

FORSYTH COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Employee Handbook

Published January 2017

Revised 07/01/2018

FORSYTH COUNTY
GOVERNMENT CENTER



.....

Message From the County Manager



Dear Colleagues,

YOU are essential! As an employee of Forsyth County Government, our collective success depends on each one of us consistently providing the highest quality service to our owners - the Forsyth County citizens. I often say that we are judged by every interaction we have with our citizens and we literally have thousands of these impressions every day. It is a demanding job, and I appreciate your decision to spend a career in public service.

The Forsyth County Government Employee Handbook provides important guidelines for interacting with clients, customers, citizens and each other with integrity. Our culture is based on our [WeCare](#) Shared Principles, which guide all of our decisions and actions. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the handbook and make a commitment to follow it.

Remember that Forsyth County's culture starts with you. If you ever have questions or concerns about policy, please discuss with your supervisor or Human Resources.

Thank you for everything you do to ensure Forsyth County is a great workplace for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dudley". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

J. Dudley Watts, Jr.
County Manager

Table of Contents

<u>Message from County Manager</u>	2	<u>Diversity and Inclusion</u>	12
		<u>Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)</u>	
		<u>Fair Chance Employment</u>	
<u>Introduction</u>	6	<u>Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)</u>	
		<u>Harassment Prevention and Complaint Procedure</u>	
<u>Mission Statement</u>			
		<u>Employment</u>	18
<u>Vision</u>		<u>Introductory Period</u>	
		<u>Promotion or Job Transfer</u>	
<u>Brief History of Forsyth County</u>		<u>Demotion</u>	
		<u>Internal Investigations</u>	
<u>Description of Forsyth County Government</u>		<u>Responsibility for Positive Employee Relations</u>	
		<u>Residency Requirements</u>	
<u>Description of Responsibilities</u>		<u>Nepotism, Employment of Relatives</u>	
<u>Board of Commissioners</u>		<u>Grievance Procedure</u>	
<u>County Manager</u>		<u>Exceptions to the Grievance Procedure</u>	
<u>Human Resources Director</u>		<u>Disciplinary Action</u>	
<u>The Guiding Principles of WeCare</u>	11	<u>Progressive Disciplinary Process</u>	
		<u>Disciplinary Authority</u>	
		<u>Right to Appeal Disciplinary Action</u>	

Table of Contents

		<u>Workplace Expectations</u>	37
Employment (continued)		<u>Disclosure and Protection of Confidential Information</u>	
<u>Performance Improvement Plan</u>		<u>Conflict of Interest Guidelines</u>	
<u>Separation of Employment</u>		<u>Whistleblower Protection Policy</u>	
<u>End of Employment Defined</u>		<u>Outside Employment</u>	
<u>Payment of Accrued Leave</u>		<u>Attendance and Punctuality</u>	
<u>Return of County Property</u>		<u>General Rules of Conduct</u>	
<u>Exit Interview</u>		<u>Required Licensures and Certifications</u>	
<u>Re-employment</u>		<u>Information Technology Usage and Security Policy</u>	
<u>Break-In-Service</u>		<u>Political Activities</u>	
<u>Workplace Safety</u>	31	<u>Solicitation, Distribution and Posting of Materials</u>	
<u>Visitors and Minors in the Workplace</u>		<u>Gifts and Favors</u>	
<u>Access Cards and Employee Badges</u>		<u>Employee Personnel Records</u>	
<u>Security Presence</u>		<u>Use of County Vehicle</u>	
<u>Non-Pandemic Flu</u>		<u>Social Media – Acceptable Usage</u>	
<u>Life-Threatening Communicable Diseases</u> <u>Smallpox Vaccination Leave</u>		<u>Compensation</u>	50
<u>Workplace Searches and Monitoring</u>		<u>Classification Plan</u>	
<u>Drug-Free and Substance Abuse Policy</u>		<u>Trainee and Work-Against</u>	
<u>Inclement Weather Policy</u>		<u>Performance Appraisal System</u>	
<u>Emergency Management</u>		<u>Pay for Performance</u>	
<u>Workplace Violence Awareness and Prevention Policy</u>		<u>Longevity Pay</u>	

Table of Contents

Compensation (continued)		Parental School Leave	
Change in Hours Worked Per Week		Military Leave	
How to Calculate a Promotion if Work Schedule Change		Workers' Compensation	
Pay Periods		Shared Leave Policy	
Direct Deposit		Lactation/ Breastfeeding	
Deduction from Pay		Benefits	72
Other Employee Authorized Deductions		Eligibility for Employee Benefits	
On-Call Pay		Health and Dental Benefits	
Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)		Life Insurance	
Overtime Compensation		Additional Benefits	
Employee Travel and Reimbursement		Wellness Program and Health Assessments	
Time Off and Leave of Absence	58	Healthkick	
Annual Leave		Making Benefits Changes	
Holiday Leave		Annual Open Enrollment	
Sick Leave		COBRA	
Transfer of Sick Leave		Tuition Reimbursement	
Maternity and Paternity Leave (Non-FML)		Retirement	
Family and Medical Leave (FML)		Post Retirement Benefits	
Bereavement Leave			
Civil Leave		Employee Assistance Program (EAP)	
Blood Donation Leave		Service Awards	
Leave of Absence Without Pay (LOAWP)		Employee Services	
Voluntary Furlough Leave		Employee Handbook Acknowledgment Form	

Introduction

Whether you have just joined our staff or have been at Forsyth County for a while, Forsyth County Government is confident that you will find our organization to be a dynamic and rewarding place to work, and we look forward to a productive and beneficial partnership. The employees of Forsyth County are the most valuable resources to its successful operation.

This handbook has been written to serve as the guide for our employer-employee relationship. The purpose is to summarize the general policies of Forsyth County as they relate to employees appointed by the Board of Commissioners and by the County Manager, as well as to those employees in the Register of Deeds, Sheriff, and Tax Departments for whom and to the extent the Department Managers of said departments have adopted said rules, regulations and policies. Policies referenced in this handbook may be viewed in their entirety on [FCNet](#) or the County's public website.

Department Manager is defined as Director throughout this handbook. Department Managers have the authority to establish rules, regulations, policies and expectations for their own department within the scope of those contained in this handbook. Department Managers have authority to establish policies and expectations which include appropriate dress, attendance and flex time in their respective departments as long as they do not conflict with policies prescribed in this handbook.

All County employees, except those who have an employment contract for a period of time subject to certain conditions, are considered to be at-will employees. The policies and procedures contained in this handbook are not intended to be and should not be construed as creating an employment contract. The County reserves the right to suspend, revise or revoke any of its procedures or practices at any time with or without notice. This handbook supersedes any prior version or edition of the Forsyth County Employee Handbook for current use.



Mission Statement

The mission of Forsyth County Government is to cooperatively support and maintain a community which is safe and healthy, convenient and pleasant to live in, with educational, cultural and economic opportunities for all. We provide certain services which the Board of Commissioners has determined to be necessary and appropriate to advance this mission.

Vision

To provide responsive and innovative services, guided by integrity, professionalism, and compassion to the people of Forsyth County that enhances the quality of life and sense of community.

A Brief History of Forsyth County

Forsyth County began as a Moravian settlement in 1753 when Bishop August Gottlieb Spangenberg acquired a one hundred thousand acre tract of land from Lord Granville, one of the lord proprietors of North Carolina. The Moravians called their land Wachovia after the Austrian estate of Count Nicholas Lewis von Zinzendorf, an early protector of the Moravian church.

After the two settlements of Bethabara and Bethania were established, the town of Salem was begun in 1766 as the central town in Wachovia. Salem grew rapidly both as a religious center and as a center for crafts and trades.

In 1849, the North Carolina legislature created the new County of Forsyth out of part of Stokes County.

Forsyth County was named in honor of Colonel Benjamin Forsyth, a respected landowner in Stokes County. Colonel Forsyth distinguished himself in battle during the war of 1812 at Odelltown, Canada, where he was mortally wounded. In 1851, the town of Winston was named as the County seat.

The Courthouse Square was laid one mile north of Salem Square with plans for the streets of the two towns to run together.

In 1949, Willie H. Johnson, Jr., a Carver High School student, designed the Forsyth County seal during a contest to celebrate the County's centennial.

Forsyth County has progressed from its rustic past to a modern community that offers a variety of services to its citizens.

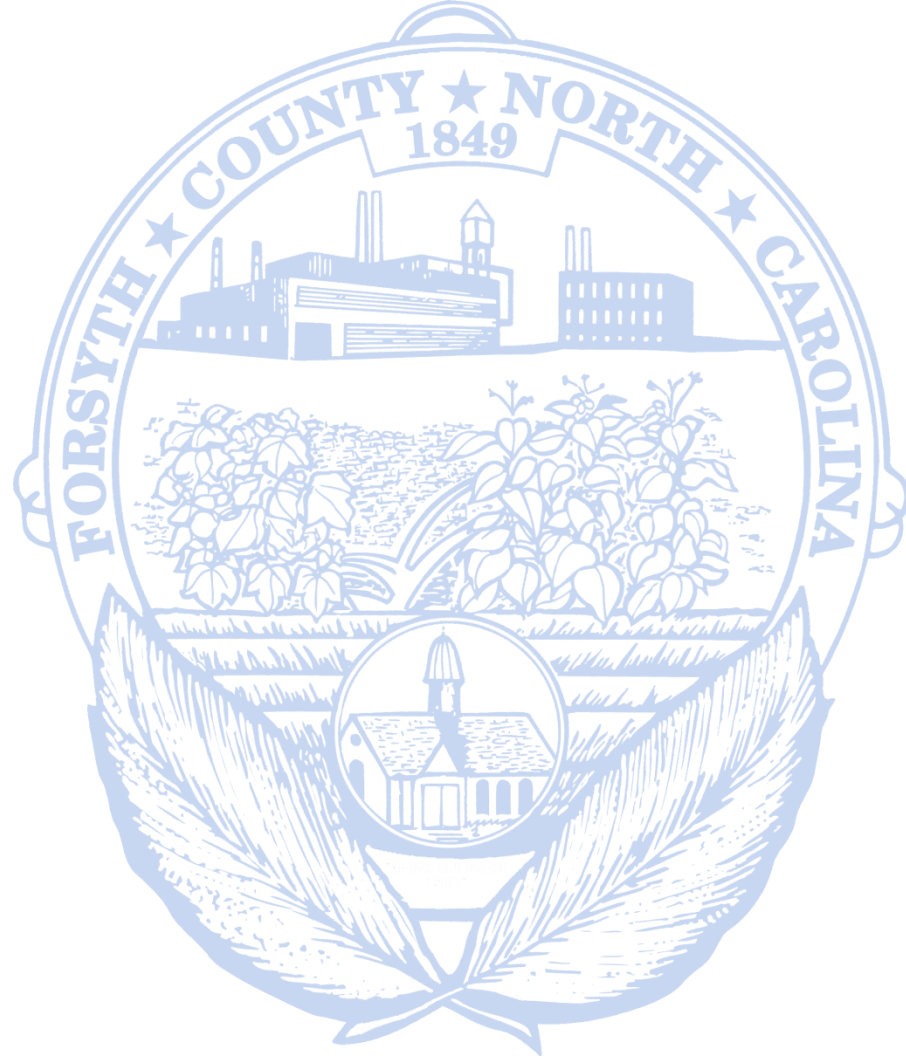


Description of Forsyth County Government

The Forsyth County Board of Commissioners is composed of seven members elected by Forsyth County citizens for staggered four-year terms. At the first regular meeting in December each year, the Board elects a chair and vice-chair from among its members for a one-year term. Refer to the County website for dates and times of regular meetings. The public is welcome to attend these meetings.

The Commissioners consider ordinances and resolutions that establish County policies and levy taxes. They also make appointments to boards, committees and commissions and set levels of service provided to Forsyth County residents.

The Commissioners appoint a County Manager as the administrative head of Forsyth County Government. The County Manager supervises the day-to-day operations of all departments under the general direction of the Commissioners. Forsyth County Government has a broad scope of responsibilities that includes functions such as Animal Control, Interagency Communications, Emergency Services, Sheriff, Environmental Assistance and Protection, Public Health, Social Services, North Carolina Cooperative Extension Services, Public Library, Parks and Recreation, Housing and Community Development, Budget and Management, Management Information Services, MapForsyth, Finance, General Services, Human Resources, Attorney, Board of Elections, County Manager, Register of Deeds, Tax and school funding.



Responsibilities of the...

Board of County Commissioners

Pursuant to North Carolina General Statutes, the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners is responsible for:

- Adopting personnel policies and amending them as necessary;
- Adopting the classification and pay plan and amending the plan as necessary to maintain a plan that is fair and equitable;
- Confirming appointments as required by law; and
- Fulfilling other responsibilities that may be established by state statutes.

County Manager

Pursuant to North Carolina General Statutes 153A, the County Manager is responsible to the Board of County Commissioners for the administration of the County's personnel system. The County Manager is authorized to appoint, discipline, suspend, and remove all County officers and employees, except those officers who are elected by the people, employees whose appointment is otherwise provided for by law, employees who serve at the pleasure of a governing board, or employees of the Office of the County Attorney.

The County Manager is also authorized to:

- Promote a positive work environment;
- Recommend staffing levels needed to support County operations within the fiscal parameters established by the Board of Commissioners;
- Establish performance standards and employee expectations;
- Recommend revisions and updates of the personnel policies to the Board of Commissioners;
- Recommend revisions and updates to the Classification Plan;
- Administer, maintain, and recommend revisions to the Pay Plan;
- Assign employee salaries within the ranges established by the Pay Plan and Classification Plan;
- Establish and adjust work schedules;
- Perform other duties as needed to provide for the administration and maintenance of a fair and equitable human resources system.

.....

Responsibilities of the...

