

UNITARIAN CHURCH OF LINCOLN

PERSONNEL POLICIES

Approved by the Personnel Committee on April 11, 2002

Amended by Board of Trustees on October 23, 2002

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Approved by Board of Trustees, May 19, 2019

I. PREAMBLE

The Personnel Committee establishes the following policies on behalf of the Unitarian Church of Lincoln (UCL) Membership. These policies are to be understood as extensions of all relevant church bylaw provisions and Board of Trustees policy statements and are to be interpreted in a manner consistent with those documents. Those provisions and statements and these policies describe the aspects of personnel management which the church holds so intrinsic to its mission as to control the Minister's activities as supervisor of the church's paid staff. As long as the Minister's actions are compliant and consistent with these statements, the Minister is free to exercise and further document his or her supervisory practices as he or she deems best serves the church's mission.

These policies apply to employees who regularly work at least ten hours per week, except that the church's direct employment relationship with the Minister is not addressed by these policies. It is governed by relevant provisions of the church bylaws, supplemented by a separate written employment agreement executed by the Board of Trustees and the Minister.

II. PHILOSOPHY

The Unitarian Church of Lincoln, as an employer, believes in treating each employee with dignity and respect, recognizes the individual worth of each employee, and believes in helping employees develop their potential.

UCL seeks to provide equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, national origin, age, disability, or other protected status. UCL fully complies with all applicable Federal, State, and local anti-discrimination laws.

III. EMPLOYMENT

A. Posting Openings/Advertising

All full and part-time positions openings will be posted at the church and advertised in the church newsletter. Openings may also be advertised in the newspaper as the Minister deems appropriate. Current employees and volunteers may apply for any position for which they are qualified.

B. Qualifications

Specific minimum experience and educational qualifications for each job will be described in the job description. The job description will be available to applicants for the job and any other interested persons.

C. Applications

A candidate for a position in the church shall submit a written application and/or resume.

D. Background Check

All applicants will be subject to a background check through the State Department of Health and Human Services or other public agencies as appropriate.

E. Hiring

Employees will receive two copies of a letter of confirmation of the job offer stating the date when employment begins, salary, and terms of the probationary period. One copy of the letter of confirmation is to be signed by the employee and put into his or her personnel file. The second copy is for the employee. All employees will receive a copy of their job description and the current personnel policies.

F. Orientation

Employees will receive an orientation to their position and general church operations.

IV. EMPLOYEE AGREEMENTS

The Minister may execute a written agreement with any church employee. The agreements shall be available to the Personnel Committee. Any agreement provision which is inconsistent with these policy statements will be valid only upon specific approval by a recorded vote of the Personnel Committee.

V. HOURS OF WORK

Hours of work are established by supervisors and vary in accordance with the needs of a particular area of work. The nature of work at the Unitarian Church may necessitate assignments for weekdays, weekends, evenings and holidays. Flexibility in an employee's work schedule (flex time) is permitted with supervisor approval.

VI. PROBATIONARY PERIOD

A. Use

Probationary periods may be used for a variety of reasons including: new employees, position changes, and unsatisfactory performance.

B. New Employees

The probationary period is designed to give the new employee a chance to become acquainted with the position and the organization and provides the employer an opportunity to observe the capabilities and skills of the new employee. The probationary period consists of a minimum of three months from the date of employment.

All employees will be formally evaluated at the end of the probationary period and either be confirmed as a regular employee, terminated, or placed on an extended probationary period, not to exceed six months. Informal evaluations will be provided during the probationary period in order to assist the new employee in obtaining job proficiency.

C. Position Changes

If an employee changes positions within the church, a minimum three-month probationary will apply to the new position. This rule can be waived under special circumstances.

D. Unsatisfactory Performance

After documented warning, signed by the employee and supervisor, an employee may be placed on probation, for a specified period for unsatisfactory performance. During this probationary period, performance will be evaluated by the supervisor and the employee. At the end of the period, a performance review is conducted and the employee will be returned to regular status, placed on an additional probationary period, or terminated.

