroll of the following month. Enrollment forms must be received by the 27<sup>th</sup> of the present month to be effective the 2<sup>nd</sup> payroll of the following month.

**CAFETERIA/FLEX ONE – FLEXIBLE BENEFITS PLAN:**

The County offers an IRS Cafeteria type plan that allows employees the opportunity to pay health insurance and other special care premiums with pre-tax dollars.

**IMPORTANT:** Please make sure to ask any questions you may have *prior* to making your participation election. Once you've made your participation election, you may not be eligible to change or revoke your election until the next open enrollment period effective January 1<sup>st</sup> of the next plan year.

**GETTING AHEAD**

**STEP INCREASES:**

Whitman County non-represented and unionized employee groups receive wage increases in accordance with multiple salary ranges and steps. Steps are awarded after specific time periods and a successful performance evaluation. Specific information about the step system for each employee group may be found in the policy manual and the appropriate collective bargaining agreement at [www.whitmancounty.org](http://www.whitmancounty.org).

An employee may change salary ranges through promotion to another job within the County or a re-evaluation of the position due to job responsibility changes. The Human Resources Director, at the request of the employee or Department Head/Elected Official, does this review for

possible reclassification. The Human Resources Director completes a position analysis and either denies the reclassification or makes a recommendation to the County Commissioners. A denial for classification can be appealed to the Classification Committee.

**JOB POSTINGS & PROMOTIONS:**

Job openings for positions within the County are advertised to the general public and County employees. Certain bargaining unit positions may be posted within the respective unions for five working days prior to public posting.

Department Heads/Elected Officials may fill vacancies within their department by promotion of employees within the service of the County.

**EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE:**

The County does not offer financial assistance for the education of employees at academic institutions. However, there is opportunity for enhancing professional skills and knowledge through attendance at workshops, seminars and training sessions within the County and those sponsored by other agencies or individuals. Attendance at such workshops, unless mandated by the County, state or federal standards, is at the discretion of the Department Head/Elected Official. Employees are strongly encouraged to share the information/skills gained at such conferences with other employees or departments that may benefit from such information.

**TRAINING:**

The County offers many types of training to employees: individual and group training through in-house presentations or demonstrations, and as mentioned above, through the attendance at seminars or workshops. Department Heads and/or Elected Officials plan the training program for employees. Attendance at workshops and seminars is offered to employees without loss of wages or benefits.

**PERFORMANCE REVIEWS:**

Most employees are provided a performance review by the immediate supervisor at least annually and prior to step increase eligibility. The performance review at the end of the probationary period determines the status of the employee; from probationary status to full or part time. Other performance reviews are conducted to provide the employee with specific information on their success at their job, improvements needed, and/or goals for the next review date. A performance rating is designated and the employee is granted a step movement based on that rating. An employee's performance level must be rated at least "meets expectations" in order to receive a step.

Employees are encouraged to respond to the comments and/or ratings given in their performance review. Some space is provided on the review form; additional sheets can be attached as the employee desires.

If an employee is denied a step increase due to poor performance the Department Head/Elected Official or supervisor will establish with the employee the next date at which the employee will be reviewed.

## **TAKING TIME OFF**

### **ANNUAL LEAVE:**

Full-time employees who qualify are eligible to accrue annual leave at the rate of 4 hours of annual leave for each pay period. After 5, 10, 15 and 20 years of service, the monthly accrual increases. (Refer to the Personnel Policies manual for specific information.) Employees hired on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> have a rounded hire date of the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month hired. Employees hired after the 15<sup>th</sup> have a rounded hire date of the first of the next month. That rounded hire date determines when accruals may start. An employee must work half of the pay period to accrue. Annual leave is pro-rated for part-time employees who qualify. Employees must be hired to work at least 50% time to be eligible for vacation accruals. Consult with the Human Resources Department to determine if your position qualifies. Temporary employees do not earn annual leave.

Effective mid-2018 accruals will occur per pay period (twice per month) at one half the monthly rate each period.

Annual leave is allowed subject to approval by the Department Head/Elected Official, and insofar as consistent with the efficient operation of the department, the person in charge shall endeavor to schedule vacation according to the employee's length of service and choice of dates.

Although annual leave benefits are earned from the date of employment, full and part-time employees, who qualify, may not use this benefit until they have completed the probation period. After termination of employment, the employee is eligible to receive payment for accrued annual leave up to the maximum balance of 216 hours, or 240 hours with 20+ years of service, unless termination occurs during the probation period. Hours obtained due to the sick leave conversion benefit are not eligible for payout.

