



PIEDMONT REGION

# Employee Handbook

## Table of Contents

I.	VIRGINIA CAREER WORKS-PIEDMONT .....	4
II.	EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION.....	4
A.	Equal Opportunity Employment.....	4
B.	Disability Accommodation .....	4
C.	Immigration and Employment Eligibility .....	4
D.	At-Will Employment.....	5
E.	Trial Period of Employment.....	5
F.	Employment Categories .....	5
G.	Normal Work Week .....	6
H.	Attendance and Punctuality .....	6
I.	Timekeeping .....	7
J.	Paydays .....	7
III.	BENEFITS .....	7
A.	Holidays .....	7
B.	Vacation .....	7
C.	Sick Leave.....	8
D.	Retirement.....	8
E.	Health and Dental Insurance.....	8
F.	Long-Term Disability Insurance.....	9
G.	Life Insurance .....	9
H.	Bereavement Leave .....	9
I.	Direct Deposit of Paychecks.....	10
J.	Reimbursable Expenses .....	10
K.	Cell Phone Reimbursement.....	10
L.	Personal Health and Wellness Incentive.....	10
M.	Jury Duty .....	10
N.	Family and Medical Leave Act.....	11
O.	Military Reserve and National Guard Leave .....	11
P.	USERRA (Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act) Compliance and Anti-Discrimination .....	12
IV.	EMPLOYEE CONDUCT .....	12
A.	Business Ethics and Standards of Conduct.....	12
Gifts and Gratuities .....	12	
B.	Confidentiality and Protection of Company Information .....	12
C.	Political Activity and Non-Partisanship .....	13
D.	Computers, Internet, Technology, and E-Mail Use .....	13
E.	Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy.....	14

F.	Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Compliance.....	14
G.	Professional Appearance and Dress Standards .....	14
H.	Work Time, Focus, and Time Theft.....	15
V.	WORKPLACE SAFETY.....	15
A.	General Safety Guidelines .....	15
B.	Hazardous Chemicals and Your Right to Know .....	16
C.	Workers' Compensation .....	16
D.	Workplace Violence Prevention .....	17
E.	Sexual and Other Unlawful Harassment.....	17
	Sexual Harassment.....	17
	Other Harassment.....	17
	Reporting and Investigation .....	18
F.	Drug-Free Workplace Program .....	18
VI.	EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE.....	18
A.	Performance Evaluation and Merit Increases .....	18
B.	Progressive Discipline .....	18
C.	Employment Termination.....	19
VII.	MISCELLANEOUS.....	19
A.	Emergency Closings / Inclement Weather .....	19
B.	Smoking .....	19
C.	Non-Business Visitors.....	19
D.	Appearance and Courtesy .....	19
E.	Access to Personnel Files .....	19
F.	Personal Information.....	19
	EMPLOYMENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AGREEMENT .....	20

## **I. VIRGINIA CAREER WORKS-PIEDMONT**

Welcome to Virginia Career Works-Piedmont (VCWP), one of fourteen Regional Workforce Development Boards in the Commonwealth of Virginia. We are committed to addressing workforce development needs, combating unemployment, and strengthening the regional economy.

Virginia Career Works-Piedmont is dedicated to ensuring that individuals understand their merit, value, and worthwhile building community wealth through responsive workforce services. We serve unemployed and underemployed job seekers, businesses, individuals with disabilities, veterans, youth, individuals re-entering the workforce, career switchers, recent graduates, and other diverse populations. Our work focuses on reducing workforce gaps and addressing employment barriers, economic inequities, and the need for cultural competence across the workforce system.

You are a valued member of our staff, and we hope you will find your work experience both challenging and rewarding. Our success depends on the commitment, skills, and collaboration of our employees. We strive to recruit qualified professionals and to foster a respectful, inclusive, and supportive workplace, and we are committed to compensating our staff fairly.

To ensure Virginia Career Works-Piedmont's continued success, it is important that all employees follow the policies and guidelines that govern the organization. Please take time to review this handbook, and do not hesitate to ask questions or raise concerns.

## **II. EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION**

### **A. Equal Opportunity Employment**

It is the policy of Virginia Career Works-Piedmont to provide equal opportunity in employment to all applicants and employees without regard to race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, gender identity, and sexual orientation), national origin, ancestry, age, disability, marital status, military or veteran status, or political affiliation or belief, consistent with applicable federal and state law.

This policy applies to all terms, conditions, and privileges of employment, including recruitment, hiring, placement, promotion, transfer, training, compensation, benefits, discipline, termination, and other employment-related decisions.

All employees are expected to be familiar with and comply with this policy and to conduct themselves in a manner that supports an inclusive, respectful, and non-discriminatory workplace.

### **B. Disability Accommodation**

Virginia Career Works-Piedmont is committed to full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and applicable state and local laws, and to providing equal employment opportunity to qualified individuals with disabilities. All employment practices and activities are conducted on a non-discriminatory basis and include the provision of reasonable accommodations, as required by law. Virginia Career Works Piedmont will comply with state or local laws that provide greater protections to individuals with disabilities than those afforded under the ADA.

### **C. Immigration and Employment Eligibility**

In compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, all employees must be authorized to work in the United States. Individuals offered employment are required to provide documentary proof of identity and employment authorization and to complete and sign Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification, issued by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Form I-9 requires employees to attest, under penalty of perjury, that they are authorized to work in the United States and that the documents presented are genuine and relate to the individual presenting them. Virginia Career Works-Piedmont complies with all federal requirements related to employment eligibility verification and retains completed Forms I-9 in accordance with applicable law.