Human Resources Director

The Human Resources Director, as directed by the County Manager, is authorized to:

- Establish and maintain a record of all persons employed by the County, including job class title, salary, date of appointment, and other data necessary to promote a fair and equitable human resources system
- Review and evaluate staffing levels in consultation with the County Manager and Department Directors
- Establish and administer a recruitment and selection process and the County's equal opportunity program
- Maintain a classification plan including all County positions and recommend revisions as needed
- Designate those employees who are exempt from the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act
- Establish, maintain, and administer compensation and benefit programs
- Develop and administer a performance review program
- Review and evaluate training, development, and educational programs for County employees
- Maintain consistent implementation of the County's personnel policies
- Report annually to the County Manager on the operations of the County's personnel system
- Serve as the County's EEO Officer and report any EEOC claim or potential claim to the County Manager immediately upon notification
- Serve as the County's ADA Coordinator
- Coordinate personnel action processes
- Facilitate and document appropriate grievance processes to ensure the County provides adequate consideration in resolving personnel actions

The Guiding Principles of WeCare

Everything we do at Forsyth County Government is driven by our Shared Principles, known as WeCare. These principles are a unifying force, connecting us across departments, divisions, and functional areas. These values shape the organization's culture at Forsyth County Government. Our Shared Principles enable us to make a positive difference throughout our workplace and community.



INTEGRITY

We do what's right. Integrity is the impartial and honest standard by which we make decisions and take actions, large and small, every day. In our practices, integrity is a mandatory standard.

AWARENESS

We strive to gain an understanding of how each department fits into the big picture to make a difference for our employees and this community.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We take personal responsibility. We hold each other accountable for our actions. We learn and grow to develop skills to better serve the community.

RESPECT

We treat all people with dignity and respect. We value diversity and inclusion throughout our workplace and our community.

EXCELLENCE

We encourage forward thinking. We strive to find new ways to innovate and improve service to our citizens.

2

3

4

5

6

7

Diversity and Inclusion

Position Statement

Fair treatment to all persons seeking employment or currently employed is one of the guiding principles of Forsyth County.

Forsyth County Government is committed to providing Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) to all employees and qualified persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, genetics, political affiliation or any other non-job related criteria. All employment and personnel policies and practices including recruiting, hiring, promotions, transfers, training, compensation, benefits, reductions-in-force, termination and tuition assistance will be administered in a non-discriminatory manner consistent with EEO principles. The County is committed to complying with the Federal Merit Personnel System as well as all applicable federal, state and local civil rights laws that pertain to employment.

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)

EEO Plan

Forsyth County Government has an Equal Employment Opportunity Plan (EEO Plan) available for review by County employees and the public. Employees may view the County's EEO Plan using the link on Human Resources' Homepage on [FCNet](#) or by using the link found on the County's public website. A bound copy of the County's EEO Plan is located in the Human Resources Department.

Fair Chance Employment

Forsyth County Government is a fair chance employer and ensures that the hiring practices of the County do not unfairly deny employment to people with criminal conviction records which are not job-related. To view the full Fair Chance Employment Policy, please visit [FCNet](#).

What Does EEO Cover?

These laws prohibit discrimination.



Remember:

It is the duty of every employee to report any harassment, retaliation, or other discriminatory treatment. Each employee is expected to respect others and act professionally at work.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Purpose

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits employers with 15 or more employees from discriminating against applicants and individuals with disabilities. This law provides reasonable accommodations to applicants and employees who are qualified for a job, with or without reasonable accommodations, so that they may perform the essential job duties of the position.

It is the policy of Forsyth County to comply with all federal and state laws concerning the employment of persons with disabilities in accordance with regulations and guidance issued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Furthermore, it is our county policy not to discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in regard to application procedures, hiring, advancement, discharge, compensation, training or other terms, conditions and privileges of employment.

What Does ADA Cover?

This law prohibits discrimination on the basis of a disability in all employment practices including hiring, firing, compensation and all employment related activities.

ADA Accommodations

The County will reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with a disability so that they may perform the essential functions of a job unless doing so causes a direct threat to individuals or others in the workplace and the threat cannot be eliminated by reasonable accommodation or if the accommodation creates an undue hardship to Forsyth County. Contact the Human Resource department with any questions or requests for accommodation.

Persons who feel they have not been afforded an equal employment opportunity after providing such notice to the Human Resources Director of such disability may follow the established grievance procedure outlined in this handbook. (See Grievance Procedure section.)



Remember:

It is your responsibility to follow Forsyth County policies. Failure to comply can carry serious consequences, including termination of employment. If you have questions or concerns about any of the County's policies that apply to your work, raise them *before* taking action.

Harassment Prevention & Complaint Procedure

Purpose

Forsyth County Government strives to provide an environment where all employees are free to perform their job duties with respect and dignity; therefore, Forsyth County will not tolerate or condone workplace harassment on the basis of race, sex, gender, religion, national origin, age, color, or disability in any department by co-workers, supervisors, or non-employees who conduct business with the County. Retaliation or interference, coercion, restraint or reprisal against any person complaining of, or participating in an investigation of, alleged harassment is also prohibited. The County has established a training program for all employees as a part of its prevention plan. The Workplace Harassment Policy is located on FCNet.

Who is Covered by this Policy?

This policy is applicable to all County employees *except* the Sheriff's Department which is subject to an internal procedure set forth in its "Standard Operating Policy 234."



Harassment Prevention and Complaint Procedure (Continued)



Remember:

Workplace Harassment is defined as unwelcome speech or conduct based upon race, sex, gender, religion, national origin, age, color, or disability or other protected status that creates a hostile work environment or constitutes quid pro quo harassment.

Hostile Work Environment is defined as unwelcome speech or conduct that unreasonably interferes with job performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment. Whether a hostile work environment exists depends upon, among other things, the following factors: (i) whether the harassment was verbal or physical or both; (ii) how frequently the harassment was repeated; (iii) how hostile and clearly offensive; (iv) the identity of the harasser (coworker or supervisor); (v) whether other people joined in the harassment; and (vi) whether the harassment was aimed at more than one person. In addition to actual verbal or physical behavior, some examples of things that could contribute to a hostile work environment include posted written materials and/or cartoons, radio or recorded audio played and computer images or websites that another person could find offensive based on one of the protected statuses listed above.



Remember:

Quid Pro Quo Harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct when:

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

Retaliation is defined as adverse treatment of an employee that occurs as a result of a report of, investigation of a report of, or opposition to workplace harassment.

Bullying is defined as the repeated mistreatment of one or more employees with a malicious mix of humiliation, intimidation and sabotage of performance.

.....

Harassment Prevention and Complaint Procedure (Continued)

What is the Complaint Procedure?

1. Any employee who believes he or she may have a complaint of workplace harassment must immediately file a complaint with their immediate supervisor, the Human Resources Director (“HR Director”), or the County Manager (only if the complaint is against the HR Director).
2. It is the employee’s responsibility to complain in writing or to request an individual interview and be prepared to provide as much specific information as possible.
3. Supervisors on notice of harassment or any employee who witnesses workplace harassment should also immediately report the prohibited conduct to their supervisor or the HR Director. Working very closely with Department Managers and other County administrators, the HR Director is responsible for managing all complaints of workplace harassment and for ensuring that complaints are investigated promptly, thoroughly and impartially.

Investigation Process

The confidentiality and privacy of County employees and others involved will be maintained throughout the investigatory process to the extent practical and appropriate under the circumstances. The parties and appropriate management officials will be advised of the outcome of investigations. Any employee found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary procedures up to and including dismissal.

2

3

4

Employment

At Forsyth County Government our intent is to ensure that each employee :

- Has a superior experience as a Forsyth County Government employee.
- Understands County and Department expectations for work and behavior.
- Understands policies and procedures for Forsyth County Government.

5

6

7

Introductory Period

It is the goal of Forsyth County to create a superior experience for new employees. Both Forsyth County and new employees need time to determine if the selection process has resulted in a good fit. Therefore, all appointments to full-time and part-time positions are for an introductory period of six months. Six (6) months or more of “service” time determines appeal rights. “Service” time applies to PT w/benefits and full-time only. If the employee is in a trainee status, the introductory period is six months or the training period, whichever is longer. If an employee’s performance needs additional time to be evaluated, Department Managers have the discretion to extend the introductory period for up to three additional months in which case the employee will be notified in writing by Human Resources.

During the introductory period, the Department Manager is responsible for determining whether an introductory employee is working proficiently or should be dismissed from County employment. An employee who is dismissed during the introductory period may not appeal the decision to the County Manager.

Promotion or Job Transfer

It is the County’s policy to give current employees first consideration as applicants for promotional opportunities. Internal candidates must meet the minimum job requirements and have substantially equivalent qualifications as external candidates.

In some situations, an employee may choose to apply for a position that would be a lateral transfer or demotion in order to pursue a different career path or enhance career potential.

The best interests of the County and the employee are considered when reviewing these requests. A demotion will include a reduction in pay. A lateral transfer will result in no change in pay.

Promotions are job changes to positions with at least a 2.5% increase of the current pay grade. The County will take into consideration internal equity. If an employee receives a promotion, an increase will be based on factors such as the difference between the minimum salaries, how much training is necessary and the salaries and comparable knowledge, skills and abilities of other employees in the work unit and department.

A promotion will change the performance appraisal date. This allows an employee’s next evaluation to review a full year of performance in the new position.

Promotion or Job Transfer (Continued)

Employees under an active written warning or whose most recent performance appraisal rating is “*does not meet expectations*” are not eligible for promotions.

This policy does not limit the County’s right to transfer employees to another position within the same job class taking into account the needs of the County and the employee.

Demotion

Disciplinary demotion is an adverse personnel action resulting in a change in employee wages to a lower pay grade (lower by 2.5% of their current pay grade). Generally, it is the result of a disciplinary action due to unacceptable personal conduct or unacceptable job performance.

Voluntary demotion is a change in employment status resulting from an employee application and a departmental reassignment to a position in a lower pay grade. This change is the result of a mutual agreement between the employee and the County, or it may be the result of an employee applying for and being selected for a position at the lower pay grade.

If an employee has been promoted and is unsuccessful in the new role, through mutual agreement, the county reserves the right to transfer an employee back to the original or comparable position through a non-competitive process if a position is vacant.

An involuntary demotion that occurs as a result of a Reduction in Force will be handled in accordance with the applicable policy. Refer to the Reduction in Force Policy on [FCNet](#).

.....

Internal Investigations

It is the responsibility of the County to investigate any violation of this handbook brought to its attention. All County employees have a duty to report any activities that may need investigating and to be truthful and cooperative during all investigations. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Responsibility for Positive Employee Relations

All employees within Forsyth County have a responsibility to understand and promote county policies. Always keep the following in mind:

- Set a positive example through your own ethical behavior.
- Supervisors will:
 - welcome employee questions and concerns.
 - will listen and respond.
 - will not retaliate against an employee for raising a concern in good faith.

.....

WHAT IF..



I am concerned about the confidentiality of the investigation. What should I do about it?



The confidentiality and privacy of County employees and others involved will be maintained throughout the investigatory process to the extent practical under the circumstances. At the conclusion of investigation the parties will be notified that the investigation is complete.

Residency Requirements

No person is eligible to hold any Department Manager, Deputy County Manager, or Assistant County Manager position, or any office or position which must be filled by the action of the Board of Commissioners unless that person is a resident of Forsyth County, or becomes a resident by no more than 180 days after the effective date of their appointment.

Failure to comply with the residency requirement before the end of the 180 day period will result in the loss of County employment. Continued residency in the County is a requirement of continued employment. The Board of Commissioners may grant hardship exceptions to the residency requirement upon recommendation of the County Manager.

Nepotism, Employment of Relatives and Relationships

Forsyth County discourages workplace practices that results in conflicts of interest, favoritism or the appearance of favoritism.

This extends to practices that involve employee hiring, promotion, demotions and transfers.

The employment of close relatives, partners, those in dating relationships or immediate family members within the same department or division will be avoided unless significant recruitment difficulties exist.

Close relatives or members of an immediate family shall not be employed within the same department or division of the department if such employment results in a close relative supervising a member of his or her immediate family, or where a close relative occupies a position which has influence over the other's employment, promotion, salary administration or other related management or personnel considerations.

The County Manager may make exceptions in cases with extenuating circumstances.

The terms "close relatives" and "immediate family" mean wife, husband, mother, father, brother, sister, daughter, son, grandmother, grandfather, grandson, and granddaughter of the employee. Also included are the step, half and in-law relationships of the above.

Grievance Procedure

Problems can arise in any job situation. It is Forsyth County's management philosophy that problems can best be resolved by free and open discussion. The County Grievance Procedure is designed to promote such discussion along with an orderly resolution to the problem. It is the County's desire to address employee grievances promptly and fairly.

Except as specified under the Exceptions to Grievance Procedure section, any employee who has a problem or complaint concerning his or her job, working conditions or County policies may use the following grievance procedure.

Employees are expected to continue to perform their jobs as directed by their supervisors until their grievance is resolved.

For purposes of this Grievance Procedure, a mere disagreement or difference of opinion with a supervisor or another employee, including disagreement with a performance appraisal, a written warning or a position classification decision, is ordinarily not a grievable issue.

Step 1

Employees should first discuss the problem with their immediate supervisor. Many concerns can be resolved at this level. An employee must put the complaint in writing.

Step 2

If a satisfactory solution is not reached in Step 1, employees may request an appointment and meet with their Department Manager to discuss the matter further. At the meeting with the Department Manager, an employee should openly discuss the problem. If a satisfactory solution is reached, the matter may be considered resolved.

Step 3

If the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved in a conference between an employee and the Department Manager, an employee may then request an appointment to discuss the matter with the Human Resources Director. The Human Resources Director will investigate the matter and report the findings to the employee and the employee's Department Manager in writing.

Step 4

After meeting with the Human Resources Director, if an employees' problem is still unresolved, an employee may request an appointment and meet with the County Manager. After this conference, the County Manager will consider the matter and will respond to the employee and Department Manager through the Human Resources Director. The decision of the County Manager is final.

Remember:

A mere disagreement or difference of opinion with a supervisor or another employee, including disagreement with a performance appraisal is not a grievable issue.



Exceptions to the Grievance Procedure

If an employee feels a problem is of a highly sensitive nature (e.g., sexual harassment, discrimination, or an accommodation for a disability), an employee may submit a written description of the situation to the Human Resources Director. The Human Resources Director will notify the employee in writing of the appropriate procedure to follow.

The Sheriff and the Register of Deeds are elected officials and, by law, have the sole right to hire and dismiss their employees, as does the Tax Assessor for certain employees.