Annual leave is accrued until December 31<sup>st</sup>. A maximum of 216 hours, or 240 with 20+ years of service, of annual leave may be carried over at year-end. Any annual leave over this limit will be automatically forfeited without action on the part of any party.

### **HOLIDAYS:**

Whitman County recognizes twelve holidays per year. Regular employees qualify for a holiday if their position is classified at least 50% time and they worked twenty (20) hours per week during the corresponding pay period. The following dates are recognized and observed as paid holidays for all regular full and part-time employees who qualify:

New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, Native American Heritage Day, Christmas Day and one Floating Holiday.

Whenever a holiday falls on Sunday, the succeeding Monday is observed as the holiday. Whenever a holiday falls on a Saturday, the preceding Friday shall be observed as a holiday. Each holiday is taken on one calendar day per year.

Part-time employees will be eligible for only those recognized holidays which occur on a day they would normally be scheduled to work, and will be eligible for a floating holiday if they are regularly scheduled to and work twenty (20) or more hours per work week. Part-time employees will be compensated on the basis of the number of hours they would normally have been scheduled to work that day.

Temporary employees are not eligible for holidays.

An employee may select one Floating Holiday during each calendar year provided the employee has been continuously employed by the County for at least six months and the number of employees selecting a particular day off does not prevent the County from providing continued public service. New employees must be hired before July 1 in order to qualify for the Floating Holiday that year. This holiday is non-cumulative and non-compensable upon termination.

In accordance with State law, qualifying employees are entitled to two unpaid holidays per calendar year for reasons of faith or conscience or for an organized activity conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or religious organization. Selection of the dates requires approval with the department head/elected official. Contact Human Resources for further information.

**MILITARY LEAVE:**

Military leave is granted as provided by law; and in addition to any vacation or sick leave to which the employee is entitled.

**VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY SERVICES PERSONNEL LEAVE:**

Personnel also serving as volunteer emergency services are entitled to specific leave in the case of an emergency. Leave parameters are dictated by RCW 49.12.460.

**SICK LEAVE:**

Sick leave for full-time employees is accrued at a rate of four hours for each pay period. For part-time employees working 50% time or more who qualify, sick leave shall be prorated for each full month of service. See Human Resources for details on eligibility. It can be accumulated to a total of 960 hours. Any excess accrual is lost at the end of each calendar year. Sick leave accrues based on a rounded hire date. Someone hired on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month has a rounded hire date of the 1<sup>st</sup> of that month. An employee hired after the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month has a rounded hire date on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the following month. An employee must work half the pay period to accrue.

Sick leave may be used after 90 days of employment.

Regular employees working less than 50% time and temporary employees earn one hour of sick leave for every forty hours worked.

Employees are not allowed to draw on accumulated sick leave benefits for ninety days after being hired unless they are covered by a union contract that specifies otherwise. Benefits cannot be used or earned during a leave without pay and cannot be used or earned during a suspension without pay. Sick leave may be taken for the following reasons:

1. An illness or injury incapacitating the employee.
2. Exposure to a contagious disease, during which attendance at work would constitute a health threat to other employees or the public.
3. Doctor or dental appointments.
4. Illness or death in the immediate family (see the policy for a definition of “immediate”).
5. Death of an immediate family member. Restrictions apply.
6. When the employee’s workplace or child’s school or place of care has been closed by a public official for a health related reason.
7. For absences qualifying under the state’s Domestic Violence Leave Act.

Sick leave is only to be taken under the conditions outlined in this section and in the Policies Manual. It is not to be used for additional annual leave or to compensate employees for time off the job for any reason. Abuse of sick leave privileges may be reason for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Employees are responsible to notify their immediate supervisor of an absence due to illness as soon as they become aware of such illness or no later than the beginning of the work shift. Department Heads/Elected Officials may require a certificate of illness from a doctor after three days of absence. Restrictions apply.

Four hours of sick leave in excess of 960 may be converted to one hour of vacation. All accrual maximums still apply. Converted hours may not be paid out upon ending employment. See union contracts and County Policy for conversion ratio details.

**SICK LEAVE BANK:**

The County has established a sick leave bank for the purpose of assisting employees who have need of additional sick leave due to a serious illness or medical condition. Employees who are non-represented (by a union) may donate sick leave to an individual or a general donation to the sick leave bank. There are specific rules and guidelines set for each group of employees regarding how much time they must have to contribute, how much time they can contribute and the frequency of contributions. The Commissioners have also established criteria that an employee must meet in order to be granted time from the bank. See County Policy and union contracts for further details.