VII. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

A. Guidelines

Performance evaluations will be based on written criteria established at the beginning of the evaluation period and should be a collaborative effort. Employees will have an opportunity to evaluate their own performance and set goals for the coming year. Supervisors and reviewers will have an opportunity to evaluate and discuss the performance and goals of the employees they supervise or whose performance they review. Evaluations will be based on the job functions and competencies in the employee's job description, which will be reviewed and updated yearly.

B. Timing

1. Written performance evaluations for all employees will be conducted annually and should be completed by June 30.
2. A personal meeting, as well as written performance evaluation, will be conducted at the end of any probationary period.

C. Procedures

1. The supervisor will solicit comments from key people who have a direct relationship to the performance of the employee.
2. An employee can request that a member of the Personnel Committee be present at the performance evaluation.
3. All performance evaluations must be signed and dated by the employee and the supervisor. The signature of the employee indicates the evaluation took place and that the employee has seen the completed evaluation. The employee's signature does not necessarily indicate agreement with the evaluation. The supervisor will give the employee a copy of the evaluation.
4. If an employee does not agree with an evaluation and cannot resolve the disagreement using the problem solving and grievance procedures in Section IX, the employee may, within 10 working days, provide a written response to the supervisor and the Personnel Committee, to be placed in the employee's personnel file.

VIII. TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

A. Resignation

In the event an employee chooses to terminate employment with the church, the church requests that the employee give at least two weeks' notice in writing. All employees are encouraged to give more notice whenever possible.

B. Dismissal

1. Dismissal with Advance Notice

The church will give at least two weeks' notice of dismissal to employees in writing unless the conditions for dismissal without advance notice apply.

2. Dismissal without Advance Notice

- a. Employees who are on initial probation or probation as a result of unsatisfactory performance may be dismissed without advance notice.
- b. The church reserves the right to terminate employment without advance notice of any employee guilty of gross misconduct. Gross misconduct includes, but is not limited to, harassment, theft, dishonesty, falsification of records, disclosure of confidential information, insubordination, or willful neglect of duty.

3. Dismissal due to Reduction in Staff

When there is a reduction in staff because of decreased funding or reorganization, decisions on retention or dismissal of employees will be made using the following criteria.

- a. The need of the church relative to the particular position.
- b. The qualifications and skills of the employee.

c. Seniority (length of employment at the church).

Employees who are dismissed as a result of decreased funding or reorganization will be given four weeks notice.

4. Employee Grievance

Employees dissatisfied with the decision to dismiss may use the grievance procedures in Section IX.

IX. PROBLEM SOLVING/GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

A. Problem solving

Problem solving should begin with a discussion between employee and his or her immediate supervisor.

If a problem cannot be resolved and is of a serious nature, it can be referred to the Personnel Committee. The Personnel Committee will act as a sounding board.

B. Grievance Procedures

All grievances must be initiated within 30 working days of the date the employee knew or reasonably should have known of the event that is the subject of the grievance. Problem solving procedures must have been attempted.

If a satisfactory settlement is not reached using problem solving, the employee may submit his or her grievance, in writing to the Personnel Committee. The decision of the Personnel Committee is final and shall be conveyed in writing to the employee.

All meetings under these procedures shall be conducted in private and shall include only the persons involved and their designated or selected representatives.

Grievances shall be processed in a manner which does not interfere with the employee's work and the normal operation of the church.

X. PERSONNEL RECORDS

Each employee will have a confidential personnel file which will include copies of:

1. Job application and/or resume.
2. Letter of job confirmation.
3. Job description.
4. Records of performance evaluations.
5. Documentation of unsatisfactory performance, probation, and supervisory meetings or actions.
6. Contact in case of emergency.
7. Any information employee wishes to provide related to health or disabilities.
8. Documentation of education advancement courses taken and any degrees received.
9. Contracts, if used.

10. Record of salary adjustments.
11. Written notice of resignation or dismissal.
12. Copy of driver's license and proof of insurance.

An employee may view or copy information contained in his or her file at any time in the presence of the Minister, except for letters of recommendation or reference received in the hiring process.

Personnel information is confidential and will be made available only to the employee, supervisor, Minister, and Personnel Committee. Requests for information about employees from prospective employers will be limited to the dates of service, position with the church upon separation. More specific information will be released only after it has been discussed with the employee and a written release of information has been signed by the employee that includes the specific information to be released.