Any employee in one of these departments who has a grievance should follow the grievance procedure established by their department.

Disciplinary Action

While it is Forsyth County's desire and expectation that all employees' job performance meet or exceed expectations, realistically there may be times when an employee's job performance or personal conduct falls below an acceptable level. In those instances where an employee does not achieve acceptable standards of performance or violates established rules of conduct, supervisors are expected to take prompt action in accordance with the disciplinary procedures provided below.

Employees of the Sheriff's Department should refer to their department policy.

Progressive Disciplinary Process

The purpose of disciplinary action is to give employees the opportunity to correct unacceptable performance or behavior unless an employee's offense is of such a serious nature as to warrant dismissal from employment without prior warning(s). Any disciplinary action taken since an employee's last performance appraisal will be considered in the employee's next performance appraisal.

Forsyth County reserves the right to combine or skip steps in this process depending on the facts of each situation and the nature of the offense. The level of disciplinary intervention may also vary. Some of the factors that will be considered are whether the offense is repeated despite coaching, counseling and training; the employee's work record; and the impact of the conduct and performance issues on the County.

Progressive Disciplinary Process (Continued)

As soon as performance or conduct deficiencies occur, supervisors are encouraged to counsel or give feedback to employees. If one or more coaching conversations fail to resolve the problem, supervisors should proceed to the following disciplinary measures:

Verbal Warning: A supervisor has an *oral conversation* with an employee about a deficiency. A written record of discussion is placed in the employee's departmental file for future reference.

Written Warning: A written warning is to be used for a first instance of a serious failure in job performance or personal conduct, or when coaching, counseling and/or verbal warning(s) have failed to resolve a particular issue. Receipt of a written warning places an employee in a probationary status for not less than ninety (90) days.

This probationary status may be extended if another event occurs in that 90-day period which would warrant further disciplinary action. An employee in a probationary status is not eligible for pay-for-performance increases and his or her performance appraisal date is adjusted by the amount of time he/she is on probation.

An employee may receive one or more written warnings for the same issue or deficiency, as the supervisor deems appropriate. Failure to show immediate and sustained improvement in the area(s) noted in a written warning will result in further disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment.

Subsequent Written Warning: A written warning escalates to a subsequent written warning if an employee has subsequent issues for the same type of deficiency for which the initial written warning was received. A written warning can escalate to a subsequent written warning if the offense occurs within 18 months from the date of a written warning.

Dismissal: Dismissal from employment will result when an employee fails to demonstrate improvement in deficient areas despite written warning(s) as noted above or when an employee engages in misconduct or violation of policy which is so serious as to warrant immediate dismissal without progressive discipline. Examples would include, but not limited to, engaging in criminal actions in the workplace, workplace violence, use of alcohol or drugs in the workplace, gross insubordination, or theft of County property.

Disciplinary Authority

Department Managers **that are not appointed by the County Manager** have the discretion to suspend, demote, or dismiss employees. However, it is advisable they consult with the Human Resources Director on disciplinary actions. These Department Managers are the County Attorney, Board of Elections Director, North Carolina Cooperative Extension Director, Register of Deeds, Sheriff, and Tax Assessor/Collector.

All other Department Managers are required to consult with the Human Resources Director prior to taking action to suspend, demote, or dismiss employees. Suspensions and demotions are very rarely used as disciplinary action but may be considered in unusual circumstances. Demotions will result in a reduction in pay. If an employee is suspended with pay pending an investigation, all attempts will be made to resolve the investigation within 7 business days.

Right to Appeal Disciplinary Action

Employees in departments whose Department Manager is appointed by the County Manager may appeal any suspension, demotion, or dismissal to the County Manager. To appeal such a decision by a Department Manager, the employee must notify the Human Resources Director in writing within 15 calendar days of the date of the decision. The decision of the County Manager is final. Employees in their [introductory period](#) are not included in this appeal process.

Employees in departments whose Department Manager is not appointed by the County Manager may or may not have appeal rights. Employees of those departments should check with their supervisor about any appeal rights.

Forsyth County Department Managers have varying authority related to disciplinary action (see “Disciplinary Authority” section). If dismissal occurs, some employees have certain appeal rights which vary by department as described under “Right to Appeal Disciplinary Action.” All employees dismissed will be removed from the payroll immediately.



Remember:

Employees in their introductory period do not have appeal rights.

Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)

A Performance Improvement Plan is not considered a step in the disciplinary process. An employee may be placed on a Performance Improvement Plan whenever an employee has been involved in a disciplinary situation that may be readily resolved or when additional coaching will assist an employee to perform assigned work responsibilities efficiently.

A Performance Improvement Plan will last for a predetermined amount of time not to exceed 120 days. Within this time period, the employee must demonstrate a willingness and ability to meet and maintain the conduct and/or work requirements as specified by the supervisor and the County. At the end of the performance improvement period, the Performance Improvement Plan may be closed or the next appropriate action may be taken. There is no right to appeal placement on a Performance Improvement Plan.

Remember:



A Performance Improvement Plan is not considered a mandatory step in the progressive disciplinary process.

A Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) is not to exceed 120 days.

.....

Separation of Employment

Reasons for Separation

Separation of employment from the County can occur for several different reasons.

Resignation: Although the County hopes your employment with us will be a mutually rewarding experience, we understand that varying circumstances cause employees to voluntarily resign employment. Resigning employees are encouraged to provide two weeks' notice, preferably in writing, to facilitate a smooth transition out of the organization. Management reserves the right to accept a resignation effective immediately in situations where job or organizational needs warrant such action. If an employee provides less notice than requested, the County may deem the individual to be ineligible for rehire depending on the circumstances regarding the notice given. An employee should submit the letter of resignation to his or her immediate supervisor.

Retirement: Employees who wish to retire are required to notify their department director and Human Resources in writing at least two (2) weeks before the planned retirement date. Preferably, at least one (1) month is desired. It takes the Retirement System up to 120 days to process a retirement, so employees are encouraged to contact Human Resources within 120 days of the anticipated retirement date.

An employee may choose to use accrued annual leave during the last month of employment up to and including the last day, provided he/she works at least one (1) day in the month preceding the retirement date.

Job Abandonment: Employees who are able and fail to report to work or contact their supervisor for three (3) consecutive workdays shall be considered to have abandoned the job without notice, effective at the end of their normal shift on the third

day. The supervisor shall contact the Human Resources department at the expiration of the third workday for review of the situation and consideration

Dismissal: Employment is ended by the County against the will of an employee.

End of Employment Defined

An employee's end of employment date will be their last day worked **or** the last day of the approved leave, whichever is later. An employee may not use accrued leave beyond the last day worked in order to receive longevity pay, holiday pay or for any other reason. Retirement is the only exception.

Final Paycheck

The final paycheck will include payment for accrued annual leave up to 336 hours (contingent upon hours worked per week) if employed longer than 6 months. Employees working 6 months or less have advanced leave not accrued leave and will not be paid the advanced leave.

Separation of Employment (Continued)

If an employee changes his or her mind and wishes to continue to work after the County has accepted a clear verbal or written notice of separation from employment, it will be up to the department manager whether or not to allow an employee to withdraw the initial notice of voluntary separation from employment.

Payment of Accrued Leave

Accrued annual leave : The accrued annual leave will be paid in the last paycheck for all reasons of separation.

<u>Hours worked Per Week</u>	<u>Maximum Hours to be Paid</u>
40	240
42	252
42.50	255
42.88	257.28
56	336

Accrued sick leave : The accrued sick leave will not be paid out. If an employee resigns from Forsyth County employment and retires within a year, Forsyth County will report to the Retirement System the accrued sick leave at the time separation. If the employee resigns and goes to another North Carolina government agency within a year, the employee should check with the new employer to see if they accept a transfer of sick leave.

Return of County Property

Employees separating from employment for any reason must return all county property at the time of separation, including for example uniforms, cell phones, keys, PCs and identification cards.

Exit Interview

When an employee ends employment with Forsyth County by resignation or retirement, an exit interview will be scheduled with the Human Resources Department. The separating employee needs to contact the Human Resources department prior to separation to schedule an exit interview. The interview will be no later than the employee's last day of work or another day, as mutually agreed upon.

The purpose of the exit interview is to discuss relevant matters of concern to the terminating employee. Such matters include:

- Reason for termination
- Status of employee benefits
- Refund of retirement contributions
- Forwarding address

Re-Employment

If a former Forsyth County employee is selected for re-employment after November 1, 2002, the employee will receive credit for previous service. This includes the annual leave accrual rate and longevity and service date adjustments. A sick leave balance is reinstated only if there has been less than a year break in service and the employee had accrued (not advanced) sick leave at the time of separation.

Re-employment is not considered new employment and the 6 days of sick and annual leave is not advanced.

Salary is determined in the recruitment process.

Break In Service

It is also considered a break in service to move from a position with benefits to a position without benefits.

How is Re-Employment Defined?

A former full-time or part-time with benefits county employee separates employment and returns to county employment in a full-time or part-time with benefits position.



Remember:

If an employee is re-employed, 6 days of sick and annual leave will not be advanced.

2

3

4

5

6

7

Workplace Safety

Forsyth County places a high value on the safety of its employees and is committed to providing a safe workplace. A Safety Program was developed to identify and eliminate hazards in the workplace. The Safety Program focuses on injury prevention through employee training and education, development of departmental and county-wide safety policies and procedures, planning for foreseeable emergencies, inspection of County worksites to identify and correct hazards, and assisting departments in complying with OSHA standards.

Our goal is to sustain a culture of safety and awareness.

Visitors and Minor Children In the Workplace

The presence of visitors and children in the workplace with the employee during the workday is inappropriate and is to be avoided except in emergency situations. Emergency situations should be discussed with the supervisor and approved by the Department Manager. This policy is established to avoid disruptions in job duties of the employee and co-workers, reduce property liability, and help maintain a professional work environment.

Access Cards and Employee Badges

Safety and security of employees is of utmost importance. Each employee is issued a personal access card which should be carried at all times. If an employee separates employment, the access card and badge must be returned to their supervisor.

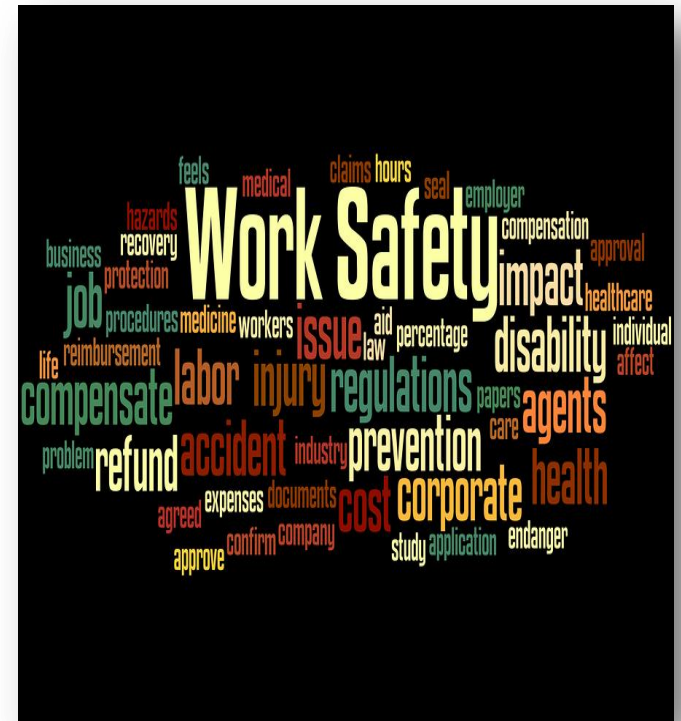
Smoking Policy

The use of all tobacco products, including cigarettes, cigars, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco products, and any new tobacco products of any and all types is limited to designated areas with county issued ash receptors. An employee should refer to his or her designated department for those designated areas. Designated areas are specific to the building in which the employee works.

Tobacco usage is limited to designated smoking areas and should not be used inside County buildings, County vehicles, any enclosed areas and where work is performed.

Security Presence

Forsyth County provides security presence on certain County premises.



Non-Pandemic Flu Policy

During periods of severe flu outbreak (including pandemic flu outbreak), the County Manager may activate the County's Flu Policy. County employees will be notified when the Flu Policy is in effect.

The complete [Flu Policy](#) can be found on FCNet.

Life-Threatening Communicable Disease Policy

This policy applies to those diseases which the Public Health Director has determined pose little reasonable risk of transmission in the workplace by normal contact, including the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and other life-threatening communicable diseases. View the complete [Life-Threatening Communicable Disease Administrative Policy](#) on FCNet.

Smallpox Vaccination Leave

After declaration of an actual or potential public health emergency by the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, the County shall grant paid sick leave up to seven (7) days and subsequently, paid leave under the County's Workers Compensation Policy to first responders such as firefighters, law enforcement officers, paramedics, or health department employees for absences due to an adverse medical reaction resulting from receiving employee vaccinations against smallpox incident to the administration of smallpox countermeasures. During the first seven (7) days of absence, the County will not deduct from the employee's accrued sick or annual leave. A Medical Provider Certification may be requested consistent with the County's attendance policies.

Workplace Searches and Monitoring

Situations will arise where there is a legitimate, job-related concern that requires Forsyth County to conduct a search or to monitor.

All employees should assume that there is no expectation of privacy and that what they do while at work or on County premises is not private.

A search is a part of an investigation process to determine the facts and does not constitute an accusation of wrongdoing

The reasons for such searches may include, but are not limited to the suspicion of using or possessing County property without permission or in an unauthorized manner; use or possession of drugs, alcohol, weapons, stolen property or other illegal contraband, and harassment, violence or threats of violence.

A department, after consultation with the Human Resources Director, and without the consent of the subject of a search, may search, inspect or monitor persons, vehicles, work spaces, desks, lockers, computers, telephones, packages or other items on County premises or on those premises where an employee is conducting business on behalf of the County. Employees refusing to allow or to properly cooperate in a search where there is reasonable suspicion will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

.....
In addition, it is expected that in the normal course of work employees may enter your work areas in your absence to continue work-related functions. Anything that is discovered in this process is subject to investigation.