**DEATH IN IMMEDIATE FAMILY:**

Accrued sick leave up to three days is to be used in the event of a death in the immediate family. If the funeral is more than 250 miles away in one direction, up to five days sick leave may be used. If the employee requires additional time, annual leave or a leave of absence without pay

may be granted at the discretion of the Department Head/Elected Official. See the sick leave policy for a definition of immediate family.

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE:**

A personal leave of absence is a privilege the County may extend to qualified employees for specific periods of time under certain circumstances.

Leaves of absence may be allowed any full-time or part-time employee for a limited period not to exceed ninety calendar days. Leaves of absence are subject to the approval of the Department Head/Elected Official and the County Commissioners in advance, provided the leave is not a detriment to the Department or County as determined by the Department Head/Elected Official and County Commissioners. The employee is not required to use accrued sick leave or annual leave for a leave of absence. During a leave of absence without pay, benefits must be paid directly by the employee. Sick, vacation, and service time credits will not be accumulated during this time if the leave is beyond half of the employee's regular service month.

A leave of absence without pay must be requested in writing, in advance stating the reason for the leave and the anticipated date of departure and return. The request shall be received at least thirty days prior to the effective date of leave, except in emergency situations when the thirty days may be waived by the Department Head/Elected Official.

The County reserves the sole discretion and right to grant or deny any leave request.

**JURY DUTY:**

Any employee who is called to jury duty or is subpoenaed to appear as a witness before any court or other public body, in any proceeding in which the employee is not a party of interest in the litigation, shall receive from the County his/her normal rate of pay for the time actually required to be absent from work because of such obligation. However, if such employee shall receive compensation, excluding mileage, for jury duty or as a witness, such compensation received shall be deposited into the appropriate general County fund. Any such absence from duty shall not be considered sick or annual leave.

If an employee is called to jury duty or subpoenaed as a witness in Whitman County and is dismissed prior to the end of the work shift, the employee shall report to work for the remainder of the work shift.

**FAMILY LEAVE:**

The federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and state Paid Family and Leave Act (PFMLA) give eligible employees the right to take unpaid leave, or paid leave in specific circumstances, for a period of up to 12 weeks in any 12 months due to:

- the birth of a child or the placement of a child for adoption or foster care;
- the employee is required to care for a seriously ill relative;
- the employee being unable to do his or her job because of a serious health condition; or
- the employee is preparing for a relative's military pre or post deployment.

Different rules and restrictions apply. Contact Human Resources for further information. Pregnancy Disability Leave (PDA) is also available for those who qualify.

**MILITARY FAMILY LEAVE:**

An employee whose spouse is a member of the United States armed forces, national guard, or reserves who has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty; or who has been deployed; or when the military spouse is on leave from deployment, may have a total of fifteen days of unpaid leave per deployment.

An employee who is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of a covered service member who is recovering from a serious illness or injury sustained in the line of duty while on active duty is entitled to up to 26 weeks of leave in a single 12-month period to care for the service member. This military caregiver leave is available during “a single 12-month period” during which an eligible employee is entitled to a combined total of 26 weeks of all types of FMLA leave. See Human Resources for details and eligibility.

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEAVE:**

Washington State allows victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking to take reasonable leave from work. Employees may use sick leave or other paid time off, compensatory time, or unpaid leave time. Family members may also take reasonable leave to help a victim obtain needed treatment or services. Family member includes a child, spouse, state registered domestic partner, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent or person with whom the employee is dating. See Human Resources for details and eligibility.

**TEMPORARY EMERGENCY LEAVE IN RESPONSE TO A SHELTER-IN-PLACE/STAY-AT-HOME ORDER**

Emergency Leave is in response to an official shelter-in-place or stay-at-home order. Employees are paid full wages if they are asked to stay home due to the emergency. The leave ends when the order is stopped. Rules and restrictions apply. See the full policy or contact the Human Resources Department.

**RECEIVING BENEFITS**

**HEALTH INSURANCE CARRIERS**

Whitman County provides health insurance for most employees through Washington Counties Insurance Fund (WCIF). Each employee must complete the appropriate enrollment form, even if not electing to participate in a medical insurance plan.

Corrections Officer and Support Staff, and Road Bargaining Unit members receive specific coverage through the Teamster’s Welfare Trust Plans.

