

Rowan County Government
Employee Handbook



“A County Committed to Excellence”

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Dear Fellow County Employees:

Welcome to County Government! You are a member of a dedicated team of men and women striving to provide many services to the citizens of our community.

This handbook has been prepared to provide you with the vital information regarding your job, personnel policies, and benefits. It was designed to briefly answer questions you may have about your employment with the County. However, if your questions are not answered here, please contact your supervisor or Human Resources.

We will be working along with you to build a more efficient and progressive government to better serve the citizens of our County. We hope you enjoy your employment with Rowan County.

*Sincerely,
The Human Resources Staff*

<i>Darlene Boling</i>	<i>Human Resources Director</i>	<i>(704) 216-8100</i>
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<i>Tina Solomon</i>	<i>HR Analyst II</i>	<i>Classification, Compensation, Recruitment, Training</i>	<i>(704) 216-8102</i>
<i>Debbie Holshouser</i>	<i>HR Analyst I</i>	<i>Benefits, Retirement, Employee Orientation, FMLA</i>	<i>(704) 216-8103</i>
<i>Tammi Powell</i>	<i>HR Specialist I</i>	<i>Job Offers, Drug Testing, Employee Status Changes</i>	<i>(704) 216-8104</i>
<i>Michelle Stewart</i>	<i>Secretary/ Receptionist</i>	<i>Applications, Job Posting, Discount Tickets, Employee Files</i>	<i>(704) 216-8101</i>

INTRODUCTION

Your job has been given its title according to the responsibilities you have been given and the duties you perform. Trained analysts established required knowledge, skills, and abilities for each job classification.

Jobs with similar duties and responsibilities go into the same class and draw rates of pay within the same salary range. Your supervisor, the Department Director, and Human Resources are responsible for studying, and redefining your job, if necessary.

However, each position has its own unique duties and responsibilities. Your supervisor will explain the requirements of your job, and also help you develop a work plan. Periodically, you will meet together to discuss your work as it progresses. Your supervisor is familiar with policies, rules, benefits, and services, which apply to you as a County employee. Please feel free to ask any questions you may have about employment with the County.

PERSONNEL POLICIES

Work Schedule

The standard workweek for local government is 40 hours. Some agencies use a variable work schedule. This allows you to choose the time you begin to work from 7:30a.m. to 9:00a.m. The normal workday includes one hour for lunch. Therefore, the end of your workday will depend on your arrival time. Your choice of working hours and any change you wish to make later must be approved by your supervisor and the Department Director. Due to work requirements, not all positions use the total variable work schedule. Your supervisor will give you specific information about your department's operating schedule and your workday. If you are in a department with 24-hour operations, your work schedule will be set for your particular work unit.

Work Breaks

When the workload permits, two ten (10) minute work breaks are permitted daily. The work break is not an employee right, and the break may never be used as a valid reason for failure to perform required duties. Break time may not be accumulated.

Payday

The County pays bi-weekly on every other Friday. Direct deposit is required for new employees. You will be provided a check stub showing deductions, accruals, and earnings. If you are absent from work on payday, make arrangements with your supervisor regarding your check stub.

Deductions

The County is required to deduct from your paycheck:

Federal and State withholding taxes	Child Support Orders
Local Government Retirement contributions	Bankruptcy Orders
Social Security taxes	
Absences from work not covered by authorized leave credits	
Tax Liens	

Other deductions may also be made from your check; however, they must be requested and authorized in writing by you. Among these are:

Insurance Premiums	Voluntary Benefits
United Way Contributions	401-K Contributions
YMCA/The Forum Memberships	

Personal Protective Equipment

The County furnishes, at no cost to you, most of the personal protective equipment required by the North Carolina Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA). Your supervisor will discuss with you items of protective equipment, which you must furnish at your expense.