XI. COMPENSATION

A. General Guidelines

Compensation includes salary, wages, and benefits. All employee compensation is subject to available funding. Employees are given salaries based on midrange UUA standards adjusted for tenure. Factors to be considered in establishing compensation include education, experience, knowledge, abilities and skills, level of work, responsibility for decisions, supervisory duties, independence of judgment and action, working conditions, and like pay for like work in the community.

B. Salary and Wages

1. Salary Adjustments/Increases

All salary adjustments/increases will be determined in the church's annual budgeting process.

2. Pay Days

Employees are paid monthly.

3. Withholdings

Federal income, state income, FICA, and Medicare taxes are withheld from an employee's gross pay. The church is responsible for submitting them to the proper authorities. Whenever it will be beneficial to an employee for tax reasons for the church to pay a portion of the employee's salary or wages directly to an insurance company for health, dental, life, disability and/or other personal insurance, the church will do this. For example, if the amount budgeted by the church for such insurance benefits is not adequate to cover the employee's premium, the church will, upon request by the employee, pay the additional premium amount from the employee's salary or wages and adjust the tax withholdings accordingly.

4. Voluntary Work

Employees who voluntarily work to cover another church employee's time off will be paid at their regular rate of pay.

5. Comp Time

Salaried employees who work in excess of their usual hours in any week will be granted compensatory time off within the next 30 days as arranged with the supervisor.

6. Emergency Closings

If the minister closed the church due to emergency conditions, employees normally scheduled to work will be paid for their scheduled hours.

7. Travel Reimbursement

a. If an employee must use his or her personal vehicle in the fulfillment of his or her expected duties, the employee will receive mileage based on the current reimbursement rate of the church. The employee shall fill out a mileage log which must be approved by his or her supervisor in order to receive reimbursement.

b. When approval has been given for an employee to attend a conference or other activity for personal development, all permissible IRS expenses will be permissible professional development expenses.

C. Benefits

1. Vacation

Church employees who regularly work at least 20 hours per week will accrue at least one vacation day for each month worked starting with the first day of employment. All vacation dates must be arranged with the employee's supervisor. Employees are encouraged to use their vacation days within one year of accrual unless otherwise agreed to by the supervisor. All employees who resign or are dismissed will be paid for any accrued vacation time.

2. Established Holidays

Church employees will receive a day off in observance of the following holidays. Employees will be paid the number of hours they would have normally been scheduled to work:

New Years Day

Martin Luther King, Jr., Day

Memorial Day

Fourth of July

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day

Christmas Day

If the church program requires an employee to work on a scheduled holiday, the employee's day off will be arranged with the supervisor.

3. Floating Holidays

In addition to the church's established holidays, employees are granted four floating holidays per calendar year. These holidays can be taken whenever the employee wishes, but they must be scheduled in advance in consultation with the supervisor.

4. Sick Leave

Sick leave may be used for personal or family illness, injury, or disability or for medical, dental, or optical appointments that cannot be scheduled during non-working hours.

Employees will accrue one paid sick leave day for each two months worked.

Employees may accumulate up to 25 sick leave days.

Employees on initial probation may use sick leave.

All sick leave terminates on the day of separation from the church, and no reimbursement is made for accumulated sick leave.

5. Parental Leave

Upon the birth of the employee's child, or upon the placement of a child with the employee for adoption, the employee shall be granted up to six weeks of paid leave (including full salary and benefits) with the approval of the minister and the management team.

6. Family/Medical Leave

Family/Medical Leave is available to all employees. A family/medical leave of absence is an approved absence of up to three months of unpaid leave per year under particular circumstances that are critical to the life of the family. Medical certification to support a claim for leave is required. Leave may be taken for any of the following reasons:

- a. When the employee is unable to perform the functions of his or her position because of a serious health condition.
- b. When the employee is needed to care for a child, spouse, parent, or other close family member who has a serious health condition.

The employee is expected to return to work at the earliest possible time. Employees will first use any accumulated sick, personal, and vacation time prior to being placed on unpaid leave. Employees retain the right to return to active employment without the loss of position or salary within the three-month period.