#### **D. At-Will Employment**

The Commonwealth of Virginia is an at-will employment state. This means that either the employee or Virginia Career Works-Piedmont may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without notice, for any lawful reason.

If you choose to resign, you are requested to provide at least two weeks' advance notice to your supervisor, indicating your intended last day of work. Failure to provide advance notice may affect your eligibility for rehire.

Upon separation from employment, employees will be paid all wages earned through their last day of work on or before the next regular payday, in accordance with Virginia law. Final wages will be issued using the organization's regular payroll method on file, unless otherwise required by law.

#### **E. Trial Period of Employment**

Unless otherwise indicated in writing by Virginia Career Works-Piedmont, each new or rehired employee will complete a trial period of employment beginning on the first day of work and ending ninety (90) days from the date of hire.

This trial period provides an opportunity for employees to become familiar with their job duties and working conditions, while allowing management to evaluate job performance, attendance, skills, adaptability, and ability to work effectively with others.

Employment with Virginia Career Works-Piedmont is at-will during and after the trial period. Completion of the trial period does not alter the at-will nature of employment and should not be considered a guarantee of continued employment or continued employment for any definite period.

#### **F. Employment Categories**

It is the intent of Virginia Career Works-Piedmont to clearly define employment classifications so that employees understand their employment status and eligibility for benefits. These classifications do not create a contract of employment or guarantee employment for any specific period. Employment with Virginia Career Works-Piedmont remains at-will, meaning that either the employee or the organization may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without notice, for any lawful reason.

Each employee is designated as either exempt or non-exempt in accordance with applicable federal and state wage-and-hour laws. Non-exempt employees are entitled to overtime compensation as required by law. Exempt employees are excluded from specific overtime and minimum wage provisions based on their job duties and compensation levels. An employee's classification may be changed only upon written notification by Virginia Career Works-Piedmont management.

In addition to the above categories, each employee will belong to one other employment category:

**REGULAR FULL-TIME** employees are those who are not in a temporary or introductory status and who are regularly scheduled to work thirty-two (32) or more hours per week. Generally, regular full-time employees are eligible for Virginia Career Works-Piedmont's benefit package, in some instances on a prorated basis, subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefit program.

**PART-TIME** employees are those who are not assigned to a temporary or introductory status and who are regularly scheduled to work fewer than thirty (30) hours per week. Part-time employees receive all legally mandated benefits, including Social Security and workers' compensation insurance.

Part-time employees who are regularly scheduled to work at least twenty (20) hours per week may be eligible for certain additional benefits on a prorated basis, subject to the terms, conditions, and eligibility requirements of each benefit program.

Part-time employees accrue 2.5 hours of paid time off (PTO) and 1.6 hours of sick leave per pay period.

**INTRODUCTORY** employees are those in the first ninety (90) days of employment during which job performance, attendance, and overall suitability for regular employment are evaluated. Employees who

satisfactorily complete the introductory period will be notified of their regular employment classification and benefit eligibility, if applicable. Completion of the introductory period does not alter the at-will nature of employment.

**TEMPORARY** employees are those hired as interim replacements, to temporarily supplement the workforce, or to assist with the completion of a specific project. Employment assignments in this category are of a limited duration. Employment beyond any initially stated period does not imply a change in employment status.

Temporary employees retain their temporary status unless and until they are notified in writing of a change in classification. Temporary employees are employees of Virginia Career Works-Piedmont and are not eligible for the organization's benefit programs, unless otherwise required by law or expressly provided in writing.

**INTERNS** are employees with limited professional work experience who are hired to gain experience in the business community and/or to become familiar with the industry. Internship assignments are generally of a limited duration.

Interns are employees of Virginia Career Works-Piedmont and are subject to all applicable employment laws. Interns retain their internship status unless and until notified in writing of a change in employment classification. Completion of an internship does not guarantee continued employment. Employment with Virginia Career Works-Piedmont is at-will during and after the internship period.

#### **G. Normal Work Week**

Virginia Career Works-Piedmont currently operates Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Some weekend events may require attendance, and work schedules may be adjusted based on operational needs.

Work schedules are generally eight (8) hours per day and forty (40) hours per week. Flextime may be available with supervisory approval, allowing employees to adjust their work schedules within established parameters to meet organizational goals and objectives.

For non-exempt employees, all hours worked over forty (40) in a workweek must be approved and will be compensated in accordance with applicable wage-and-hour laws.

Supervisors may adjust work schedules as necessary to ensure adequate staffing and operational coverage.

#### **H. Attendance and Punctuality**

Since our business depends on employees to provide high-quality services to our clients, regular attendance and punctuality are expected of all Virginia Career Works-Piedmont employees. If you expect to be late or absent, you are required to notify your supervisor as soon as practicable, preferably by 9:00 a.m., the start of the workday.

Unless otherwise approved, employees are expected to contact their supervisor each day of absence and advise of their anticipated return to work. Contact by someone other than the employee is generally discouraged except in cases of serious illness, injury, or emergency.

Poor attendance and excessive tardiness are disruptive to operations and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, consistent with applicable law.

An employee who is absent from work for two (2) consecutive workdays without notifying the organization or providing an explanation may be considered to have voluntarily abandoned their position. Before any separation for job abandonment is finalized, the organization will make reasonable efforts to confirm the employee's intent to resign and will consider any information related to legally protected leave or circumstances.

## I. Timekeeping

Accurately recording time worked is the responsibility of every employee. Federal and state laws require Virginia Career Works-Piedmont to maintain accurate records of all time worked in order to properly calculate employee pay and benefits.