Drug-Free and Substance Abuse Policy

Forsyth County is committed to promoting and maintaining a safe, healthy, and efficient working environment for all employees and those who do business with Forsyth County. To help achieve this goal, employees are prohibited from:

- Possessing, distributing, selling, manufacturing, or being under the influence of any illegal drug;
- Consuming alcoholic beverages while on County premises, County customer premises, in County vehicles, or while on County business or time; and
- Abusing inhalants or prescription drugs or possessing prescription drugs that have not been prescribed for the employee by a physician.

An employee will be considered "under the influence" if the presence of alcohol or the above-cited use of such drugs is detected. If a supervisor suspects that an individual is at work and under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the supervisor will notify the Department Manager and the Human Resources Director.

Any employee who refuses to grant consent for submission to a drug or alcohol screen is grounds for immediate termination or it may be considered a "voluntary termination."

Self-Reporting Requirement. Prior to employees driving a County motor vehicle as a part of their regularly assigned duties or prior to driving sporadically as assigned, employees shall disclose the following occurrences to the Human Resources Director (or Consultant assigned to their Department):

Arrests for on or off-duty DUIs, as well as convictions and the terms of any "diversion" program as a result of on or off-duty driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs.

The use of prescription drugs according to a physician's instructions or the use of over-the-counter drugs for medicinal purposes in the event such drugs would impair their physical, mental, emotional, or other faculties.

Such reporting is a confidential record in the same manner as FMLA records.

If an employee recognizes a personal addiction or abuse problem and seeks assistance from management in advance of detection, the County may elect to assist the employee in seeking treatment. The confidential nature of the employee's counseling and rehabilitation for drug or alcohol abuse will be preserved

Maintenance of Medical Records

All information relating to drug or alcohol screens will be kept strictly confidential. The information will be kept in the employee's medical file which will be maintained separately from the employee's personnel file. These medical files will be kept secured and access will be limited to certain need to know Human Resources and management individuals. Under no circumstances will the results of a drug or alcohol screen be discussed with individuals who do not have a work-related need to know.

***Drug Testing:**

Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers: The County requires drivers of certain commercial vehicles to obtain commercial drivers licenses ("CDLs"). Drivers with CDLS are subject to random testing at least four times each year, are required to strictly comply with alcohol and drug testing rules, and are required to make certain disclosures to the County about the use of alcohol and controlled substances.

.....
Drivers are subject to discharge for violation of the Drug-Free Workplace and Substance Abuse Policy which includes the following:

- United States Department of Transportation requirements under 49 CFR 383, or
- North Carolina CDL requirements under NCGS Chapter 20, Article 2C, or
- A pre-duty requirement to disclose the use of over-the-counter drugs for medicinal purposes that might cause impairment; or
- A refusal to consent to random drug testing at least four (4) times per each fiscal year.

*CDL Drivers shall sign a written statement acknowledging their receipt of a County notice of CDL Driver requirements, receipt of CDL educational materials, and that they have read the complete Drug-Free Workplace and Substance Abuse Policy located on FCNet.

Other Individuals: Further, individuals are subject to drug testing pre-employment, post-accident, and if under reasonable suspicion of substance abuse.

A violation of the policy is subject to corrective action up to and including termination of employment.

Inclement Weather

To fulfill Forsyth County's obligations to the public, each Department Manager is responsible for ensuring that the department supervised is

open during regularly scheduled office hours. It is not County policy to delay opening, close early or close all day in the event of inclement weather. All absences or tardiness caused by inclement weather is charged to annual leave, sick leave, or leave without pay. Use of leave without pay during inclement weather is subject to the approval of the Department Manager.

Although every effort will be made for County offices to remain open for the full scheduled work period, employees who anticipate problems with transportation are permitted to use leave privileges as listed above. An employee is expected to follow the department's normal call-in procedure in order to request leave for tardiness or absenteeism due to inclement weather.

Emergency Management

During and after major emergencies and disasters (such as tornadoes, ice storms, hazardous material spills) the residents of Forsyth County will still expect the County to provide some level of service; therefore there it is an expectation that employees be available to work. Emergency Management is a combined City/County Department that provides information for employees to follow in an emergency. An employee may be assigned to:

Staff a position in the Emergency Operation Center,
Augment another department, Perform normal duties

If a Disaster Occurs....

During Work Hours:

[Try to remain calm](#)

[Check the conditions of others in the area](#)

[Check in with your supervisor\(s\)](#)

If you are assigned to an EOC team, ask your supervisor; call City Police Communications, 773-7700; or call the City Fire Department, 773-7900, to see if the EOC is being activated. If calls are not possible, make your way to the EOC location.

While at Home:

[Protect yourself and your family first](#)

[If you are scheduled to work](#)

If you are assigned to an EOC team, contact City Police Communications, 336-773-7700, the City Fire Department, 336-773-7900, or the EOC, 661-6440.

DO NOT DIAL 9-1-1 FOR THIS INFORMATION.

If the telephone system is not operational, listen to the radio or TV for emergency information or listen to the directions of the Emergency Alert System.

Workplace Violence Awareness and Prevention Policy

Forsyth County has adopted the following guidelines to deal with threats of or actual violence that may occur onsite or offsite during work-related activities.

The County will not tolerate intimidation, threats, verbal abuse, bullying, physical attacks, or any other act of violence against employees, visitors, customers, county facilities or property. This includes such conduct by anyone on County property, or on a County-controlled site and in connection with County employment or County business. This zero-tolerance policy also prohibits such conduct while not at work if there is a potential adverse impact on an employee's ability to perform their assigned duties. Although nothing can guarantee that an employee will not become a victim of workplace violence, this policy provides information which will assist the County with its efforts to keep the County free from violence or the threat of violence.

Whether perpetrated by or towards an employee, any violence or the threat of violence is strictly prohibited. A violation of this policy will lead to an investigation and corrective action up to and including a separation from employment or if applicable, a referral for prosecution.

Employees should be alert to the possibility of violence by employees, former employees, customers, and visitors; should take seriously any violent act or threat against themselves or others, should not attempt to handle a violent or potentially violent incident on their own, and should report such acts of violence or threats as follows:

Call 911 -- Violence or Imminent

Violence: Employees shall call law enforcement immediately if employees believe a danger exists or if a danger is imminent which could cause death or serious physical harm.

After calling law enforcement, employees shall notify their Department Manager, or any supervisor, or any on-site security.

Threat of Violence. Employees who witness a threat, or receive a threat, or are on notice of a threat to another; shall immediately notify their Department Manager, or any supervisor, or any on-site security.

Potential Threat. Employees shall report any behavior that they witness and regard as potentially threatening or violent if it is carried out in connection with County employment or County business and shall do so even without a specific threat, and regardless of the relationship between the individual who initiated the behavior and the person being threatened.

Additional County Contacts. Employees should report to the Human Resources Director, Risk Manager, or the Attorney's Office if unable to contact the Department Manager, a supervisor, or on-site security.

For the complete policy refer to the Workplace Violence Awareness and Prevention Policy located on [FCNet](#).

2

3

4

5

6

7

Workplace Expectations

Employees of Forsyth County Government are expected to follow the [WeCare](#) Principles in daily interactions with co-workers, customers, and all individuals encountered throughout the work experience. Each employee is expected to do the best job possible each and every day.

.....

Disclosure and Protection of Confidential Information

Employees are not authorized to disclose confidential information:

(a) to any other County employee unless there is a legitimate business reason, on a need to know basis, and pursuant to their job descriptions or;

(b) to any person outside of the County unless management expressly states that the information may be disclosed to that person.

An employee authorized to do so may access, use, or disclose confidential information only if they exercise due diligence in order to ensure the privacy and security of such information. This expectation applies to all such information whether in oral, written, photographic, or electronic form. The employee duty also extends to ensuring the privacy and security of County devices such as computers, smart phones, and tablets. This duty continues even after an employee separates from the County.

County employees are required to treat all information as confidential County property unless the employee's Department Manager directs otherwise or the employee obtains prior approval to disclose. This requirement extends to all contractors, personnel with organizations partnering with the County, and volunteers. Individuals allowed access by consent, by authorization based upon employees' job title, or by law are required to limit further use and disclosure. Such safeguards require employees to restrict access to certain designated areas and documents. Violations of County privacy and security policies or state and federal regulatory requirements which result in unauthorized or inappropriate use, disclosure, or access may be considered a breach, will not be tolerated, and subjects an employee to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment.

All employees are subject to close supervision and monitoring by Department Managers to ensure that employees review and comply with obligations under policies designed to safeguard the County's confidential property.



.....

Disclosure and Protection of Confidential Information (Continued)

Employees will maintain County privacy and security standards without exception. Therefore, it is expected that employees shall access and comply with the detailed requirements available on [FCNet](#) under the following two major headings set out below:

(a) protected health information (“PHI”) under the federal **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (“HIPAA”)** which includes demographic information relating to:

- the individual’s past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition,
- the provision of health care to the individual, or
- the past, present, or future payment for the provision of health care to the individual, and
- that identifies the individual or for which there is a reasonable basis to believe can be used to identify the individual.

“PHI” includes many common identifiers (e.g., name, address, birth date, Social Security Number) when they may be associated with the health information listed above.

(b) personally identifiable information (“PII”) about employees and citizens which is any information that may be used to identify a specific individual either directly (name, address, SSN, telephone number, etc.) or indirectly in conjunction with other data elements (birth date, gender, race, account number). PII also includes any information that might be used to contact an individual either physically or online via the internet.

Conflict of Interest Guidelines

Purpose

Due to the County's fiscal responsibility to the public, employees are prohibited from intentionally engaging in any situations that may be perceived as a conflict of interest.

How is Conflict of Interest Defined?

A situation that has potential to influence the impartiality of a person because of the possibility of the person's self interest or professional interest.

Examples of Conflict of Interest

Include but are not limited to:

- Providing services to the County as an independent contractor
- Having close ties to a vendor or potential vendor
- Performing consulting work that is closely related to County role or that of your department
- Participating in an interview that involves a friend, acquaintance, or relative
- Misusing your position in the County for personal gain
- Misusing your County position by participating in decision-making involving governmental services or benefits for a friend, relative, or acquaintance without approval of your supervisor



Remember:

If there is uncertainty whether a situation may be a conflict of interest, or whenever a potential conflict of interest arises, discuss it with your Department Manager to make sure you are complying with this policy.

Whistleblowers Protection Policy

Any employee who reasonably believes that a policy, practice, or activity of Forsyth County Government is in violation of law, a clear mandate or public policy must file a written complaint with the Human Resources Director. This enables Forsyth County to investigate and, if the complaint is substantiated, to correct the alleged violation.

Forsyth County will not retaliate against an employee who, in good faith, has made a protest or raised a complaint against some practice of the County or of an employee of the County, or of another individual or entity with whom the County has a business relationship, on the basis of a reasonable belief that the practice is in violation of law, a clear mandate or public policy.

Forsyth County does not retaliate against employees who disclose or threaten to disclose to a supervisor or a public body, any activity, policy, or practice of the County that the employee reasonably believes is in violation of a law, rule or regulation mandated pursuant to law or is in violation of a clear mandate or public policy concerning the health, safety, welfare or protection of the environment.



Outside Employment

The work of the County must have precedence over any other occupational interest of its employees. An employee who wishes to hold outside employment for salary, wages or commission or any self-employment, must request permission in writing using the “Request for Outside Employment Form” located on [FCNet](#). The form must be approved by an employees’ immediate supervisor and Department Manager prior to beginning such employment. No time during County working hours may be used to promote or carry out outside employment, nor shall any County equipment, supplies or office space be used in conjunction with outside employment (except public safety uniforms when used in approved outside employment). Employees who have accepted outside employment may not use paid sick leave to work on the outside job. Fraudulent use of sick leave will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Conflicting outside employment shall be grounds for dismissal. Not disclosing outside employment is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Attendance and Punctuality

The quality of service provided to the public is a reflection of the consistent and dependable performance of County employees. Unscheduled absence or tardiness places a burden on co-workers and hinders effective County operations. In situations where employees must be tardy or absent, employees must notify their immediate supervisor within the 30-minute period following the normal reporting time. Employees must comply with the attendance guidelines for their designated department.

Unapproved absences or unpaid absences that are not protected by law are also subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Any absence of three consecutive workdays without prior approval is deemed to be a voluntary resignation.



Remember:

Outside Employment: Conflicting outside employment is grounds for dismissal. Not disclosing outside employment is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Attendance and Punctuality: Any absence of three consecutive workdays without prior approval is a voluntary resignation.

.....

General Rules of Conduct

The proper conduct of all employees is necessary to ensure a safe, productive and pleasant working environment. As a County employee, conduct yourself in accordance with the [WeCare Principles](#) and the following guidelines:

- Know and observe all established County policies and procedures.
- Perform the job and duties assigned.
- Be prompt in reporting to work and devote full attention to your work while on duty.
- Know and abide by the published safety rules of the County for your own protection, that of fellow employees and the public.
- Be fair, respectful, courteous and cooperative in dealing with the public and with fellow employees.

The following actions are not permitted. Any employee discovered committing any of the following offenses while on duty is subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. This list is not all-inclusive:

- Refusing to carry out the instructions of a supervisor or other authorized person
- Repeatedly disappearing from the work area without permission or without an acceptable reason
- Removing County property from the premises without permission from the proper authority
- Theft or misuse of County property or services (e.g., mailing personal things, personal use of a County car, extensive use of cell phone or office phone for personal calls, making personal long distance phone calls at the County's expense, personal use of tools or supplies, etc.)
- Intentionally falsifying County records or being untruthful during an investigation
- Using internet access, e-mail, the telephone, a facsimile machine or any other means to view, generate, send or receive materials that could be construed as fraudulent, illegal, harassing, obscene, indecent, profane or intimidating
- Violating the [Drug-Free Workplace and Substance Abuse Policy](#)

General Rules of Conduct (Continued)

- Fighting or provoking a fight on County property; using abusive, obscene, profane or threatening language; or engaging in immoral conduct while on duty
- Engaging in workplace violence which includes, but is not limited to intimidation, threats, physical attack, profane or threatening language, domestic violence or property damage
- Carrying a concealed handgun on County property which is governed by Forsyth County Code Section 15-27(b), amended in 2012 to comply with changes in the NC statutes.
- Operating a County vehicle without a valid driver's license or otherwise in violation of policies regarding the use of County vehicles
- A suspension or revocation of drivers' license or a failure to notify the supervisor of the loss of driving privileges prior to reporting for the next scheduled shift if your County job requires a drivers' license (See also "Vehicle Operator's Policy" on [FCNet](#))
- A criminal conviction or failure to notify your department manager immediately but no later than five (5) business days after any criminal conviction
- Unwelcome or unsolicited speech or conduct based on age, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability or any other factor that creates a hostile work environment



Required Licensures and Certifications

Employee Responsibility

If an employee's job requires a specific license (including driver's license) or certification, it is the employee's responsibility to keep the license or certification current and in good standing. An employee is required to notify the supervisor immediately upon notice of any pending disciplinary action, sanction or loss of privileges, suspension, revocation, lapse or loss of any credentials that make you eligible to perform your duties.