7. Extended Leave without Pay

Extended leave, without pay, for periods of extended illness, disability, or injury recovery will be treated as a leave of absence after all accumulated sick, vacation, and family/medical leave has been used.

8. Court Room Leave

All employees are eligible for required court room leave upon employment and will receive pay for their regular working hours, less any payment received as a witness or juror.

9. Military Training

Employees will be granted leave to attend required military training and active duty.

10. Health/Dental/Life/Disability/and Other Personal Insurance

a. Compensation for all church employees contracted to regularly work 30 or more hours per week will include, in addition to salary or wages, a monthly amount primarily intended to provide health and dental insurance coverage for the employee. The amount will be at least sufficient to provide

- 80% of the premium cost for health and dental insurance for the employee, and
- 50% of the additional premium cost for health and dental insurance for employee family members eligible for coverage, under programs selected by the church.

Compensation for church employees contracted to work between 15-30 hours a week will include, in addition to salary or wages, a monthly amount primarily intended to provide health and dental insurance coverage for the employee. The amount will be at least sufficient to provide

- 40% of the premium cost for health and dental insurance for the employee, and
- 25% of the additional premium cost for health and dental insurance for employee family members eligible for coverage, under programs selected by the church.

b. All eligible employees will be enrolled in the church's long term disability and life insurance program and the premium cost for this coverage will be automatically deducted from their insurance compensation amount. Employees may elect or decline enrollment, for themselves or their family members, in the church's other insurance programs. Employees may also request that the church draw on the insurance compensation amount to:

- make direct payment for insurance coverage under programs other than those selected by the church, or
- reimburse the employee for insurance premiums paid to such programs, or

- reimburse the employee for copay or deductible payments made under such programs.

Payments made in excess of the insurance compensation amount will be deducted from the employee's salary payments. If an the employee does not elect to have his/her entire insurance compensation amount disbursed in any of the above ways, s/he may have all or part of the remaining balance

- contributed to his/her pension account, or
- set aside to provide him/her with professional development or materials, or - disbursed to him/her as salary.

All payments made will be subject to or exempted from taxation as determined by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service.

11. Worker's Compensation

Church employees are covered by worker's compensation insurance.

12. Pension

The church budgets an amount (usually a percent of salary) for a pension benefit for employees who regularly work at least 1000 hours per year (approximately 20 hours per week). Employee must be at least 18 years of age. Elective pre-tax contributions can be made immediately upon hire regardless of hours. The church begins contributions after the first 1000 hours in 12 months from date of hire, or after 1st calendar year working 12 months and 1000 hours at any qualifying Unitarian Universalist institution.

XII. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Employee professional development is encouraged. The church budgets an amount for professional development expenses. An employee may request permission of his or her supervisor to attend a job related conference or activity and be paid for regular working hours plus all or part of the cost of attending that conference or activity.

XIII. SABBATICAL POLICY

The Unitarian Church of Lincoln (UCL) believes that its employees benefit from time spent in study, reflection, spiritual renewal, continuing education, or community service.

This program is a privilege that is earned by UCL staff and is completely discretionary and may be suspended, terminated, or altered at any time.

This policy may be superseded by letters of call or agreement between clergy and the Unitarian Church of Lincoln.

A. Eligibility

Regular employees normally scheduled for 20 or more hours per week, who have demonstrated a good work record and are currently in good standing, are eligible to apply.

B. Waiting Period

Sabbatical may be granted to eligible employees who have been in continuous, regular employment with UCL for seven years or longer.