Your Personnel File

Your official personnel file is maintained in the Human Resources Department and is considered confidential in accordance with the requirements of North Carolina G.S. 153A-98. Rowan County will not release personal and/or confidential information without your prior written consent unless otherwise directed by law. As required by North Carolina G.S. 153A-98, any person may have access to the following information with respect to each County employee (including former County employees) as a matter of public record:

- a. Name
- b. Age
- c. Date of original employment or appointment to County service
- d. The terms of any contract by which you are employed, whether written or oral
- e. Current position
- f. Title
- g. Current salary
- h. Date and amount of each increase or decrease in salary with the County
- i. Date and type of each promotion, demotion, transfer, suspension, separation or other change in position classification with the County
- j. Date and general description of the reasons for each promotion with the County
- k. Date and type of each dismissal, suspension, or demotion for disciplinary reasons taken by the County. If the disciplinary action was a dismissal, a copy of the written notice of the final decision of the County setting forth the specific acts or omissions that are the basis for the dismissal
- l. The office to which you are currently assigned.

You may examine your own personnel file except for (1) pre-employment letters of reference and (2) information concerning a medical disability, mental or physical, that a prudent doctor would not give to a patient.

Materials in your personnel file may not be removed with the exception of payroll deduction forms, benefit forms, or other administrative documents which are superseded or obsolete and no longer have any administrative value. Disciplinary actions may not be removed and are considered as permanent documents in your personnel file. If you object to any material in your file on the grounds that it is inaccurate or misleading, you may add your own statement to your file concerning those materials.

Pay Plan

County jobs that are similar in kind and level of work are grouped together and given the same title. Based on what outside employers are paying for similar work and on what other County employees are paid, each class of positions is then assigned to one of the County's salary grades.

Probationary Period

The probationary period is a part of the hiring process. It is an "on-the-job trial" or test period. In this way, supervisors observe new employees in their work, help them learn their new duties, and determine if they are suited for the particular job. Your supervisor will look at your progress often during this period. When you demonstrate that your work progress has been satisfactory and the decision is made to

continue your employment, you will be given regular status. During the probationary period you earn all benefits of a regular employee (except 401-K). Health insurance becomes effective on the first day of the month following thirty days of employment.

Cost of Living Adjustments

The County Commissioners consider Cost of Living increases for County employees on an annual basis. These are in addition to those provided for in the County Personnel System salary plan. When you receive an across-the-board increase your salary is raised, but your pay grade and step remain the same.

Overtime Pay

County employees receive straight-time pay for a standard 40-hour workweek. If you are required to work more than 40 hours in any week, and you are eligible for overtime, you will receive time and one-half off (comp time) for time worked over 40 hours during a week. In unusual circumstances, overtime pay equal to one and one half times your regular hourly rate will be considered.

Overtime pay does not apply to employees whose jobs are deemed exempt as executive, administrative or professional. Other special provisions apply to certain types of work such as emergency services, in-residence employment, seasonal employment, and law enforcement work.

Promotion

You may apply for higher level jobs for which you are qualified. Human Resources will post vacancies to be filled internally in a location known to employees. County employees are given first chance to apply for the majority of vacancies. If you want to be considered for an opening, submit an application to Human Resources before the listed closing date.

When you are promoted, the amount of the pay increase, at least 5%, will be decided on an individual basis, depending on the pay range, length of service, the qualifications of the person being promoted, and market conditions.

Change In Job Classification

If because of a change in your duties and responsibilities, your job is assigned to a different class with a higher salary range, your salary will be changed to at least the minimum of the new range. If you are already at that rate, your pay rate may be left unchanged or you may be given an increase based on management's review of your salary in relation to others.

Salary Range Revisions

Salary studies are made from time to time to ensure that the County's salary range for each class is competitive in the labor market. The County Commissioners may approve a higher salary grade for a class based on these studies. If this affects your position, your salary must be raised at least to the minimum of the new range.

When your salary is already above the new minimum, your salary may remain unchanged or be increased, depending on your salary as compared to others in the same classification and availability of funds.

Demotion

You may be demoted or transferred to a lower class at your request, for unsatisfactory work, or during a reduction in force.

Reporting and Remaining At Work

Your job is important. If you will be late or absent due to sickness or for any reason, you must notify your supervisor immediately.

Adverse Weather Conditions

On occasions, severe weather conditions may become a factor in determining whether employees should report to work. Local radio and television stations will make announcement regarding any delay or closing. Departments providing emergency and critical services should report as usual. Department Directors are responsible for ensuring that their respective offices are opened as soon as practical and that at least a minimum number of employees are present. Employees are to use their discretion based upon their own personal situation to decide if and when travel to work can be safely made. When offices and operations are open, employees will be allowed to offset lost time with their vacation leave.