Time worked includes all time actually spent performing assigned job duties. Employees are prohibited from performing any work outside of recorded hours or altering time records without proper authorization.

If corrections or modifications are made to a time record, both the employee and the supervisor must review and verify the accuracy of the changes in accordance with established procedures.

## J. Paydays

The paydays are the 15th and 30th of each month (or the last day of the month in February).

## III. BENEFITS

### A. Holidays

Virginia Career Works-Piedmont offers the following paid holidays each year, as listed below. Regular full-time employees will receive holiday pay for these designated holidays.

If a holiday falls during an employee's approved vacation period, the employee will receive holiday pay rather than having the day charged against accrued vacation time.

Regular part-time employees who are regularly scheduled to work at least twenty (20) hours per week are eligible to receive holiday pay for holidays that fall on days they are normally scheduled to work. Holiday pay for part-time employees will be paid for the number of hours they would have worked on that day based on their regular work schedule as established by their supervisor.

The recognized holidays include:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- President's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Indigenous Peoples' Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving Day and Friday following Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

Holidays that fall on a Saturday will be observed on the Friday before the holiday. If a holiday falls on a Sunday, then it will be observed the following Monday.

### B. Vacation

Vacation accrual begins with the first month of hire. Full-time employees acquire vacation time based on the following schedule:	
Completed Years of Service	Annual Vacation
0 - 3 years	10 days (accumulating 3.33 hrs. per pay period)
4 - 7 years	15 days (accumulating 6.67 hrs. per pay period)
7 - 10 years	20 days
11+	25 days

One (1) additional day of vacation per year is awarded with each completed year of service, up to a maximum of fifteen (15) years of service and twenty-five (25) vacation days per year. Additional vacation time is awarded on the employee's employment anniversary date.

Employees who are regularly scheduled to work at least twenty (20) hours per week but fewer than forty (40) hours per week are awarded vacation time on a prorated basis, calculated according to their regular work schedule and years of service with Virginia Career Works-Piedmont.

Introductory employees are not eligible to request or use vacation time.

Vacation requests will be approved based on operational needs and at the mutual convenience of Virginia Career Works-Piedmont and the employee, subject to supervisory approval. Vacation time may also be used to observe religious holidays that are not otherwise recognized as paid holidays.

Vacation time does not accrue during a leave of absence.

Up to ten (10) unused vacation days (80 hours) may be carried forward from one year to the next.

An employee who separates from employment after one (1) year of service (365 calendar days) will be compensated for no more than five (5) unused vacation days (40 hours), in accordance with this policy.

### **C. Sick Leave**

Sick leave equivalent to ten (10) days per year, earned at a rate of 6.67 hours per month and accrued at the end of each month, is provided to all regular full-time employees. Employees who are regularly scheduled to work at least twenty (20) hours per week but fewer than forty (40) hours per week are eligible to receive sick leave on a prorated basis, calculated according to their regular hours worked.

Temporary employees are not eligible to earn or use sick leave. Accrued sick leave may be carried forward for up to ninety (90) days.

Employees are not compensated for unused sick leave upon separation from employment.

Employees are responsible for notifying their supervisor or manager when sick leave is needed due to illness and for keeping their supervisor informed of their condition and expected return to work. When an employee is absent for more than three (3) consecutive workdays, the organization may require a medical statement from the employee's health care provider, consistent with applicable law.

Medical and dental appointments should be scheduled outside of working hours whenever possible. When this is not feasible, time away from work for such appointments will be charged to sick leave. Management reserves the right to require an employee to leave the workplace when a contagious illness may pose a risk to others, and to request appropriate medical documentation when appointments occur during working hours or as otherwise permitted by law.

### **D. Retirement**

Virginia Career Works-Piedmont offers a retirement plan to regular full-time and regular part-time employees who have completed one (1) year of service and at least 1,000 hours of service during a consecutive twelve-month period, in accordance with the terms of the plan.

Eligible employees may elect to make tax-deferred contributions to the plan. Virginia Career Works-Piedmont will provide a matching contribution equal to one dollar for each dollar contributed by the employee, up to a maximum of four percent (4%) of the employee's eligible compensation per plan year.

Contribution limits, eligibility, and other plan provisions are governed by the official plan document and applicable law. Employees may consult the organization's benefits provider for additional information regarding current plan limits and options.

### **E. Health and Dental Insurance**

Virginia Career Works-Piedmont offers group health and dental insurance coverage to regular full-time employees who are regularly scheduled to work at least thirty (30) hours per week. Coverage becomes

effective on the first day of the month following the employee's start date, in accordance with the terms of the applicable plans.

Eligible employees may elect to participate in the health and dental insurance plans subject to all terms, conditions, and eligibility requirements set forth in the plan documents and insurance carrier agreements. Employees may also choose to enroll eligible dependents. The cost of dependent coverage is paid by the employee through payroll deduction on an after-tax basis.

Virginia Career Works-Piedmont reserves the right, at its discretion, to change insurance carriers, modify plan offerings, or add or discontinue insurance benefits at any time, subject to applicable law. All benefit plans are governed by their official plan documents and Summary Plan Descriptions (SPDs).

#### **F. Long-Term Disability Insurance**

Virginia Career Works-Piedmont offers a long-term disability (LTD) benefits plan designed to assist eligible employees who experience an illness or injury resulting in a long-term absence from work. LTD coverage is intended to provide partial income replacement for employees who are determined to be disabled and unable to work, as defined by the terms of the plan.