Department Responsibility

It is the responsibility of each County department to confirm proof through the proper licensing authority that such credentials are valid for each new hire, to monitor credentials regularly dependent upon the renewal cycle, and to perform periodic checks of licenses and certifications for all employees whose job requires it.

Remember:



An employee must keep the license or certification in good standing.

While the County will assess each situation based on the specific circumstances, a failure to maintain required credentials in good standing may deem an employee unqualified for their job and may subject an employee to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Information Technology Usage and Security Policy

Most employees of Forsyth County are provided with computers and telephones as tools to assist with their work. All work-related communications should contain only business-appropriate content.

Personal, political or religious content in voicemail greetings or email taglines should not be included. The computer and phone and the data that is created, sent, received or stored in it are at all times the property of Forsyth County. Forsyth County reserves the right to retrieve and read any messages or documents with or without advance notice or employee consent.

Internet access, e-mail and voicemail are provided by Forsyth County as working tools but remain County property.

Employees are expected to exercise good business judgment and comply with all County policies at all times when using these tools. Any abuse of the use of computers, the Internet, e-mail or phones is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Some examples of abuse are: accessing Internet information that is inappropriate in the workplace, using County time to pursue personal interests either over the Internet or through e-mail, and sending or forwarding e-mail that a reasonable person could consider offensive or harassing. These examples do not include all possible misuse of these tools.

The County's workplace harassment policy, as well as other policies,

apply with equal force to your use of the County's computer system, e-mail, telephones or any other electronic equipment as well as any personal electronic devices or any other devices an employee brings into the workplace.

The complete policy may be viewed on [FCNet](#).



Remember:

An employee should leave the computer in locked mode upon leaving their work area. Computer passwords should not be shared with anyone.

Non-exempt employees are not permitted to use personal or County technology devices while off-duty without the advanced approval of their supervisor. This includes accessing emails, phone messages, data or any other work -related functions.

Political Activities

Forsyth County encourages County employees to take their civic responsibility seriously and support good government.

Employees may join, affiliate with and support the principles or policies of civic organizations of a political nature in accordance with the Constitution and laws of the United States of America and the State of North Carolina. However, no employee shall:

- Engage in any political activity while on duty or within any period of time during which he/she is expected to render services compensated by the County
- Be required, as a duty of his/her office or employment, or as a condition of employment, promotion or tenure of office, to contribute funds for political or partisan purposes
- Solicit, or act as custodian of, funds for political or partisan purposes while on duty as an employee of the County

- Coerce or compel contributions for political or partisan purposes from any other employee of the County

- Use any County supplies or equipment for political purposes

Any non-elected county official or employee who becomes a candidate for public office shall be required to take a leave of absence without pay or take annual leave, one (1) month preceding the primary, if the official or employee is a candidate in the primary. If successful in the primary, or not subject to the primary, the candidate must take a leave of absence without pay or take annual leave for 1 month preceding the general election.

All constitutional and elected officers are exempt from this entire section, but no such constitutional or elected officers are to use any County funds, goods, supplies or materials for partisan political purposes.

Solicitations, Distributions and Posting of Material

In order to protect employees from unwanted interruptions, it is the policy of Forsyth County that solicitation by outsiders for any reason is forbidden.

Solicitation by co-workers should only be done with the prior approval of the Department Manager during breaks and lunch time.

Posting of materials or distribution of literature of any kind to employees without the prior approval of your Department Manager is not permitted. With the prior approval of the Department Manager, fundraiser brochures may be left in a central area or break room for co-workers to view during breaks and lunch times.

This policy does not apply to any County Manager-approved events or community activities such as the United Way, Arts Council and Blood Drives.

Gifts and Favors

No County employee is permitted to accept any valuable gifts, whether in the form of entertainment, products, money, services, loans, or promise from any person, firm or corporation that has or anticipates a direct or indirect business interest with the County. However, a County employee is permitted to receive advertising items, souvenirs of nominal value, and meals furnished at banquets. No County employee is permitted, in the discharge of their duties to grant any favor, service, or gift.

Employee Personnel Records

Forsyth County takes utmost precautions to protect confidential employee information. It is maintained in secured files for necessary business purposes only. While most of the information contained in your personnel file is confidential, some information is a matter of public record under North Carolina law (G.S. §153A-98).

- All requests for public records should be forwarded to your Department Manager or the Human Resources Director. All requests for references on present or past employees should be directed to Human Resources.
- Employees may examine the information contained in their personnel file with the exception of references solicited prior to employment. It is important that employees keep their personnel records up-to-date by notifying the Human Resources Department of any change in their:
 - Address or phone number
 - Legal name
 - Marital status
 - Beneficiary for life insurance, retirement, 401k or 457
 - State or federal tax withholding
 - Emergency notification information

What is Public Record?

- Name
- Age
- Date of original employment
- Terms of any written or oral employment contract
- Current position title
- Current salary (including benefits, incentives, bonuses and deferred and all other forms of compensation)
- Date and amount of each increase or decrease in salary
- Date and type of each promotion, demotion, transfer, suspension, separation or other change in position classification
- Date and general description of the reasons for each promotion
- Date and type of each dismissal, suspension, or demotion for disciplinary reasons
- For dismissals due to disciplinary reasons, a copy of the written notice of final decision setting forth the specific acts or omissions that are the basis for the dismissal
- Current assigned office

Use of County Vehicle

At various times an employee's job may require travel. When the use of a vehicle is required, departmental policy and the availability of a County fleet vehicle will govern whether an employee drives his or her personal vehicle or a fleet vehicle. If use of a fleet vehicle is required, employees should reserve a vehicle from the County fleet at least 1 week in advance.

Use of a personal vehicle is appropriate if it is authorized by an employee's Department Manager and within budgeted funds. An employee will receive mileage reimbursement at the current effective rate if use of a personal vehicle is authorized.

Employees must have a valid driver's license to drive a County vehicle or personal vehicle for business. Employees must let their supervisor know when they have temporarily or permanently lost their driving privileges. Driving a County vehicle or personal vehicle for business without a valid driver's license will be considered misconduct and the employee will be recommended for dismissal.

Refer to the [Drug-Free Workplace and Substance Abuse Policy](#) section of the handbook as it pertains to driving.

An employee whose job entails authorized use of a County vehicle for commuting to and from work should be aware that this usage is a taxable fringe benefit.

Social Media – Acceptable Use

It is understood that social media can be a fun and rewarding way for employees to share their lives and opinions with family, friends and co-workers around the world. However, use of social media for self-expression also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. To assist employees with making responsible decisions about the use of social media, the County established guidelines for the mutual protection of the County and employees. Refer to the Social Media Policy on FCNet for approved social media sites.

Employee use of County-approved social media sites to communicate with residents and to promote citizen participation:

- Employees may only initiate posts with supervisor-sanctioned content and may only respond to content that is related to their County job duties.
- Employee posts and responses may only reflect their official positions pursuant to their job duties and shall be factually accurate.
- The County may review and consider the content of an employee's social media postings in its determination of the type of disciplinary action it will issue up to and including dismissal.
- Forsyth County employees may be disciplined, up to and including dismissal, for comments on personal or County-approved social media accounts that infringe upon that employee's or other County employees' productivity or performance; that contains harassing, discriminatory, retaliatory, or bullying content; that is disparaging or defamatory, that publishes confidential information, or that undermines the County mission and credibility. Even if completed after hours, from home, and on home computers, any communication that would not be permissible in the workplace is also not permissible between co-workers on line. This policy will not be interpreted or applied in a way that would interfere with the rights of employees.

2

3

4

5

6

7

Compensation

Forsyth County uses a classification system which groups positions into pay grades based on the level of responsibilities and the labor market. The plan focus on both internal and external competitiveness.

Performance Appraisal System

The performance appraisal system is designed to be a consistent mechanism for evaluating performance as well as promoting future personal and professional growth. It is designed to help employees understand job requirements and the standards for performance. Any questions about job expectations should be directed to the employee's supervisor.

All full-time County employees and part-time employees with benefits will have a formal performance evaluation annually. The scheduled evaluations cover a full 12 months of work in a position. The evaluation date will change with promotions, disciplinary action and demotions. Evaluation dates will be adjusted (moved into the future) for any time spent on an unpaid leave of absence

(other than protected leaves of absence) or in disciplinary probation status. For example, if an employee is on an unpaid leave of absence for one month and the evaluation date is September 1st, the evaluation date will be adjusted to October 1st. If the employee is on unpaid Family Medical Leave, the date will not be adjusted.

- All employees will be evaluated in the areas of attendance, relationship with coworkers, job knowledge and skills, customer service and workplace responsibility. Additional performance expectations and outcomes may also be evaluated.
- The County's goal is for each employee to meet or exceed the expectations of their job. A description of performance expectations is included on the evaluation form.

Supervisors will assess performance with a numerical rating. The cumulative, weighted score will determine an overall performance rating as either "Exceeds Expectations," "Meets Expectations" or "Does Not Meet Expectations." Any pay increase is determined by this cumulative performance rating. Only performance ratings of "Meets Expectations" or "Exceeds Expectations" are eligible for pay increases, contingent upon available funding.

After supervisors have reviewed the evaluation, employees will have the opportunity to document comments on the performance evaluation form.

A difference of opinion or a mere disagreement with a supervisor over a performance appraisal is not a grievable issue. Please see the "Grievance Procedure" section of the Employee Handbook for more information on circumstances or situations that may be grievable.

Performance Appraisal System (Continued)

Who is Ineligible for an Increase?

- Employees who receive a rating of “Does Not Meet Expectations.”
- Part-time no benefit employees.

Who is Eligible for an Increase?

Full-time and part-time with benefit employees who receive a performance rating of “Meets Expectations or “Exceeds Expectations” are eligible for pay increases, contingent upon available funding.



Remember:

Supervisors must review the position description questionnaire on an annual basis at the time of the employee’s performance evaluation.

Pay for Performance

The County's annual budget may allocate money for pay for performance increases. When money is allocated, full-time employees and part-time employees with benefits who meet or exceed expectations will be eligible for an annual pay for performance increase on the employee's appraisal date. Pay for performance increase is directly tied to the employee's overall performance appraisal rating and is awarded as a percentage of the employee's current salary. It is added to base pay if the employee's salary is less than or equal to the maximum salary of the assigned pay grade. It is paid as a lump sum if the employee's salary is over the maximum salary of the assigned pay grade.

Longevity Pay

Full-time employees who have been credited with 7 or more years of compensated full-time service with Forsyth County and who are on the payroll as of November 30, may receive an annual lump-sum longevity payment in December. A longevity payment is considered taxable income for the year in which it is received. Receipt of longevity pay is contingent on the Board of County Commissioners' approval or revision each fiscal year. Longevity calculations will be published on FCNet after each annual budget adoption.

Changing Hours Worked in a Workweek

While most work schedules are 40 hours during the County's workweek, some work schedules exceed that by working an average of 42, 42.5, 42.88 or 56 hours within the County's two-week pay period.

If an employee laterally moves to a position in which the employee works an average in excess of 40 hours during the County's workweek, the base annual pay will stay approximately the same but the hourly rate will be changed to reflect the different number of hours the employee will be working annually.

If an employee is promoted or demoted to a position which changes the average hours worked within a workweek, the current hourly rate will first be recalculated and then the salary adjustment will be calculated from the new hourly rate.

How to Calculate a Promotion if Workweek Hours Change

"Employee A" works in a position that has a 42.50 hour average workweek (2210 hours annually). He is receiving a 5% promotion to a different position that has a 40 hour average workweek (2080 hours annually). His current hourly rate is \$13.50 or \$30,000 annually.

Example

Pay Periods

County employees are paid every other Friday, 26 times per year. The pay period for all County employees ends at midnight on the Friday preceding a payday. If a regular payday falls on a holiday, employees will receive their pay on the last working day prior to the holiday.

Each employee will complete a payroll time sheet to record hours worked and leave taken during each pay period. The time sheet must be reviewed for accuracy and signed by the employee's immediate supervisor. Time will be recorded in 15-minute increments and must be rounded up or down to the nearest 15 minutes. Specific instructions on completing the time sheet are available on FCNet.

Direct Deposit

Direct deposit is the method Forsyth County uses to pay employees. Employees have the option to deposit pay into either a checking or savings account with most financial institutions.

Deductions from Pay

The following standard deductions are authorized by law to be deducted from employee's paychecks:

FICA (Social Security and Medicare)
State Income Tax
Federal Income Tax
Garnishment/Wage Withholding
Retirement Contribution

Other Employee Authorized Deductions

Health Insurance
Dependent Dental Insurance
Vision Insurance
Supplemental Life Insurance
Credit Union Savings or Loan Repayments
United Way Contributions
Arts Council Contributions
401(k) or 457 Deferred Compensation
Medical Reimbursement Accounts
Dependent Care Reimbursement Accounts
Disability Insurance

On-Call Pay

A few positions in the County are required to be available "on-call" after normal working hours. Employees should check with their supervisor to obtain details about the department's "on-call" policy.



Remember:

Direct deposit is required for all employees. You may discuss options for a bank account with the Human Resources Department.

Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

It is the policy of Forsyth County to fully comply with the FLSA. All positions in the County are designated exempt or non-exempt under FLSA depending on whether they meet the requirements of the Act. These designations have nothing to do with the importance of a position to the County.