Public Relations and You

As a County employee, you represent Rowan County Government to everyone you meet. The impression you give and the statements you make can influence what people think of County government. It is the policy of Rowan County Government to uphold, promote, and demand the highest standards of ethics from all employees and officials, whether elected or appointed. Accordingly, County employees should maintain the utmost standards of personal integrity, truthfulness, honesty, and fairness in carrying out their public duties; avoid any improprieties in their roles as public servants; and never use their County position or powers for improper personal gain.

Release of Information

Most information in County government is public. However, many confidential matters are entrusted to County employees. If you are unsure about what you are requested to release, you should ask your supervisor.

Gifts and Favors

Receiving or giving of gifts or favors is not in the best interest of the County; therefore, no official or employee of the County shall accept any gift, favor, or thing of value that may tend to influence them in the discharge of their duties or grant, in the discharge of their duties, any improper favor, service, or thing of value.

Dress Code

Due to the nature of our business and the frequency of professional business people utilizing our office, Rowan County expects employees to maintain a clean, neat, professional, and well-groomed appearance at all times. Employees should dress appropriately for the job and the work environment.

Care of Supplies, Equipment, and Property

You have an individual responsibility to avoid waste and take proper care of supplies, equipment, and property with which you work. County supplies and equipment are expensive and often difficult to obtain. You are responsible for reporting to your supervisor any equipment which is defective or not functioning properly. Deliberately damaging or wasting County supplies or equipment is prohibited and can subject you to disciplinary action. Knowingly and willfully consuming or improperly removing County or employee property without authorization can result in immediate dismissal.

Tobacco Guidelines

Smoking and the use of smokeless tobacco products is prohibited in County Buildings, County owned vehicles, and on any County owned or leased properties that are designated as tobacco free properties. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

It is the policy of Rowan County to maintain an alcohol and drug free workplace. Rowan County has zero tolerance for the use of alcohol, illegal substances, or the misuse of prescription medications during work hours or the presence of these substances in the body during work hours regardless of when consumed. Employees shall not engage in unlawful use, manufacture, possession, sale or transfer of any substance, which may impair their ability to perform assigned duties or otherwise adversely impact the organization. Substances which may impair performance include, but not limited to alcoholic beverages, drugs (whether legal or illegal), and any other intoxicant. The policy is in effect during the time in which the employee is engaged in the performance of job related duties regardless of location and at all times on County property including parking lots and County vehicles. An employee must notify Human Resources of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace no later than five calendar days after such conviction. Violation of this policy and/or alcohol or controlled substance-impaired behavior on the job shall be deemed unacceptable personal conduct which shall be cause for disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination. The County may require any employee to submit to a drug or alcohol test for the following:

1. As a routine part of a County-mandated physical examination.
2. When there is reasonable suspicion of use of any substance, which may impair job performance.
3. After an accident while on County time.
4. Random drug/alcohol testing of employees as mandated by the County.

Travel

If you are required to use your personal car to conduct County business, you will be reimbursed on a per mile basis. When you are required to travel out of town, you will receive reimbursement for meals and lodging according to the Rowan County Travel Policy.

Political Activity

County employees are free to inform themselves and vote as they wish on political issues.

Employees may join or affiliate with civic organizations of a partisan or political nature, may attend political meetings and may advocate and support these organizations in accordance with the Constitution and laws of North Carolina and of the United States of America. However, no employee shall:

1. Engage in partisan or political activity while on duty or within any period of time during which they are expected to render services for which they receive compensation from the County;
2. Use official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of an election or nomination for office;
3. Be required, as a duty of their office or employment, or as a condition for employment, promotion or tenure of office, to contribute funds for political or partisan purposes;
4. Solicit, or act as a custodian of, funds for political or partisan purposes while on duty as an employee of the County;
5. Coerce or compel contributions while on duty as an employee of the County from another employee for political or partisan purposes;
6. Use supplies or equipment of the County for political purposes; and
7. Permit political advertising at any County facilities or on any County property including political advertisements attached to County vehicles.
8. Run for elected office in violation of State or Federal laws and regulations or any other

local ordinances. No formal or informal campaign efforts may be performed during the operating hours as established by the County.