Regular full-time and regular part-time employees who complete one (1) year of service and at least 1,500 hours of service in a plan year may be eligible to participate in the LTD plan, subject to all terms, conditions, and eligibility requirements established by the LTD insurance carrier and the applicable plan documents.

LTD benefits generally become payable on the 181st calendar day of an approved disability and are provided at fifty percent (50%) of the employee's base salary in effect at the time the disability begins. Payment of benefits is subject to approval by the insurance carrier and continued eligibility under the plan.

Complete details regarding eligibility, benefit amounts, limitations, exclusions, and claim procedures are contained in the official LTD plan document and Summary Plan Description (SPD), which govern in the event of any inconsistency.

#### **G. Life Insurance**

Life insurance provides important financial protection for employees and their families in the event of an untimely death. Virginia Career Works-Piedmont offers a basic life insurance plan to eligible employees.

Regular full-time employees who are regularly scheduled to work at least thirty (30) hours per week may be eligible to participate in the life insurance plan, subject to all terms, conditions, and eligibility requirements established by the applicable plan documents and the life insurance carrier.

Under the current plan, the life insurance benefit provides coverage equal to two (2) times the employee's base salary, payable to the employee's designated beneficiary upon the death of a covered employee. Specific benefit details, limitations, and exclusions are governed by the official plan documents and Summary Plan Description (SPD).

#### **H. Bereavement Leave**

Virginia Career Works-Piedmont recognizes that the loss of a loved one is a difficult time for employees. Every reasonable effort will be made to allow employees to attend to family-related matters during periods of bereavement.

Regular full-time employees are eligible for up to five (5) paid workdays of bereavement leave in the event of the death of an immediate family member.

Regular part-time employees who are regularly scheduled to work at least twenty (20) hours per week are eligible for paid bereavement leave for the number of hours they would normally have been scheduled to work on the day(s) of absence, as determined by their regular work schedule.

For purposes of this policy, immediate family includes the employee's spouse, child, parent or legal guardian, grandparent, great-grandparent, grandchild, sibling, mother-in-law, sister-in-law, or a person who was living in the employee's household immediately prior to death.

In the event of the death of a relative who is not considered an immediate family member, or of a close personal friend, an employee may request up to one (1) day of paid leave to attend the funeral, subject to supervisory approval.

### **I. Direct Deposit of Paychecks**

For your convenience, you may elect direct deposit of your paycheck.

### **J. Reimbursable Expenses**

Expense reports are used to reimburse employees for reasonable and necessary business expenses incurred on behalf of Virginia Career Works-Piedmont. All reimbursable expenses must be directly related to organizational business activities.

Expense reports must include itemized receipts for lodging, airfare, meals, mileage, and any other reimbursable transactions. Mileage is reimbursed at the standard rate established by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in effect at the time the travel occurred.

To be eligible for reimbursement, all expenses must be approved by the employee's supervisor in advance and are subject to review for compliance with organizational policy and funding requirements.

### **K. Cell Phone Reimbursement**

After ninety (90) days of employment with Virginia Career Works-Piedmont, employees in active employment status are eligible to receive a cell phone stipend intended to help offset business-related cell phone usage.

The stipend is provided in the amount of fifty dollars (\$50) per month. The monthly stipend is accrued and paid in two (2) lump-sum payments each year: one payment issued during the last pay period of June and one payment issued during the last pay period of December to employees who are in active status at the time of payment.

This stipend is considered taxable compensation and will be processed through payroll in accordance with applicable tax withholding requirements. Virginia Career Works-Piedmont reserves the right to modify or discontinue the stipend at any time.

### **L. Personal Health and Wellness Incentive**

After ninety (90) days of employment with Virginia Career Works-Piedmont, employees in active employment status are eligible to receive a wellness stipend of up to sixty-five dollars (\$65)\* per month to help offset the cost of a gym membership.

The stipend accrues monthly and is paid in two (2) lump-sum payments each year: one issued during the last pay period of June and one issued during the last pay period of December. Payments are made to employees who are in active status at the time of each payout.

This stipend is considered taxable compensation and is processed through payroll in accordance with applicable tax withholding requirements. Virginia Career Works-Piedmont reserves the right to modify or discontinue this benefit at any time.

*\*A proof of payment of membership must accompany reimbursement requests in June and December.*

### **M. Jury Duty**

Virginia Career Works-Piedmont will grant employees time off as required for mandatory jury duty. Employees will also be granted time off when required to appear in court pursuant to a court order or subpoena. Employees must provide a copy of the jury summons, court order, or subpoena to their manager as soon as practicable.

Regular full-time employees will receive jury duty pay of up to eight (8) hours per day for a maximum of three (3) workdays. If jury service continues beyond three days, additional time off will be granted as required by law and operational circumstances but will be unpaid.

Regular part-time employees will be granted approved jury duty leave but will not receive paid jury duty leave.

Virginia Career Works-Piedmont will not discharge, discipline, or otherwise penalize any employee for serving on jury duty or complying with a lawful court order.

Time off related to civil or criminal proceedings in which the employee is a party, rather than a juror or subpoenaed witness, is not eligible for pay under this policy.

#### **N. Family and Medical Leave Act**

Virginia Career Works-Piedmont complies with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which provides eligible employees with job-protected leave for certain family and medical reasons, in accordance with applicable law.

Employees who have been employed by Virginia Career Works-Piedmont for at least twelve (12) months and who have worked at least 1,250 hours during the twelve-month period immediately preceding the start of leave may be eligible for up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave during a designated twelve-month period for the following reasons:

- The birth of a child and care for the newborn child;
- The placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care;
- To care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition;
- When the employee is unable to perform the essential functions of their job due to a serious health condition.