Contact the Human Resources Office for further information.

**HEALTH INSURANCE:**



Most Whitman County employees receive health insurance through Washington Counties Insurance Fund (WCIF). Corrections Officer and Support Staff Bargaining Unit members receive specific health insurance through the Teamsters Welfare Trust. A summary of plans and rates is provided at [www.whitmancounty.org](http://www.whitmancounty.org).

Whitman County pays a portion of the health insurance premium. The Human Resources Office can advise you of the amount the County is paying in any given year.

Dependents must be enrolled at the same time you sign up for health insurance coverage. If you elect not to enroll dependents at this time you will have to wait for the Open Enrollment period unless a “qualifying event” has occurred. Contact Human Resources for specific requirements.

Open enrollment for employees of Whitman County usually occurs during the months of October and/or November. Employees may change insurance plans, add dependents, and in some cases, change primary care physicians. The changes that you select during an Open Enrollment period will take effect at the beginning of the new group contract, usually January 1<sup>st</sup> of the next year. Health insurance becomes effective on the first day of the employee’s first full month of employment.

#### **CONTRIBUTION POOLING FOR MEDICAL INSURANCE:**

In the case where two spouses are working for the same employer, Whitman County allows one spouse to cover the second spouse as a dependent on medical coverage. Effective January 1, 2011 spouses working for Whitman County may elect to pool their County medical contributions.

Pooling is available to non-represented employees, as well as Courthouse, Road and Solid Waste bargaining units through Teamsters Local 690.

Employees where both spouses work in one of the employee groups listed above may elect to have one spouse cover the second spouse as a dependent on medical insurance. However, each spouse must maintain separate dental, vision and life insurance coverage through WCIF. If elected, each spouse will receive the County contribution agreed to through their bargaining unit and Commissioner vote. The spouse electing to be covered as a dependent will have the cost of dental, vision and life insurance deducted from their contribution. The remainder will be pooled with the remainder of the other spouse’s contribution to cover medical insurance premiums. Any remaining contribution after medical premiums are covered may be used for other dependents or placed in a VEBA account.

Interested couples should contact Human Resources during the open enrollment period for further details and paperwork. Spouses covered as dependents may lose Long Term Disability coverage, Short Term Disability coverage and/or retirement medical coverage through WCIF. Please see Human Resources regarding your specific circumstances.

#### **LONG TERM DISABILITY (LTD):**

A base plan for Long Term Disability (LTD) is part of each WCIF medical benefit package. The base plan provides 40% of pre-disability salary with a six-month waiting period. The Long Term

Disability buy-up plan is optional. Applying for the LTD buy-up coverage during the open enrollment period requires successful completion of underwriting. The buy-up plan provides 60% of pre-disability salary with a three-month waiting period. If an employee has waived medical coverage, they are not eligible for the LTD base plan or buy-up option. New employees have 31-days to enroll. If they wait longer than the 31-days, their application will be processed through underwriting. Consult Human Resources for details.

**SHORT TERM DISABILITY (STD):**

STD Insurance is a voluntary benefit through The Standard. Insurance premiums are based on the employee's salary. There is a 31-day waiting period following a qualified disability or injury event. The weekly benefit is 60% of your insured pre-disability earnings reduced by deductible income. Benefits will continue for a maximum of 180 days depending on the LTD plan selected. This coverage provides insurance during the LTD waiting period. If the employee waives medical coverage, and therefore LTD insurance, they may not be eligible for the STD. Contact Human Resources for premium amounts, applications and further information.

**VEBA:**

VEBA is a health reimbursement account that may be established when the employee's health benefit premiums are less than the County's contribution. Eligible employees will be provided with the application forms during orientation. Funds earn interest tax-free and there is no tax on reimbursements. Account balances can be carried over from year to year without penalty. You may be reimbursed funds for qualified medical expenses at any time. Funds in this account continue to earn interest if you leave employment with Whitman County. See the information provided with the VEBA application, County policy and union contracts for additional details.

**LIFE INSURANCE:**

The County offers a Basic Life insurance plan from The Standard Company. Dependent coverage may also be purchased by the employee. The plan has a \$24,000.00 face value for the employee, and dependent coverage for each family member of \$1,000.00. Life insurance coverage begins on the first day of the employee's first full month of employment. Additional life insurance is available at employee cost through The Standard. A separate application form is available with rate information from Human Resources. Whitman County Deputy Sheriff Association members receive life insurance plans at 1 times annual salary.