Employees who are non-exempt must be paid overtime or granted compensatory time for hours over 40 worked each workweek. There are specific exceptions under the FLSA for law enforcement and fire fighting.

Employees who are exempt do not have to be paid overtime for hours over 40 worked each workweek.

It is County policy to promptly investigate and correct any improper payroll deductions or other payroll practices that do not comply with the FLSA.

If an employee believes that an improper payroll practice has occurred, such as an improper deduction from an exempt salary,

the employee is required to file a written complaint to the Human Resources Director. The report should provide the date the reduced paycheck was issued and the circumstance that led to the deduction. HR will see that the matter is appropriately reviewed. The employee will be reimbursed for the amount of any inappropriate deduction taken.

Nonexempt employees required to work when daylight savings time begins or ends will be paid for the hours actually worked. In the spring, employees will be paid one hour less when clocks are set forward one hour.

Conversely, in the fall when clocks are set back one hour, employees will be paid for the extra hour. The extra hour is work time and included for purposes of calculating overtime.

Overtime Authorization

The County does not allow compensatory leave. Employees of the County are either exempt or non-exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Exempt employees are expected to work a minimum of 40 hours per week and may work more than 40 hours when it is necessary to get the job done. An exempt employee will normally not be paid overtime.

Non-exempt employees must be compensated for all hours worked; however, no overtime shall be worked by a non-exempt employee except as authorized by the County Manager or his designees. Therefore, non-exempt employees are not to work through their lunch, begin working early, continue working past their scheduled work time or perform any work when off-duty unless specifically authorized in advance by their supervisor. This includes checking emails, taking work home, making work-related phone calls or any other activity that would be considered County work. Failure to comply with this policy may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Overtime work for non-exempt employees, properly and sufficiently authorized in advance by the County Manager, shall be compensated by monetary payment at the rate of one and one-half times the regular rate of pay.

Employee Travel and Reimbursement

A county employee who travels in connection with properly authorized business or training may be eligible for travel reimbursement. The complete [Travel Policy](#) is located on FCNet.

Expense Report Responsibilities

Persons with expense report approval responsibility must review expense reports and approve or deny as appropriate per the policy and guidelines.

Frequently Asked Questions...

What are allowable travel expenses?
How much will be reimbursed?



What happens if I lose my receipt?
Is there a gratuity limit? What is the reimbursement rate for mileage? Can I drive instead of fly?



Answers to all of these questions can be found by reading the “Employee Travel and Reimbursement Policy” located on FCNet.

2

3

4

5

6

7

Time Off & Leaves of Absence

The County acknowledges the need for time off and leaves of absences and encourages work-life balance. The County supports the right balance of leave and each employee is expected to manage the leave provided.

Annual Leave

Employees are provided with annual leave that they may take subject to the approval of their supervisor. New full-time employees (not including those considered re-employed –see [Re-employment Policy](#)), begin their County employment with advanced leave based on the employee’s work week. The regular accrual of annual leave for full-time employees begins the first pay period following the employee’s 6th month anniversary date according to the schedule below. New part-time employees with benefits begin accruing pro-rated annual leave in direct proportion to their workweek each pay period. They are not advanced any leave.

Increase in accrual rates will be effective beginning with the first pay period following completion of 4, 7, 12 and 17 years of service.

Annual Leave Accrual Schedule

	Hours Worked Per Week				
	40	42	42.50	42.88	56
<u>Years of Service</u>					
Hours Advanced 1 st 6 months	48	50.40	50.96	51.48	67.20
	Number of Hours Accrued Annually				
7th month - end of first year	48	50.40	50.96	51.48	67.20
2nd year through 4th year	96	100.80	101.92	102.96	134.40
5th year through 7th year	112	117.60	119.08	120.12	156.80
8th year through 12th year	136	142.80	144.56	145.86	190.40
13th year through 17th year	160	168.00	170.04	171.60	224.00
18th year and after	184	193.20	195.52	197.36	257.60
<u>Year End Max for Annual Leave Equivalency of 30 days</u>	240	252	255	257.28	336

Remember:

Any hours in excess of the “Year End Max for Annual Leave” will be rolled over into the sick leave balance. Refer to the sick leave section of the handbook.



Annual Leave(Continued)

Non-exempt full-time employees whose regular workweek exceeds 40 hours will have their annual leave calculated in direct proportion to the workweek. However, if the workweek changes, the sick and annual leave hours accumulated will be converted accordingly.

The leave balance for full-time employees may exceed [30 days](#) during the calendar year. Annual leave in excess of 30 days will be converted to regular sick leave each year at the end of the pay period that includes January 1st. Converted sick leave can be used the same as any other sick leave and is eligible to be reported to the retirement system. Annual leave in excess of [30 days](#) will also be converted to sick leave at the time of retirement. If you are a part-time employee with benefits, no more than 240 hours may be carried forward to the next calendar year.

Employees whose County employment is terminated within their first 6 months will not be paid for any remaining advanced annual leave. For employees with more than 6 months of service, no more than [30 days](#) of annual leave will be paid out if you separate from service for any reason, including retirement or death.

Holidays

Full-time employees and part-time employees (with benefits) receive the following paid holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King's Birthday
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day (plus 2 days as determined by the County Manager)
- One additional day designated by the County Manager (normally the day after Thanksgiving)

If a holiday falls on Saturday, the previous Friday will be observed. If a holiday falls on Sunday, the following Monday will be observed. Non-exempt full-time employees will receive 24 hours of holiday leave around the Christmas holiday. Non-exempt part-time employees with benefits will be paid for 12 hours of holiday leave around the Christmas holiday.

Full-time employees must work or take paid leave (sick or annual) their scheduled workday before and their scheduled workday after a holiday to earn and be paid for the holiday. An employee on an approved furlough leave is eligible for holiday pay.

All non-exempt holiday hour balances as of June 20, 2015 were converted to annual leave.



Sick Leave

Sick leave benefits are a privilege and not a right that an employee may demand. New full-time employees (not including those being re-employed) begin their County employment with an advancement of sick leave. Refer to the sick leave chart. The regular accrual of sick leave will begin the first pay period following the employee's six-month anniversary date. New part-time employees with benefits will begin accruing sick leave immediately but will not be advanced leave. After the first 6 months, all full-time employees accrue sick leave. Review chart for the number of hours accrued based on the work week.

Non-exempt, full-time employees whose regular workweek exceeds 40 hours per week and part-time employees with benefits who work less than 40 hours will earn sick leave in direct proportion to their workweek. However, if an employee's workweek changes, the employee will begin accumulating at a different hourly accrual rate based on the new workweek.

There is no limit to the number of sick leave hours an employee may accrue. At the end of the first pay period of the calendar year, excess annual leave will be converted to sick leave. Refer to [annual leave chart](#) for the maximum amounts.

Employees may use sick leave for themselves or an immediate family member. For the purposes of this sick leave policy, "immediate family members" are defined as parents, spouses, and children (step, foster or adopted). Sick leave may be used for the following:

- An employee's personal illness, injury, or disability (including maternity for the period of actual disability resulting from childbearing and subsequent recovery);
- Illness or injury of a family member when the employee's care is required;
- Required physical or dental examinations or treatments for the employee or a family member or;
- Death of a family member (See Bereavement leave section).

If an employee is absent unexpectedly due to a personal or family illness or injury, the employee must notify his or her supervisor within 30 minutes of the normal reporting time. If an employee is on annual leave and becomes sick, his/her supervisor may allow use of sick leave if the employee would have been too ill to report to work for that day. The supervisor may require the employee to provide a written statement from a health care provider documenting the absence and ability to resume duties.

Sick Leave Chart

	Hours Worked Per Week				
	40	42	42.50	42.88	56
Hours Advanced 1 st 6 months	48	50.40	50.96	51.48	67.20
# of Hours Accrued per Pay Period	3.69	3.88	3.92	3.96	5.17

.....

If an employee resigns, retires or is dismissed from County employment, the employee will not be paid for accrued sick leave.

However, if the employee retires under the provisions of the North Carolina Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System (NCLGERS), unused sick leave may be added to service time for benefits computation.

Transfer of Sick Leave

Employees hired or re-employed into a position with benefits after February 5, 2000 may transfer to the County hour-for-hour their unused sick leave accumulated from their previous employer, if that employer participates in the North Carolina Retirement System. The transfer of sick leave is contingent upon the employee having no longer than a one-year break in the Retirement System and Human Resources receiving sick leave verification directly from the previous employer.

Transferred sick leave can be used by employees when needed and is eligible to be reported to the Retirement System at retirement.

Maternity & Paternity Leave (Non-FML)

This Maternity/Paternity Leave policy is applicable only to employees who are not eligible for Family and Medical Leave (FML). Under the Maternity and Paternity Leave policy, employees must request maternity or paternity leave in writing to the human resources department as much in advance as possible, giving the projected dates of the requested leave including the request for any additional leave of absence beyond the employee or spouse's period of disability resulting from childbirth or upon the adoption of a child. Employees may request up to six weeks of maternity or paternity leave. Time spent in an unpaid leave status will adjust service, longevity (if applicable) and evaluation dates.

Employees may use accrued sick leave and annual leave, in that order, for the period of actual disability as a result of childbearing and subsequent recovery (whether for the employee or spouse). For leave taken beyond the period of actual disability, the employee may choose whether to take accrued sick leave or annual leave, if available. When adopting a child, a physician may designate a period of time that is medically necessary for the care of the child and sick leave can be used for that period of time.

For leave taken beyond the time designated by the physician as medically necessary for the care of the child, the employee may choose whether to request accrued sick leave or annual leave, if available.

Remember:



The Maternity/Paternity Leave policy is applicable only to employees who are not eligible for Family and Medical Leave (FML). Maternity/Paternity leave runs concurrently with paid leave.

A Leave of absence Without Pay (LOAWP) cannot be combined with maternity and paternity leave.

Family and Medical Leave (FML)

Upon hire, Forsyth County provides all new employees with notice of this benefit.

The function of this policy is to provide employees with a general description of their rights.

Under this policy, Forsyth County will grant up to 12 workweeks (or up to 26 weeks of military caregiver leave to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness) during a 12-month period to eligible employees. The leave may be paid, unpaid or a combination of paid and unpaid leave, depending on the circumstances of the leave and as specified in this policy.

Eligibility

To qualify to take family or medical leave under this policy, the employee must meet the following conditions:

- The employee must have worked for the County for 12 months. The 12 months do not have to be consecutive. Separate periods of employment will be counted, provided that the break in service does not exceed seven years. Separate periods of employment will be counted if the break in service exceeds seven years due to National Guard or Reserve military service obligations or when there is a written agreement stating the employer's intention to rehire the employee after the service break. For eligibility purposes, an employee will be considered to have been employed for an entire week even if the employee was on the payroll for only part of a week or if the employee is on leave during the week.

- The employee must have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12-month period immediately before the date when the leave is requested to commence.

The principles established under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) determine the number of hours worked by an employee. The FLSA does not include time spent on paid or unpaid leave as hours worked. Consequently, these hours of leave should not be counted in determining the 1,250 hours eligibility test for an employee under FML.

Types of Leave Covered

Twelve workweeks of leave in a rolling 12-month period. To qualify as FML leave under this policy, the employee must take leave for one of the reasons listed below:

1. The birth of a child and to care for the newborn child within one year of birth;
2. The placement of a child for adoption or foster care and to care for a newly placed child within one year of placement;
3. To care for a spouse, child or parent with a serious health condition;
4. The serious health condition of the employee.

Types of Leave Covered (Continued)

5. Any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a covered military member on "covered active duty;" or
6. Twenty-six workweeks of leave during a single 12-month period to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness if the eligible employee is the servicemember's spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin (military caregiver leave).

Amount of Leave

The County will measure the 12-month period as a rolling 12-month period measured backward from the date an employee uses any leave under this policy.

Each time an employee takes leave, the County will compute the amount of leave the employee has taken under this policy in the preceding 12 months and subtract it from the 12 weeks of available leave, and the balance remaining is the amount of time the employee is entitled to take at that time.

An eligible employee can take up to 26 weeks for the FML military caregiver leave circumstance above during a single 12-month period. For this military caregiver leave, the County will measure the 12-month period as a rolling 12-month period measured forward. FML leave already taken for other FML circumstances will be deducted from the total of 26 weeks available.

Both Spouses Work for County

Spouses who are eligible for FML and are employed by the same covered employer may be limited to a combined total of 12 weeks of leave

during any 12-month period if the leave is taken for birth of the employees' son or daughter or to care for the child after birth, for placement of a son or daughter with the employee for adoption or foster care or to care for the child after placement, or to care for the employee's parent with a serious health condition.

Health Benefits During Leave

While an employee is on Family and Medical leave (FML), the County will continue the employee's health benefits during the leave period at the same level and under the same conditions as if the employee had continued to work. If an employee is on unpaid FML, the employee is required to make timely premium payments to the County or benefits may be terminated.

Returning to Work

An employee who takes leave under this policy will be asked to provide a Fitness for Duty Certification from the health care provider to County Human Resources.

.....

Use of Paid and Unpaid Leave

All paid sick, annual and shared leave runs concurrently with FML. If worker's compensation is applicable, it will run concurrently.

Intermittent Leave or Reduced Work Schedule

An employee may take FML in 12 consecutive weeks, may use the leave intermittently (take a day periodically when needed over the year) or, under certain circumstances, may use the leave to reduce the workweek or workday, resulting in a reduced-hour schedule. In all cases, the leave may not exceed a total of 12 workweeks (or 26 workweeks to care for an injured or ill service member over a 12-month period).

Recertification

The County may request recertification for the serious health condition of the employee or the employee's family member when circumstances have changed

significantly, or if the employee seeks an extension of his or her leave. Otherwise, the County may request recertification for the serious health condition of the employee or the employee's family member every six months in connection with an FML absence.

Procedure for Requesting Family and Medical Leave

Employee must request Family Medical Leave using the FMLA Tracker or contact Human Resources if unable to submit the request. [Instructions to request FMLA](#) can be found on FCNet.

Extension of FML any approval beyond 12 weeks is subject to review by Human Resources.