An eligible employee may substitute accrued sick leave and/or vacation leave for unpaid FMLA leave, consistent with Virginia Career Works-Piedmont's paid leave policies.

A serious health condition means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves inpatient care in a hospital or medical facility, continuing treatment by a health care provider, incapacity due to pregnancy or prenatal care, or a chronic or episodic condition requiring ongoing medical supervision.

During approved FMLA leave, Virginia Career Works-Piedmont will continue to pay the employer's portion of group health insurance premiums under the same terms as if the employee had continued to work.

Upon return from FMLA leave, an employee will be restored to the same position or to an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, and terms and conditions of employment, as required by law.

Use of all twelve (12) weeks of FMLA leave does not automatically terminate employment. Requests for additional leave beyond FMLA will be evaluated in accordance with applicable laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Virginia Human Rights Act.

Employees should provide sufficient notice of the need for FMLA leave when foreseeable and must supply appropriate medical certification when required. Employees who do not intend to return to work following FMLA leave must notify their supervisor as soon as possible.

#### **O. Military Reserve and National Guard Leave**

As a member of the United States Military Reserve or National Guard, you may be required to take time off from work to meet annual training requirements or fulfill other military service obligations. Virginia Career Works-Piedmont will provide military leave in accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

Employees are encouraged to notify their supervisor as far in advance as possible of upcoming military service so that arrangements can be made to cover work responsibilities during the employee's absence; however, advance notice may not always be possible. Leave for military service will generally be unpaid. Employees may elect, but are not required, to use accrued paid time off for days absent from work due to military service.

Upon completion of military service, employees are entitled to reemployment and job-restoration rights in accordance with USERRA, provided they report back to work or apply for reemployment within the timeframes established by law and meet all statutory eligibility requirements. Failure to return or apply for reemployment within the legally permitted timeframe, absent good cause, may affect an employee's reemployment rights.

#### **P. USERRA (Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act) Compliance and Anti-Discrimination**

Virginia Career Works-Piedmont complies with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), which protects the employment and reemployment rights of individuals who voluntarily or involuntarily leave employment to perform military service or certain types of service with the National Disaster Medical System.

USERRA also prohibits discrimination in employment against individuals based on past, present, or future membership in the uniformed services, including applicants for military service.

### **IV. EMPLOYEE CONDUCT**

#### **A. Business Ethics and Standards of Conduct**

The successful operation and reputation of Virginia Career Works-Piedmont are built on principles of fair dealing, ethical business practices, and the professional conduct of its employees. Virginia Career Works-Piedmont is committed to conducting all business activities honestly, responsibly, and with integrity. This commitment applies to our relationships with customers, program participants, vendors, competitors, partners, board members, and employees.

Our reputation for integrity and excellence depends upon strict adherence to both the letter and the spirit of all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, as well as a consistent commitment to the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct. Accordingly, every employee is expected to maintain the highest standards of personal and professional ethics. These principles, practices, and policies are essential to the ongoing success and credibility of Virginia Career Works-Piedmont.

Virginia Career Works-Piedmont will comply with all applicable laws and regulations and expects its directors, officers, employees, and agents to conduct business in a legal, ethical, and responsible manner. Illegal, dishonest, or unethical conduct will not be tolerated.

Each employee has a responsibility to report any known or suspected violations of these ethical standards or applicable laws to their supervisor or appropriate management. Retaliation, threats, or reprisals against any individual who, in good faith, reports a concern or participates in an investigation are strictly prohibited.

#### **Gifts and Gratuities**

Employees are prohibited from soliciting gifts, favors, or gratuities from current or prospective customers, contractors, vendors, partners, or any individual or organization doing business with Virginia Career Works-Piedmont.

Gifts that are unsolicited and of nominal value may be accepted. For purposes of this policy, nominal value is defined as a value of less than fifty dollars (\$50). Any gift with a value of fifty dollars (\$50) or more must be reported promptly to the employee's supervisor, who will provide guidance on appropriate disposition in accordance with organizational policy and ethical standards.

#### **B. Confidentiality and Protection of Company Information**

As an employee of Virginia Career Works-Piedmont, you may have access to confidential, sensitive, or proprietary information related to the organization's operations, investors, partner organizations, employers, program participants, clients, and employees. This information may include, but is not limited to, business plans, financial information, operational changes such as expansions or reductions, personnel records, and other non-public information.

Such information is provided solely for business purposes and must be treated with the highest degree of confidentiality. Under no circumstances are employees authorized to disclose, share, or use confidential information for any purpose outside the scope of their job responsibilities without the express written consent of the Virginia Career Works-Piedmont Board of Directors or authorized management.

All electronic and hard-copy personnel files and confidential records must be properly secured at all times. Hard-copy files must be stored in locked locations, and electronic information must be protected using approved security measures. Compliance with these confidentiality requirements is a condition of employment.

As a member of the Virginia Career Works-Piedmont team, you may also be privy to sensitive information regarding coworkers, internal operations, or upcoming projects. Employees are expected to ensure that confidential information is shared only with designated partners, supervisors, or teammates who have a legitimate business need to know. Discussion of confidential information outside of authorized channels is strictly prohibited.

The obligation to protect confidential and proprietary information continues after the termination of employment. Former employees are expected to honor the confidentiality commitments made during their employment. Protecting the confidentiality of organizational, partner, and employee information is essential to maintaining trust and ensuring the continued success of Virginia Career Works-Piedmont.