**DENTAL AND VISION INSURANCE:**

Whitman County offers, through WCIF, both a vision and a dental insurance plan for employees. A summary of the plans is provided in the new employee packet of forms and will be discussed more thoroughly in the orientation session you attend with the Human Resources Office. Corrections Officer and Support Staff and Road Bargaining Unit members receive vision insurance through a Teamster's plan.

**WAIVER:**

If you elect not to participate in the County's medical insurance plans you must sign a waiver acknowledging that you will not be able to enroll in any of the County's plans until the open enrollment period. If you choose to enroll yourself, but not your dependents, you must sign a

waiver acknowledging your choice. All eligible employees must participate in life, dental and vision insurance.

**RETIREMENT/PENSION PLANS:**

Position eligibility is determined for each retirement system plan based on varying criteria, which will be reviewed during your Human Resources orientation. The actual rules that govern membership are contained in state retirement law. If there are any conflicts between the position eligibility reviews and state retirement law, the law will govern.

Participation by eligible employees in these plans is required. Note that the rates are subject to change at any time. The amount of your wages subject to Federal income tax is reduced by your employee retirement contribution. Complete the Department of Retirement Systems Enrollment Form only if you have never been a member of the Retirement System before. Read the directions on the cover sheet carefully before filling out the form.

**WORKERS COMPENSATION:**

All employees of the County are insured in a state insurance program designed to protect them against medical costs of on-the-job accidents and injuries. The County pays a substantial portion of the premium cost for this coverage. The employee pays those costs required by law. All accidents and on-the-job injuries must be reported to a supervisor immediately. That supervisor shall direct the employee to seek medical treatment if necessary, and shall be responsible for reporting the injury to the Human Resources Office through the completion of the appropriate forms. Employees are responsible for reporting on-the-job injuries to their physician, who in turn files a report with Washington State for Worker's Compensation coverage.

**MISCELLANEOUS COVERAGE:**

Various types of voluntary benefits are offered via payroll deduction. A variety of organizations offer benefits such as deferred compensation, financial services/products, disability coverage, life insurance, transportation services and office products. Contacts for voluntary benefits are available in the new employee orientation packet or by contacting the Human Resources office.

**EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM:**

First Choice Health Services provides Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services to all Whitman County employees. The EAP offers short-term problem resolution and referral services. This benefit is free and confidential to all Whitman County employees and their families. Contact information for the EAP may be found in the new employee orientation packet or by contacting the Human Resources Office.

**EMPLOYEE DATA SHEET/CHANGING PERSONAL INFORMATION:**

This form provides the County with personal information such as your current address, emergency contact, and any medical conditions of which we should be aware of in the event of an emergency. If any of your personal information; name, phone number, address, or emergency contact changes, please advise the Human Resource Office in writing so that up-to-date information is maintained in case of an emergency.

**STAYING SAFE AND HEALTHY**

**SMOKEFREE WORKPLACE:**

Smoking is prohibited at all times in County enclosed work and common areas, whether in enclosed individual or shared office spaces and shall apply to all persons who visit enclosed work and common areas, including all employees, contractors or visitors. Designated smoking areas have been established outside for those who choose to smoke. Speak with your supervisor about designated areas for each specific building.

Definitions:

SMOKING - shall mean and include inhaling, exhaling or carrying any burning tobacco or other plant matter, including but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, or pipes.

ENCLOSED WORK AREA - shall mean that area closed in by a roof and walls with at least one opening for ingress and egress, with the intended use primarily for and by employees of Whitman County while conducting business in facilities which are owned, leased or rented by Whitman County.

COMMON AREAS - shall mean that area enclosed by a roof and walls in facilities which are owned, leased or rented by the County including but not limited to employee’s lounges, lunchrooms, stairways, elevators, restrooms, and hallways.

**DRUG FREE WORKPLACE:**

Whitman County recognizes alcohol and drug abuse as potential health, safety and security problems. Whitman County expects all employees to assist in maintaining a work environment free from the effects of alcohol, drugs, or other intoxicating substances. Compliance with this substance abuse policy is made a condition of employment.

- I. Whitman County prohibits employees from the manufacture, dispensing, possession, use, distribution, or purchase of non-prescribed drugs and intoxicants on County premises and from working under the influence of alcohol, prohibited substances, or intoxicants during work hours.
  