Bereavement Leave

Employees may request a maximum of 3 days of accrued sick leave or 3 days unpaid in the event of a death in the family. If accrued leave is available, it must be used.

When there is a death of a County employee, every effort will be made to allow as many employees as possible to attend the funeral. Leave would not be charged.

For purposes of bereavement leave, "family member" is defined as parent, spouse, child, sibling, grandparent, grandchild or parental guardian of the employee or spouse. Also included are the step and half relationships of the above.

Civil Leave

Juror: Time spent serving on jury duty during an employee's regularly scheduled workday shall be with pay and without charge to accrued leave until released from duty by the presiding judge. Employees are expected to return to work if released from jury duty prior to the end of their scheduled workday, unless impractical and excused from returning to work by their supervisor. Employees may keep all jury fees received.

Witness or Attendance – County

Business: Employees will receive their normal salary and no leave shall be charged for the time actually required to appear at state and federal proceedings, including the North Carolina Office of Administrative Hearings (“OAH”), if subpoenaed by the County, if participation is requested by the County or if the employee is testifying in connection with job duties as a County employee.

Subpoenaed Witness – Non-County

Business: If employees are subpoenaed to attend a state or federal proceeding during their regularly scheduled work day to give testimony which is not in connection with their job duties, no leave will be charged and they will receive regular pay up to a maximum of eight (8) hours per subpoena. Thereafter, the County's normal leave policies will apply. Employees may keep any witness fees received.

Attendance – Legal Proceeding –

Personal Business: If an employee's attendance in court is required to resolve a personal matter, then the County's usual and customary leave policies will apply.

Notification: Employees must present any summons (including jury duty) or subpoena to their supervisor on their first working day after receiving notice. Time spent away from work due to any valid subpoena is an excused absence.

Hours paid under the Civil Leave policy will not be considered as hours worked for purposes of calculating overtime.

Blood Donation Leave

Supervisors may permit an employee to take a reasonable amount of time off with pay to perform this community service. An employee may request leave time if leave is available.

Leave of Absence Without Pay (LOAWP)

Any employee in a position with benefits is eligible to request a Leave of Absence Without Pay (LOAWP). A LOAWP is not a right or entitlement. All non-medical LOA's are solely granted at the discretion of the Department Manager following a review of the employee's work record and an assessment of the effect on business operations.

Within any twelve month period, no employee may be approved for more than two (2) occurrences of LOAWP and no employee may exceed the cumulative total of six (6) weeks.

For non-medical request employees may submit a ["Request for Leave of Absence Without Pay" form](#) to their Department Manager. Employees may request a LOAWP for a specified block of time ranging from a minimum of one (1) week to a maximum of six (6) weeks. The request form must indicate the employee's intention and presumed ability to return to work at the end of the leave.

A LOAWP may not be requested or taken on an intermittent basis. A LOAWP can be requested for reasons of personal or family illness or completing education. This is in addition to the 12 weeks of protected leave discussed in the section on FML, if applicable. Requests for reasons other than those listed above must be approved by the County Manager and will only be granted for reasons deemed in the best interest of both the employee and the County.

Job Protection: An employee's job will be held during an approved Leave of Absence. If unable to return to work at the end of an approved Leave of Absence or if the request is denied, an employee's last day of approved leave (including FML) will be considered a voluntary resignation date and will be the end of employment with Forsyth County unless some other mutually agreeable solution is identified that would allow an employee to keep working.

Re-employment after LOAWP: If re-employed at a later date, an employee will receive credit for previous benefited service. (See Section on Re-employment.)

No benefits accrue (e.g. paid sick and annual leave, holidays, retirement) during a LOAWP. An employee is required to pay 100% of the premium rates for health, dental and life insurance benefits (including any portion that Forsyth County now pays on an employee's behalf) for any pay period in which no hours are worked or paid. An employee should contact the Human Resources Department to arrange to continue insurance benefits. Upon your return to work, your evaluation date and service date will be adjusted to reflect your unpaid Leave of Absence.

For short-term absences of a week or less, the County's Voluntary Furlough may be an option to consider.

Voluntary Furlough Leave

Purpose: A voluntary furlough is a period of unpaid absence that an eligible employee may request, subject to advanced approval by their Department Manager. The absence is of short duration, taken in full day increments, and lasting from one to five consecutive workdays. The total number of voluntary furlough absences should not exceed ten days per fiscal year. For employees whose regular workweek exceeds 40 hours, voluntary furlough days will be calculated in direct proportion to their workweek. Furlough cannot be requested in conjunction with sick leave, leave of absence, shared leave or Family and Medical Leave. The County Manager has the authority to consider exceptions to the ten day maximum after conferring with the Department Manager.

Eligibility: All employees in full-time or part-time positions with benefits are eligible to participate.

No employee shall be coerced or required to take voluntary furlough.

Procedure to Request Furlough:

1. Employees desiring to request voluntary furlough should complete a [“Voluntary Furlough Request” form](#) available on FCNet under Forms/Human Resources.
2. The completed form must be submitted to the immediate supervisor at least two weeks in advance and is subject to the approval of the Department Manager or their designee.
3. Requests for approval of voluntary furlough will be considered by the Department Manager after assessing the impact of the absence on services and operations. Reasonable effort will be made to approve the request.

4. There is no appeal process for a voluntary furlough request that is disapproved.



Remember:

The total number of voluntary furlough absences should not exceed ten days per fiscal year.

Voluntary Furlough Leave (continued)

Impact of Furlough on Benefits and Pay:

- (1) Voluntary furlough is a pre-approved, **unpaid** absence.
- (2) Insurance benefits are not affected by voluntary furlough absences. However, if there are insufficient earnings to cover an employee's insurance premiums, any amount owed will be deducted from the employee's next paycheck.
- (3) No leave (vacation or sick) is accrued nor is any retirement contribution made during a voluntary furlough.
- (4) Voluntary furloughs not exceeding 10 days do not affect an employee's service date or performance appraisal date.
- (5) While no vacation or sick leave is accrued during a voluntary furlough, vacation and sick leave already accrued are not affected.

(6) Employees on a voluntary furlough will be paid for any holiday that falls within the voluntary furlough period.

(7) If the employee does not return to work immediately following a voluntary furlough, they will be subject to repaying the County share of any premiums paid and any other costs that may have been absorbed by the County during the voluntary furlough.

Parental School Leave

All Forsyth County employees who are parents or guardians of, or who act as parents to, a school-age child have the right to request annual leave to attend or otherwise be involved in that child's school. Employees are allowed to take up to four hours of unpaid leave a year for this purpose, provided the employee makes advanced arrangements with his/her supervisor for a mutually agreeable time. If an employee chooses to take unpaid leave for this purpose, hours in the column for unpaid leave must be placed on the time sheet.

Military Leave

Employees who are members of the armed services will be granted a Leave of Absence without pay during military service in accordance with state and federal law, including but not limited to the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights or its successor. Employees have the option to use accrued annual leave instead of leave without pay for the duration of such military time. Employees shall provide the County with a copy of the orders requiring military service.



Remember:

No leave (vacation or sick) is accrued nor is any retirement contribution made during a voluntary furlough.

Military Leave (continued)

If employees are called to military service, other than routine training and do not have (or choose not to use) accrued annual leave, employees will be eligible for additional military benefits, some of which are more generous than required by law.

These include:

- Supplemental compensation;
- Health insurance premiums the same as active employees;
- Dental insurance premiums the same as active employees;
- Continued basic life insurance paid by the County;
- Credit for the time spent in military service for annual leave accrual purposes;
- Credit for the time spent in military service for retirement purposes.

The complete Military Leave policy can be viewed on [FCNet](#).

Workers' Compensation

Forsyth County provides Workers' Compensation benefits for all employees.

Forsyth County provides coverage for lost wages and medical costs defined as "reasonable and necessary" for work-related injuries and illnesses as prescribed by the authorized treating physician.

Employees receiving wage replacement benefits do not contribute to the North Carolina Local Governmental Employees Retirement System. Contact the Retirement System if interested in information about purchasing this lost time.

Work-related claims should not be filed under the County's regular group health plan.

The County has an active Return to Work Program to benefit employees with a work-related injury resulting in a temporary disability. The Return to Work program is designed to provide temporary, transitional duty assignments, consistent with the Primary Care Provider's recommendations,

to promote quick recovery, improve morale and allow the injured worker to earn their normal wage.

Return to Work transitional duty assignments are coordinated by the Risk Manager and the employee's supervisor who strive, whenever possible, to have the employee returned to their normal work unit with appropriate modifications or place the employee in another temporary assignment.

If an employee is written out of work for more than seven (7) days (waiting period), an employee shall use sick or annual leave if the employee is written out of work by the authorized workers' compensation treating physician. If still out of work after the seven (7) day waiting period the employee will be recorded as "unpaid workers' compensation leave." The employee will receive Workers' Compensation wages and cannot also receive a pay check.

For more information on workers' compensation, please visit the Risk Management section of [FCNet](#).

Shared Leave Program

Purpose: The Shared Leave Program provides an opportunity for County employees to share and/or receive leave donations during periods of prolonged absences from work due to a catastrophic medical condition that results in exhaustion of all paid leave.

In cases of a catastrophic medical condition, an employee may apply for leave donations from other County employees and/or from the shared leave “bank.” Consenting employees may agree to have leave donations transferred from their accumulated sick or annual leave balances to the sick leave account of an employee who has been approved by the Shared Leave Committee or to the leave “bank.” Coercion and/or intimidation are prohibited and should be reported to the Human Resources Director.

Administration of this program will be by the Shared Leave Committee, and there is no right to appeal.

The Shared Leave Program is employee to employee and is offered in addition to the benefits provided by the County. Shared Leave is not “accrued” or “earned” under this program. All full-time and part-time employees with benefits who have been employed with the County for the previous 12 months and meets or exceed performance expectations are eligible for this program. Shared Leave runs concurrently with Family Medical Leave. The complete Shared Leave Policy can be viewed on [FCNet](#).

Lactation/ Breastfeeding

A breastfeeding employee may breastfeed their baby in any location of Forsyth County where the employee and baby are otherwise authorized. Discrimination and harassment of a breastfeeding employee in any form is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Employees may have their babies brought to work to breastfeed during lunchtime or break time. For privacy and comfort, breastfeeding employees may use their office, any unoccupied private meeting room space or the WIC breastfeeding room to breastfeed or pump their milk at break time and lunchtime. Employees must discuss any needed adjustments to their work schedule with their supervisor in order to accommodate breastfeeding or expressing of breast milk. In support of breastfeeding, the supervisor should make every effort to accommodate employee requests unless the schedule adjustment will create hardships for clients, fellow employees, or the Department’s ability to meet its responsibilities. Employees will be responsible for the storage of expressed milk. Employees may use their own cooler packs to store expressed breast milk, or may store clearly labeled milk in departmental refrigerator/freezers that are designated for food storage. Employees should provide their own containers, clearly labeled with name and date.

2

3

4

5

6

7

Benefits

This portion of the Employee Handbook describes in general terms the benefit plans available to County employees. In most cases, benefits are described in more detail in the actual plan documents themselves. If there is a conflict between the description of benefits in the handbook and the plan documents, the description in the plan documents will control.

Eligibility for Employee Benefits



Key Terms

Full-Time Employee:

Employees in a position that is budgeted as full-time with benefits are eligible for all the benefits described in this handbook and work performed in this status is considered County service.

Part-Time Employees:

Work performed in a part-time position without benefits is not considered County service. However, employment in this status does count toward FML eligibility.

Remember:



If you are in a position that receives part-time benefits, you are eligible for:

- Employee Assistance Program
- Shared Leave
- Pro-rated annual leave
- Pro-rated sick leave
- Pro-rated holiday leave
- Pay for performance increases
- Mandatory participation in the North Carolina Local Government Employees' Retirement System
- County 401K contribution
- Optional participation in the 401(k) and/or 457 plan
- Optional participation in the Credit Union

Health and Dental Benefits

The County provides individual health care and dental insurance to all regular **full-time** employees. The County pays a share of the premiums for both employees and their dependents. Eligible dependents include a spouse and children (biological, adopted, foster and step children) until their 26th birthday. Spouses who work full-time (defined as 30 hours or more per week) and who are offered other coverage by another employer would not be eligible for the County's health insurance. The spouse is eligible for dental insurance.

Detailed information may be found in the Benefits section of FCNet.

Life Insurance Benefits

Basic Term Life

Forsyth County pays the full cost of a term life insurance benefit for each **full-time** employee in the amount of one and one-half times the annual salary rounded up to the nearest \$1,000. The coverage amount is based on annual salary and will increase as salary increases. Employees must pay FICA taxes on the premium amounts for employer-paid life insurance coverage in excess of \$50,000. The amount of employer-provided life insurance is reduced for active employees over age 69. Please see the life insurance certificate booklet for more information.

Supplemental Term Life

Employees who are covered by the basic life insurance benefit provided by the County are eligible to purchase additional term life insurance. Please see FCNet for details.



Additional Benefits

Forsyth County provides the following additional benefits to employees:

- 401(k) Plan. Provides an automatic employer contribution into a supplemental retirement income plan (employee deferral is optional).
- Deferred Compensation Plan. Provides supplemental long-term retirement income as authorized by Section 457 of the Internal Revenue Code (employee contributions are optional).
- Cafeteria Plan, authorized by Section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code, provides employees the option of paying for qualified benefits with pre-tax wages.

Also, employees are eligible to participate in a Flexible Spending Account (FSA) that allows them to set aside pre-tax wages for reimbursement of qualified medical and dependent care.

- Voluntary short-term and long-term disability.
- Voluntary vision insurance.
- Training and Development. The County encourages participation in personnel training and development programs which enhance employees' skills, assist in performance improvement and promote effective public service.
- Service awards.
- Tuition Reimbursement.

Review the benefits section on FCNet for a complete description of the benefits available.

Wellness Program

Health Risk Assessments and Biometric Screenings

Because Forsyth County is committed to helping employees take charge of their health, the County offers a voluntary, free and confidential Wellness Screening, Health Risk Assessment (HRA), and Wellness Coaching for employees participating in the County's health insurance.

The Health Risk Assessment is a health survey that is completed online.