### **C. Political Activity and Non-Partisanship**

Virginia Career Works-Piedmont recognizes that employees may choose to participate in the political party or political activities of their choice in their personal capacity. Employees are expected to exercise discretion and take appropriate precautions to ensure that their personal political views or activities are not perceived as representing or being endorsed by Virginia Career Works-Piedmont.

Virginia Career Works-Piedmont is a non-partisan organization. The name, logo, reputation, resources, or facilities of Virginia Career Works-Piedmont may not be used in connection with any partisan political activity, campaign, or endorsement.

Employees may not represent, imply, or suggest that Virginia Career Works-Piedmont supports or opposes any political party, candidate, or ballot initiative. Political activities must be conducted on personal time and without the use of organizational resources.

### **D. Computers, Internet, Technology, and E-Mail Use**

Computers, computer systems, networks, software, electronic files, email, and internet access provided to employees are the property of Virginia Career Works-Piedmont and are intended for business use in support of organizational operations.

Employees may not access another employee's files, use another person's password, or retrieve stored electronic communications without prior authorization. To ensure compliance with organizational policies and applicable laws, Virginia Career Works-Piedmont reserves the right to monitor computer systems, email, and internet usage at any time, including random or routine reviews.

Email and internet systems may not be used to solicit others for commercial ventures, religious or political activities, outside organizations, or other non-business purposes.

Virginia Career Works-Piedmont purchases and licenses software for business use. The organization does not own the copyrights to most software or related documentation and is prohibited from reproducing or distributing software except as permitted under applicable license agreements. Employees may use software only in accordance with licensing terms and organizational authorization. The illegal duplication, installation, or distribution of software or related documentation is strictly prohibited.

Employees with questions regarding appropriate computer, network, email, or internet use should consult their supervisor or applicable Virginia Career Works-Piedmont policies.

All electronic data composed, transmitted, or received through Virginia Career Works-Piedmont's

computer systems, including email and internet communications, are considered official organizational records. Such information may be subject to disclosure to law enforcement or other authorized third parties. Employees are expected to ensure that all business communications are accurate, professional, ethical, and lawful.

All equipment, services, and technology used to access the internet remain at all times the property of Virginia Career Works-Piedmont. Accordingly, the organization reserves the right to monitor internet traffic and to retrieve, read, or review any data composed, sent, or received through organizational systems.

Misuse or abuse of computer systems, email, or internet access in violation of law or Virginia Career Works-Piedmont policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Employees may also be held personally liable for unlawful or unauthorized activities conducted using organizational technology.

### **E. Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools and applications may be used to support and enhance employee productivity and work efficiency; however, they are intended to assist in work tasks, not to replace the judgment, responsibilities, or duties of employees.

Employees are expected to exercise professional judgment when using AI tools and remain fully responsible for the accuracy, quality, and integrity of all work produced. AI-generated content must be reviewed, validated, and edited as necessary prior to use in any official capacity.

Employees must not use AI tools in a manner that:

- Compromises confidential, proprietary, or sensitive information;
- Violates organizational policies, applicable laws, or ethical standards; or
- Conflicts with Virginia Career Works-Piedmont's mission, funding requirements, or program integrity.

Use of AI must comply with all applicable organizational policies, including those related to confidentiality, data security, professionalism, and records retention.

Virginia Career Works Piedmont reserves the right to restrict, monitor, or prohibit the use of AI tools as necessary to ensure compliance with organizational standards and legal requirements.

### **F. Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Compliance**

As members of the Virginia Career Works – Piedmont team, employees are required to comply with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), § 2.2-3700 et seq. of the Code of Virginia, and all related organizational FOIA policies and procedures.

Employees who receive or become aware of a request for public records or information must promptly notify their supervisor or the designated FOIA officer and must not release records or information except in accordance with applicable law and organizational guidance. All public records must be created, maintained, and retained in a manner consistent with FOIA requirements and Virginia Career Works – Piedmont record-retention policies.

Failure to comply with FOIA requirements may result in disciplinary action and may subject the organization to legal risk.

### **G. Professional Appearance and Dress Standards**

Virginia Career Works – Piedmont employees are expected to present a professional appearance at all times while representing the organization. Clothing that is revealing, disruptive, or otherwise inappropriate for a professional work environment will not be permitted.

All attire must be clean, neat, and presentable. Clothing with rips, tears, holes, or excessive wear is considered

unacceptable. Employees must also avoid wearing attire that displays offensive, inappropriate, or discriminatory language, images, or symbols.

Supervisors may address attire that does not meet these standards and may require employees to change clothing or take other appropriate action if necessary to maintain a professional workplace environment.

## **H. Work Time, Focus, and Time Theft**

Virginia Career Works – Piedmont expects all staff members to remain focused on their assigned responsibilities during scheduled work hours. Employees are expected to use work time productively and to limit personal activities during the workday.

Personal phone calls, non-work-related tasks, and similar activities should be limited to the employee's designated 30-minute lunch break or two (2) fifteen-minute rest breaks, which may be taken at the employee's discretion and in accordance with operational needs.

Time theft is defined as the misuse of paid work time for non-work-related activities and will be addressed on an individual basis by the Executive Director or designee. The following are examples of time theft or misuse of work time, though this list is not exhaustive:

Extended or excessive breaks – While occasional isolated incidents may occur, extended or repeated breaks beyond approved limits should be discussed with the employee's direct supervisor.