- II. Employees are required to report to their jobs in an appropriate mental and physical condition, ready to work. If an employee may be impaired because of taking medication according to a doctor’s prescription, they’re required to discuss it with their supervisor before commencing work that day. If a supervisor has a reasonable suspicion that an employee is under the influence of drugs/alcohol, he/she may require the employee to undergo testing. Employees required to have a CDL will be subject to pre-employment and random drug/alcohol testing.
  
- III. Any employee who is convicted of any violation of any criminal drug statute (including misdemeanors) for a violation occurring on Whitman County property or time shall notify his or her supervisor within five (5) days of the

date of conviction. A conviction includes any finding of guilt (including one agreed to by the employee), or pleas of no contest and/or any imposition of a fine, jail sentence, or other penalty.

IV. Employees who have an alcohol or drug abuse problem are strongly encouraged to seek assistance through any programs offered through the County's health carriers or the Employee's Assistance Program. Any violation of this substance abuse policy will result in discipline up to, and including termination.

V. Drug Abuse Education Program. The County will utilize available County resources to educate employees as to the dangers of drug abuse.

**HOUSEKEEPING:**

The County employs janitorial staff to perform the bulk of cleaning and maintenance work. If your work area requires special attention please notify your supervisor so that the maintenance staff can be contacted. Generally your office/work area should be kept free from any safety or fire hazards. For specific rule or practices about housekeeping and the appearance of your work area your supervisor or Department Head/Elected Official will advise you.

**SAFETY EQUIPMENT AND SAFETY RULES:**

The County provides any necessary safety equipment for the performance of your job duties. Employees are required to use such safety equipment in the interest of their own protection. Your supervisor will review specific safety rules and practices, as you are oriented to your job. Ignoring safety rules or common safety practices is reason for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**ID Cards:**

Employees are issued ID Cards at the time of employment and periodically thereafter. The cards are required for the identification of county employees. Employees are required to wear their cards during working hours unless determined to be a safety hazard by their department head/elected official. Replacement cards may be obtained through the Human Resources Department.

**FIRST AID:**

Some positions require that employees be First Aid or CPR certified. First Aid training is available from time to time for County employees. First Aid kits are located throughout County offices; your supervisor should inform you as to the location of these kits when performing your safety orientation.

**AED:**

Automated External Defibrillators (AED) are located at the Courthouse and the Public Service Building. Your supervisor will inform you as to their location when performing your safety orientation.

**ACCIDENTS:**

All on-the-job accidents must be reported immediately or as soon as possible to your supervisor. Even if no medical treatment is required, an accident report must be completed. Your supervisor will also complete an accident report; both reports are then forwarded to the Human Resources Office.

In the event that an on-the-job accident requires medical attention you may go to the physician or hospital of your choice. Notify the doctor that your injury is job related. They will have the Department of Labor & Industries form for you to complete. Once approved by L&I, you may not have to pay for medical treatment received as a result of an on-the-job injury.

**SAFETY COMMITTEE:**

The County has a Safety Committee made up of County employees from various departments. This committee meets every month and discusses safety concerns throughout the County's facilities. Employees are encouraged to contact committee members if they have suggestions for improving the safety of the workplace or concerns they have noted. Employees who are interested in serving on the Safety Committee should notify Human Resources.

**WORKPLACE VIOLENCE:**

Whitman County does not tolerate workplace violence. This includes both threats and violent actions. All employees are responsible for maintaining a violence free workplace. Therefore, all employees must follow safe work practices and all incidents must be immediately reported to 911, the Department Head/Elected Official and Human Resources.

**INCIDENT TEAM:**

The Whitman County Incident Team is charged with providing guidance to employees in the event of an emergent incident working within the County's Emergency Plan. The Incident Team considers the safety and wellbeing of the citizens of Whitman County, establishes appropriate communication, and makes recommendations for action to the Board of County Commissioners in case of emergency.

An emergency is defined as an incident that can disrupt or shut down county operations, cause physical or environmental damage, be the source of injury or death, or threaten the financial standing or public image of the County, its employees, clients, or the general public.

The Incident Team consists of: a County Commissioner; Human Resources Director; a Law Enforcement representative; Director of Facilities Management and Fair; the Facilities Maintenance Manager; IT Director; Administrative Director; Public Works Director; Director of Public Health; Director of Parks; Director of Emergency Management; and the Superior Court Administrator.

Employee concerns regarding emergencies, safety and/or security may be directed at any member of the Incident Team for consideration. The Human Resources Department or County Commissioners may be contacted for further information.