The Wellness Screening includes:

- Height, weight and blood pressure;
- A blood test to determine risk factors for heart disease, stroke, and diabetes;
- A brief meeting with a personal Wellness Coach.

Employees who complete both the Health Risk Assessment (HRA) and Wellness Screening will qualify for a discount to their bi-weekly health insurance premium.

Based on the wellness score from the HRA and the results of your screenings, employees will be stratified into a risk category which may require coaching. If coaching is required, employees must also comply with the coaching requirements in order to continue receiving the wellness discount.

Employees will receive an easy-to-read, comprehensive report with laboratory results, descriptions of tests, coaching requirements (if any), and healthy tips. This information will be mailed to an employee's home addresses.

Wellness Program (continued)



All information gathered at the screening and the laboratory report is confidential, as protected by federal law. **Forsyth County does not have access to individual results.** We value employee privacy and understand its importance. There are many steps in place to assure confidentiality.

Healthkick

Human Resources administers a wellness program called Healthkick for County employees. The wellness program is structured to encourage healthy behaviors among County employees, dependents and retirees.

Making Benefits Changes

Forsyth County Government has established a Section 125 Benefit Plan allowable by the IRS, which allows employees to avoid paying state, federal and FICA taxes on their portion of the health and dental premiums. All full-time employees are automatically enrolled in this pre-tax premium plan.

Employees must request and sign a waiver if they do not want to pay premiums with pre-tax dollars. The Section 125 Plan also allows employees the option to set up reimbursement accounts to pay for certain eligible medical and daycare expenses tax-free. (See Reimbursement Accounts section).

In exchange for this tax-favorable treatment, the IRS requires that an employee has a valid qualifying event in order to change the amount of pre-tax premium or reimbursement account. Valid qualifying events, as defined by the IRS, include:

- Change in legal marital status (marriage, divorce, legal separation, annulment, death of spouse);
- Change in number of tax dependents (birth, adoption, or placement for adoption, death);
- Change in work schedule (including reduction or increase in hours by employee, spouse, or dependent);
- Dependent satisfies or ceases to satisfy dependent eligibility requirement (attainment of age, student status, etc.);

- Change in residence or worksite of employee or dependent (moving out of PPO service area);
- Termination or commencement of employment by employee, spouse, or dependent;
- Change in coverage of a spouse under another employer's plan and/or;
- Receipt of a legal court order specifically requiring insurance coverage for a dependent child.

In order to make health, dental, or vision coverage changes, employees must complete and sign the appropriate paperwork within 30 calendar days of the qualifying event. Written proof of the change requested must also be submitted. Because health, dental, and vision premiums are deducted in advance, employees who do not complete the required paperwork at least one month in advance will be required to pay missed premiums.

During the annual open enrollment for Section 125 benefits, employees may add or delete dependents without a valid qualifying event.

Annual Open Enrollment

The annual open enrollment period is normally held during the first few weeks of May. Benefits include health, dental, vision, disability, and life insurance, and medical and dependent reimbursement accounts. For health, vision and dental changes made during open enrollment, the new premium is deducted from the June paychecks with coverage changes effective July 1. Deductions for medical and dependent reimbursement accounts begin with the first paycheck in July with an effective date of July 1.

The annual open enrollment period is the only time employees may add or delete eligible dependents without a valid qualifying event.

COBRA Continuation of Health, Dental and Vision Coverage

Forsyth County Government offers employees and their families the opportunity to temporarily extend their health, dental, and vision coverage (called “continuation coverage”) at group rates in certain circumstances listed below. If an employee and/or dependent chooses continuation coverage, Forsyth County will offer coverage that is identical to the coverage being provided to current employees.

The employee and any dependent will be responsible for paying 100% of the premium rates (including any portion that Forsyth County now pays). This will include an additional 2% administrative charge. Premium rates are subject to change whenever Forsyth County’s premiums change.

Detailed information can be found on FCNet.

Tuition Reimbursement

The tuition reimbursement program exists to assist employees with education and expand skillsets. Financial assistance is generally available to cover courses that will improve job skills or increase the potential for advancement. Courses that are not job-related will not be approved. Therefore, reimbursement consideration will be given on a course-by-course basis and not based on a general curriculum or educational program. The County will pay 100% of the first \$400 per employee per fiscal year. Reimbursements will be limited to actual costs for registration, tuition, books and supplies. Reimbursement can only be made for successful completion (grade “C” or better). Original receipts are required to qualify for reimbursement. If tuition reimbursement requests exceed the budgeted funds, disbursements will be made on a first-come, first-served basis. After course completion, a reimbursement request should be submitted on the “Request for Tuition Reimbursement Form” along with a grade report and all original receipts for payment of expenses incurred.

Retirement

Forsyth County is a participating member of the North Carolina Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System (NCLGERS). Participation is mandatory for full-time and part-time employees with benefits. Both employees and the County contribute to the retirement system each payday. The employee's contribution to the retirement system is deducted before state and federal taxes are withheld; thus, reducing the employee's taxable income. All accumulated sick leave in Forsyth County's system at the time of retirement will be added to an employee's service time for benefits computation. Therefore, saving sick leave can significantly increase retirement benefits. Employees who have in excess of 30 days of annual leave at the time of retirement will have the excess converted to sick time which is added to the amount of sick leave reported to the retirement system.

If retiring, an employee may choose to use accrued annual leave during the last month of employment up to and including the last day, provided the employee works at least one (1) day in the month preceding the retirement date.

Retirement benefit payments are based on the number of years an employee has contributed to the system and the 4 consecutive years of highest annual salary. At the time of retirement, the lump sum paid for accrued annual leave is added to the last year of pay. Therefore, before retiring it can be to advantageous to accumulate leave up to the maximum of thirty days.

If an employee terminates employment before completing 5 years of participation in NCLGERS, the employee will receive only a refund of the employee contributions. After 5 years of participation in NCLGERS, the employee is vested and can receive contributions plus interest upon termination.

Once vested, employees may also opt to leave their money in the retirement system and receive benefit payments when they become eligible.

NOTE: Early withdrawal of retirement contributions is subject to a 10% excise tax unless rolled over to another certified retirement plan.

After 5 years of participation in NCLGERS, employees are eligible to apply for disability retirement benefits if they become totally and permanently disabled from their job.

A voluntary resignation will be deemed when applying for disability retirement.

For further information on the retirement program, please go to the NCLGERS website or call the Retirement System at 1-877-733-4191. The Retirement System web site provides a calculator for estimating retirement benefits.



Remember:

Participation in the Employees' Retirement System (NCLGERS) is mandatory for all full-time and part-time employees with benefits.

Post Retirement Benefit Options

Health Insurance

Retiree Continuation Until Eligible for Medicare Insurance

An employee is eligible to continue County insurance coverage after a retirement under North Carolina Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System ("LGERS") if (1) employed prior to July 1, 2007 without a break in service; or (2) employed initially or re-hired on or after July 1, 2007 with a cumulative total of at least twenty (20) years of Forsyth County service; or (3) an active or approved leave status, and contingent upon County Human Resources' timely receipt of an LGERS disability retirement notification. A retiree is responsible for providing notice to County Human Resources within no later than thirty (30) days after the date of the Social Security Administration Notice that the retiree eligible for Medicare insurance.

The County shall have a right to recover from the retiree any funds it disbursed for medical care, services, or supplies during any period when the retiree, the covered spouse, or covered dependent was also Medicare eligible.

LGERS will deduct premiums from the retiree retirement check at the same rate as active employees beginning the second month after the effective retirement date. However, such premiums are subject to change and the County reserves the right to modify, revoke, suspend, terminate or change health insurance benefits at any time.

Qualified Beneficiaries' Continuation Under Certain Conditions Although eligible spouses and dependents may be added at any open enrollment prior to a retirement date, no one may be added after retirement. A spouse or dependent removed from coverage for any reason may not be reinstated.

Further, spouses and dependents are not eligible for County group health insurance coverage upon a retiree's death, upon a retiree's entitlement to Medicare, upon the spouse's or dependent's entitlement to Medicare, upon divorce, or upon loss of eligibility status as a dependent under the terms of the County Plan. If a spouse or dependent is not covered under any other health insurance after becoming ineligible for County coverage due to the occurrence of a qualifying event under the provisions of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act ("COBRA"), the County will offer an opportunity for continuation of coverage up to thirty-six (36) months upon the payment of the total insurance cost plus a two percent (2%) administrative fee.

As of April 7, 2017 current retirees and new retirees that separate service on or before June 30, 2017 will be considered grandfathered and are considered eligible spouses.

Post Retirement Benefit Options

Health Insurance (Continued)

The beneficiary shall have been covered by County insurance the day before the employee's retirement and qualified under COBRA at the time the retiree becomes entitled to Medicare insurance either upon turning age sixty-five (65) or the retiree otherwise becomes entitled to Medicare insurance for any reason.

The retiree or any qualified beneficiary is responsible for providing notice of the qualifying event and such notice covers each qualified and affected beneficiary. Such retiree or beneficiary is responsible for providing notice to Human Resources within sixty (60) days starting from the latest of: (1) the date on which the qualifying event occurs; (2) the date on which the qualified beneficiary loses (or would lose) coverage under the plan as a result of the qualifying event; or (3) the date on which the retiree or qualified beneficiary is informed, through the furnishing of either the Plan Description or the COBRA general notice, of the responsibility to notify the plan and the procedures for doing so.

Life Insurance

For retirements other than disability, the employer-provided group term life insurance will end at retirement. Employees who retire with a service retirement have the option for conversion or portability of the basic and/or supplement amounts.

Conversion allows an employee to convert to an individual, non-term life insurance policy. Portability allows employees to take the term life plan with them. Employees have 31 days from the last date of employment or retirement to convert or port coverage. Applications should be submitted directly to the provider.

For disability retirements, the employer-provided life insurance will be continued at the County's expense, subject to the age reductions described in the benefits booklet. Disability retirees may also keep their supplemental life insurance in effect by continuing to remit the applicable premium to Forsyth County.

This benefit will end should disability retirement status end.

Death Benefit

The County provides a \$2,000 death benefit for all employees retiring with a service retirement and at least 15 years of full-time Forsyth County service.



Remember:

Life Insurance Options:

Conversion – if coverage ends or is reduced, employees may convert term life policy to a Whole Life Policy.

Portability – if employees terminate or retire, employees may take the term life coverage with them.

.....

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Forsyth County recognizes that a wide range of personal, family and work-related challenges may impair an employee's work performance and may also impact fellow employees. The County also realizes that with early intervention and proper support, employees can be assisted with overcoming challenges and becoming able to fully function at work and at home. As a result, the County offers an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for its employees. The EAP is a voluntary and confidential program and is designed to assist with problems, including but not limited to: depression, substance abuse, emotional distress, coping with major life events, healthcare concerns, financial or legal concerns, personal or work-related relationship issues, concerns about aging parents, etc.

Full-time and part-time with benefits employees and their family members are eligible to participate as of their first day of employment.

Human Resources may refer employees to EAP for declined job performance or if conduct seems to be affected by job-related problems. It is the employee's responsibility to cooperate in any designated treatment or rehabilitation plan.

Employees will not be charged leave for the initial visit to EAP, providing they are willing to tell their supervisor that they are attending a scheduled appointment. Subsequent appointments would require the use of sick or annual leave.

Services will be provided off-site and appointments will be scheduled by the provider to ensure anonymity. All communications between the employee and the EAP will be strictly confidential and will not be released without an employee's written consent unless otherwise specified by law. In the event of a management referral, information other than whether the employee attended the appointment and whether the employee accepted the assistance that was offered will not be released without the employee's written permission.

Service Awards

The Forsyth County Commissioners and the County Manager demonstrate appreciation to full-time employees who have completed landmark years of service by presenting them with a service award.

Active full-time employees as of December 31st of each year who complete 10 years of service during that year and every 10 years thereafter, will be eligible to select and receive a service award and are recognized. Employees who retire during the year and complete the landmark years of service will also be eligible to receive a service award of their choice and are recognized.

Employee Services

Credit Union

The Forsyth County Employees' Credit Union, an affiliate of Summit Credit Union, is a state-chartered savings and loan institution originally established for the employees of Forsyth County, CenterPoint Human Services, and the Airport Commission of Forsyth County. The Credit Union is sponsored by Forsyth County and operates under the supervision of the North Carolina Credit Union Administration and the National Credit Union Administration. Savings accounts are insured up to \$250,000 by the National Credit Union Administration, an agency of the United States Government.

All employees and immediate family members are eligible for membership. Prospective members may call or go to the Credit Union for membership applications. New members must deposit \$25.00 to a Membership Share account or sign up for a payroll deduction of at least \$10.00 per pay period.

A \$25.00 minimum balance in Membership Shares is a condition of membership and a requirement for other services.

United Way

Because of the valuable service the United Way provides to the citizens of Forsyth County, the County sponsors an annual United Way fund drive. Employees choose to make voluntary contributions to the United Way through payroll deductions or as a one-time cash or check payment.

Arts Council

In support of the cultural arts in our community, Forsyth County allows employees to authorize payroll deductions for contributions to the Arts Council.

.....

Employee Handbook Acknowledgment Form

I have received my copy of the Forsyth County Employee Handbook which serves as a guide to the County's, policies, procedures, and benefits. I acknowledge that I am responsible for reading and understanding this handbook. I further acknowledge that the contents of the handbook are subject to change at the discretion of management. I agree to read and immediately comply with all County policies as set out in the handbook and after notice is provided of any changes in policies.

I understand that the most current version of this handbook can be found on the County's website at www.forsyth.cc or on the County's intranet at FCNet.

I acknowledge that this handbook is not and shall not be considered an employment contract, and does not guarantee my employment for any specific period of time. No person has the authority to grant any County employee any contractual rights of employment. The County reserves the right to make any changes in these guidelines, their application and/or my benefits as it deems appropriate. These changes may be made with or without notice to me. I acknowledge that my employment may end at the will of either myself or the County at any time for any reason or no reason.

I understand that if I have any questions about this handbook, I am encouraged to address them with my supervisor or the Human Resources department.

Employee's Signature

Date

Employee Name (Print)

(SEND ORIGINAL SIGNED COPY TO THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT.)