Personal, non-work-related activities – Including but not limited to answering personal phone calls, checking personal email, or engaging in outside employment or side work during paid work hours. Such activities detract from organizational deliverables and are discouraged.

Digital distractions – Excessive social media use, personal web browsing, or other online activities unrelated to work responsibilities should be limited to authorized break periods. Accessing restricted or prohibited websites is not permitted at any time, including during breaks.

Late arrivals or early departures – Virginia Career Works – Piedmont's standard business hours are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Employees are expected to adhere to these hours unless an alternative schedule has been approved in advance by their direct supervisor.

Intentional time wasting – Employees are expected to remain attentive and engaged in assigned work tasks during business hours, excluding scheduled breaks. While workloads and priorities may occasionally change, clear communication with supervisors and team members is essential, as is maintaining focus and productivity.

Failure to adhere to these expectations may result in corrective action, up to and including disciplinary action, in accordance with organizational policy

## **V. WORKPLACE SAFETY**

### **A. General Safety Guidelines**

Virginia Career Works – Piedmont is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy work environment. Every employee is expected to observe, promote, and support safe work practices while performing their job duties. Safety is a shared responsibility, and everyone plays an important role in preventing accidents and injuries.

Employees who observe an unsafe condition or potential hazard should take immediate action to eliminate the hazard if it can be done safely, or promptly report the condition to their supervisor. Working together, our goal is to provide a workplace that is secure, orderly, and free from unnecessary hazards.

The following safety rules, policies, and procedures are intended to protect employees during their daily work activities. Employees are expected to follow these guidelines, review them regularly, and exercise sound judgment and common sense when carrying out assigned duties.

1. Become familiar with your job responsibilities and understand how to perform your work safely.
2. Know the location of fire alarm pull stations, fire extinguishers, and your responsibilities in the event of a fire or emergency.
3. Learn the location and contents of the first aid kit closest to your workstation.
4. Promptly report all unsafe or potentially hazardous conditions to your supervisor, including but not limited to:
  - a. Wet or slippery floors
  - b. Unsafe or poorly maintained work areas
  - c. Equipment left in hallways or walkways
  - d. Exposed or unsafe electrical wiring
  - e. Careless handling of equipment
  - f. Defective or malfunctioning equipment
5. Immediately report all accidents, injuries, near-miss incidents, or safety concerns to your supervisor, regardless of severity.
6. Use proper lifting techniques and request assistance whenever necessary to avoid injury.

Failure to follow safety rules or to report known hazards may result in corrective action, as safety violations place employees and others at risk.

#### **B. Hazardous Chemicals and Your Right to Know**

Virginia Career Works – Piedmont is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment. Employees who work with or may be exposed to hazardous chemicals or substances have the right to be informed about those hazards.

If you believe you are being exposed to a known or suspected chemical hazard while performing your job duties, you have the right to access information regarding those substances through Safety Data Sheets (SDS) and other applicable hazard communication materials. Employees should promptly report concerns or questions regarding hazardous chemicals to their supervisor, who will ensure appropriate information, training, and protective measures are provided.

Employees are expected to follow all safety instructions, labeling requirements, and handling procedures related to hazardous materials and to use required personal protective equipment when applicable.

#### **C. Workers' Compensation**

In accordance with the Virginia Workers' Compensation Act, Virginia Career Works-Piedmont maintains workers' compensation insurance to provide benefits for job-related injuries or occupational illnesses. This insurance generally provides coverage for necessary medical treatment and may include temporary or permanent disability benefits for eligible employees, as determined under applicable law.

Employees who sustain a work-related injury or illness must report the incident immediately to their supervisor. All job-related injuries and illnesses must be promptly and accurately reported so that appropriate documentation can be completed and benefits may be provided as required.

Failure to report an injury or illness promptly may delay or jeopardize entitlement to workers' compensation benefits, particularly if an initially unreported incident later results in lost work time or medical treatment.

Supervisors are responsible for reporting all workplace injuries or illnesses immediately to the Executive Director and ensuring that all required reporting procedures are followed.

Workers' compensation benefits do not apply to injuries that arise from an employee's voluntary participation in off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activities that are not related to or required by the employee's job

duties.

#### **D. Workplace Violence Prevention**

Virginia Career Works-Piedmont is committed to preventing workplace violence and maintaining a safe and secure environment for employees, customers, partners, and the public. All employees, including supervisors, managers, and temporary staff, are expected to treat one another with courtesy, professionalism, and respect at all times.

Employees are required to refrain from fighting, aggressive behavior, “horseplay,” or any conduct that may pose a danger to themselves or others. Firearms, weapons, and other dangerous or hazardous devices or substances are strictly prohibited on Virginia Career Works-Piedmont premises unless expressly authorized in writing by management and permitted by law.

Conduct that threatens, intimidates, coerces, or harasses another employee, customer, vendor, contractor, or member of the public will not be tolerated. This prohibition applies to all acts of violence or harassment, whether direct or indirect, and regardless of whether the conduct occurs during working hours or off duty when it impacts the workplace.

All threats of violence, attempted acts of violence, or actual violent behavior must be reported immediately to a supervisor, manager, or another member of management. This includes threats or violent acts involving employees, as well as those involving customers, vendors, solicitors, or other members of the public. When reporting a concern, employees should provide as much specific and detailed information as possible. Suspicious individuals or activities should also be reported promptly. Employees should never place themselves in danger when responding to a potentially violent situation.