C. Sabbatical Program Guidelines

- 1) Eligible employees who are in good standing and have been in employment with the UCL for six years or longer and wish to apply for a sabbatical should discuss their plans and submit a letter of intent to their immediate supervisor at least one year in advance. Requests for such leave should include information concerning the purpose and intent of the sabbatical as well as information as to how the sabbatical is to be spent. Plans must be grounded in intentional activities that lead to spiritual renewal and growth or vocational discernment, and may include, but are not limited to, work-related study, community service, or professional development.
- 2) Sabbatical may not begin before the employee's seventh anniversary of employment.
- 3) Written application must be made to the immediate supervisor at least six months before the proposed leave. After the supervisor approves the application, it is forwarded to minister and personnel committee for review, who should then forward it to the Board of Trustees for final approval.
- 4) The formal application procedure should lead to a written agreement that sets forth the detailed conditions for the sabbatical. Conversations within staff and personnel committee need to evaluate and discuss the challenges and stresses that will be placed on the congregation during the period of the sabbatical. Plans need to be made to provide the resources to meet those needs.
- 5) No sabbatical shall be granted at a time or under circumstances which, in the judgment of your supervisor, minister, or UCL leadership are inconsistent with the needs of the staff and/or would result in hardship for UCL.
- 6) Sabbaticals may not exceed 14 weeks. Employees may not take a sabbatical more frequently than once every seven years.
- 7) It is expected that employees will commit to work for UCL at least one year following the end of the sabbatical period.
- 8) The period during which the employee is on sabbatical shall not be counted as credited service for vacation and personal day accrual purposes. Other benefits and salary shall, typically, continue. If an employee dies while on sabbatical, sabbatical benefits cease at the time of death.
- 9) If employment terminates during sabbatical, sabbatical benefits cease at the time of termination. Approved, but unused sabbatical time is not paid out at termination of employment, nor may it be used to extend employment beyond the termination date.
- 10) Copies of all documentation should be kept as part of the employees personnel file.

XIV. CONFIDENTIALITY OF MEMBER INFORMATION

Due to the nature of the church, all records involving members are confidential and are to be maintained in the strictest confidence. This includes financial records, personal information, and other information that is not published by the church in the church directory or otherwise.

XV. DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

The church strives to provide a work place free of tensions involving matters which do not relate to the church's business. Thus the church is committed to providing a work environment that is free of discrimination and harassment. Engaging in discrimination or harassment is a form of employee misconduct that is demeaning to another person, undermines the integrity of the employment relationship, and is strictly prohibited.

Examples of prohibited conduct include negative, demeaning, or unwanted comments concerning a person's ethnicity, race, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender variation, or other similar characteristics; animosity; unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; sexually motivated verbal or physical conduct; other verbal or physical conduct or harassment; visual forms of harassment of a sexual nature when submission to that conduct is either explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of employment or is used as a basis for employment decisions; and other actions that have the purpose or effect of unreasonable interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Any employee who wants to report an incident of discrimination or harassment should promptly report the matter to his or her supervisor. If the supervisor is unavailable or the employee believes it would be inappropriate to contact that person, the employee should contact the Minister or a member of the Personnel Committee. Employees are also encouraged to use the Problem Solving/Grievance Procedures whenever possible. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal.

Complaints will be kept confidential. All complaints will be promptly and thoroughly investigated. If the investigation reveals a violation of this policy by an employee, disciplinary action (which may include termination of employment) will be promptly taken against the employee.

XVI. USE OF PERSONAL VEHICLE

Employees may sometimes be expected to use their personal cars to perform church business. Church business must be conducted at the discretion of and with the approval of the supervisor. All employees should check with their insurance agency to be sure they are covered while on church business and provide proof of coverage to the church during their first month of employment. If needed, UCL's coverage will be secondary to the employees personal coverage

XVII. ELECTRONIC MAIL AND SOCIAL NETWORK POLICY

Email should be maintained in a business-like fashion. Email and social networks may be used for personal reasons, but the use must not interfere with the employee's job duties or other work of the church and must be conducted in a professional manner.

XVIII. POLICY INTERPRETATION

If an employee raises a question relating to the interpretation of these personnel policies, the Personnel Committee's interpretation shall control and be final.

XIV. CONFLICT OF INTEREST.

Church employees must avoid any conflict of interest with respect to their fiduciary responsibility.

There must be no self-dealing or any conduct of private business or personal services between any church employee and the church except as procedurally controlled to assure openness, competitive opportunity, and equal access to "inside" information.

Church employees must not use their positions to obtain for themselves, family members, or close associates paid employment with the Unitarian Church of Lincoln except in cases of incidental or short term employment.

Employees who work more than 5 hours a week, and are members of UCL, will not serve on the Board of Trustees, Nominating Committee, or Program Council, and will not chair congregational committees or task forces.