Virginia Career Works-Piedmont will promptly and thoroughly investigate all reports of actual or suspected workplace violence or suspicious behavior. The identity of individuals who report concerns will be protected to the greatest extent practicable. To maintain workplace safety and preserve the integrity of investigations, the organization may suspend employees, with or without pay, pending the outcome of an investigation.

Violation of this policy may result in corrective action, up to and including termination of employment, and may also result in referral to law enforcement if appropriate.

#### **E. Sexual and Other Unlawful Harassment**

Virginia Career Works-Piedmont is committed to providing a work environment free from unlawful harassment, discrimination, and retaliation. All employees are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect and to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal employment opportunities and prohibits discriminatory practices.

Unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment, is a form of employee misconduct that interferes with work performance and deprives individuals of a respectful workplace. Virginia Career Works-Piedmont will not tolerate harassment of any kind.

##### **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination and is illegal under federal, state, and local law. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually-oriented comments or conduct, or other verbal or physical behavior of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made, explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of employment;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions; or

Such conduct unreasonably interferes with an employee’s work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

##### **Other Harassment**

Harassment includes any verbal, physical, or visual conduct that creates an uncomfortable, intimidating,

or hostile environment. Harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, age, disability, marital status, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law is strictly prohibited.

### **Reporting and Investigation**

Virginia Career Works-Piedmont strongly encourages prompt reporting of any perceived incidents of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation, regardless of the individual's position. Employees should submit complaints in writing to their supervisor or, if the complaint involves the supervisor, to another member of management.

Reports should be made as soon as possible and include relevant details, including names, dates, incidents, and witnesses where applicable. Virginia Career Works-Piedmont will conduct prompt, thorough, and impartial investigations.

Employees may also file complaints with the Virginia Office of Civil Rights or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Employees are encouraged—but not required—to inform an offender that the conduct is unwelcome and request that it stop.

Retaliation against any employee who in good faith reports concerns or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### **F. Drug-Free Workplace Program**

Virginia Career Works-Piedmont is committed to maintaining a workplace free from illegal drug use, alcohol abuse, and misuse of prescription medications. The illegal use of drugs or abuse of alcohol poses serious risks to employee safety and organizational effectiveness.

The following actions are prohibited:

1. Using, possessing, selling, distributing, or purchasing illegal drugs on work premises or during work hours.
2. Reporting to work under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol.
3. Misusing prescription medications.

Supervisors may meet confidentially with employees if performance or behavior suggests substance abuse concerns. Virginia Career Works-Piedmont may conduct drug or alcohol testing of applicants or employees based on reasonable suspicion.

Employees who test positive or refuse required testing may face disciplinary action, including termination, and may be ineligible for workers' compensation or unemployment benefits.

## **VI. EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE**

### **A. Performance Evaluation and Merit Increases**

Supervisors and employees are encouraged to discuss performance and goals regularly. Formal performance evaluations occur at the conclusion of the 90-day introductory period and annually thereafter, typically before the start of the July 1 fiscal year.

### **B. Progressive Discipline**

Employment is at-will. While Virginia Career Works-Piedmont may use progressive discipline, it reserves the right to bypass steps depending on circumstances.

Disciplinary steps may include:

1. Verbal warning

2. Written warning
3. Suspension (with or without pay)
4. Termination

### **C. Employment Termination**

Employment may end due to resignation, discharge, layoff, retirement, or job abandonment. Two consecutive days of unreported absence may be deemed job abandonment.

Employees resigning with proper notice or laid off due to workforce reduction may receive payment for up to ten (10) unused vacation days. Employees discharged or resigning without notice forfeit accrued paid time off.

## **VII. MISCELLANEOUS**

### **A. Emergency Closings / Inclement Weather**

Virginia Career Works-Piedmont follows Albemarle County Government closure decisions during emergencies.

### **B. Smoking**

Smoking is prohibited inside institutional facilities. Outdoor smoking is permitted only in designated areas.

### **C. Non-Business Visitors**

Personal visits should be brief and non-disruptive.

### **D. Appearance and Courtesy**

Employees must maintain professional attire and conduct. Clothing that is worn, revealing, offensive, or inappropriate is not permitted. External meetings may require traditional business attire.

### **E. Access to Personnel Files**

Personnel files are organizational property. Employees may review their files upon request and with reasonable notice, in the presence of authorized staff.

### **F. Personal Information**

Employees must promptly report changes affecting employment or benefits, including address, marital status, or emergency contacts.

**EMPLOYMENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AGREEMENT**

I acknowledge by my signature that I have been informed of the nature of the employment relationship between my employer and me and understand that I am an employee of Virginia Career Works-Piedmont. I understand and agree that my employment is at-will, which means that either Virginia Career Works-Piedmont or I may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause or prior notice, in accordance with applicable law.

I agree to comply with any drug and alcohol testing policy adopted by Virginia Career Works-Piedmont, including post-accident testing, when such testing is permitted by law.

I further agree that if, at any time during my employment, I believe I have been subjected to discrimination or retaliation based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, veteran status, marital status, or any other characteristic protected by law, or if I believe I have been subjected to harassment, including sexual harassment, I will promptly report the matter to my supervisor or another member of management so that appropriate action may be taken.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Virginia Career Works-Piedmont Employee Handbook, have reviewed its contents, and understand that it contains policies and procedures that apply to my employment. I agree to comply with the policies and practices described in the Employee Handbook. I understand that the Handbook is not a contract of employment and does not alter the at-will nature of my employment.

---

**Employee's Printed Name** **Title**

---

**Employee's Signature** **Date**

---

**Supervisor's Printed Name** **Title**

---

**Supervisor's Signature** **Date**