Violation of this policy is grounds for disciplinary action, which may include dismissal in cases of deliberate or repeated violation.

Employment of Relatives

Members of an immediate family shall not be employed within the same department or unit. Consideration may be given for members of an immediate family who would work for the same department director but in a different division at separate locations and for which there is no potential for one supervising the other, having influence over the other's employment, and where no possibility exists for the immediate family members being assigned to the same division as co-workers. The term "immediate family" shall be understood to refer to that degree of closeness or relationship, which would suggest that problems might be created within the work unit. This term is defined as wife, husband, mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter, mother-in-law, father-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandmother, grandfather, grandson, granddaughter, stepmother, or stepfather. It also includes others living within the same household or otherwise closely identified with each other as to suggest that difficulty might develop.

Secondary Employment

The employment responsibilities to the County are primary for an employee working full time or part time with benefits; other employment in which the employee chooses to engage is considered secondary. You must get approval from your supervisor and Human Resources before beginning outside employment for salaries, wages, commissions, or self-employment. This will be reviewed periodically and approval may be withdrawn at any time. Outside work that would result in a conflict of interest (directly or indirectly) or interfere with your primary job with the County cannot be approved.

Employees out of work under the provisions of the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Worker's Compensation, or Leave Without Pay for sick leave purposes are prohibited from engaging in any outside employment during the period of leave.

Conflict of Interest

No employee shall use his/her position for unauthorized personal gain. Employees must not have any financial interest in, or receive any financial benefit from, any acquisition or expenditure related to County activities that interferes or conflicts with the full discharge of their duties.

Employees Serving on Boards, Committees, etc.

County employees are prohibited from serving on any board, committee, council, or commission where appointments are made by the Board of Commissioners or where funding is provided by the County, including special study committees appointed for the purpose of recommending funding or policy.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Rowan County is an equal opportunity employer. State and Federal laws require that employment decisions are to be made without consideration of race, sex, color, creed, religion, national origin, age, veteran status, political affiliation, or disability except where specific sex, age or physical requirements constitute a bona fide occupational qualification necessary for job performance.

Each employee has a right to be considered equally in personnel functions, including, but not limited to: pay, training, promotion, demotion, layoff, and termination.

Sexual Harassment

Employees are guaranteed the right to work free from sexual harassment. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of continued employment; (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an employee is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such employee; or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an employee's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

All employees play a role in preventing or eliminating sexual harassment by: 1) examining his/her behavior on the job; 2) talking about the issue of sexual harassment; 4) identifying and taking individual action to stop inappropriate behavior by communicating directly and immediately with the person(s) whose behavior is offensive, and 5) bringing the matter to the attention of your supervisor, higher level manager, Department Director, or the Human Resources staff if the employee feels sexually harassed.

Workplace Harassment

You have the right to work in an environment free from unlawful workplace harassment and retaliation. Unlawful workplace harassment is defined as unwelcome or unsolicited speech or conduct based upon race, sex, creed, religion, national origin, age, color, disabling condition, or veteran/military status obligations that create a hostile work environment. A hostile work environment is one in which a reasonable person would find hostile or abusive, one which an employee perceives workplace actions or behavior to be hostile or abusive, and/or which unreasonably interferes with an employee's work performance. Retaliation is adverse treatment which occurs because of opposition to unlawful workplace harassment. Employees who feel they have been subjected to unlawful workplace harassment should follow the policies for Employee Appeals & Grievances found in the Human Resources Policies and Procedures Manual.

Grievance

In order to maintain a harmonious and cooperative relationship between the County and its employees, it is the policy of Rowan County to provide for the settlement of problems and differences through an orderly grievance procedure. Once you have completed your probationary period and are considered a regular employee, you have the right to present your problem or grievance in accordance with the grievance procedure prescribed free from interference, coercion, restraint, discrimination or reprisal.

The first step in the grievance procedure is an informal discussion with your supervisor. If you are not satisfied with the decision of the supervisor, the second step is to present a written request to the department director for their consideration of the matter. If the decision of the department director is not satisfactory, a written summary of the specific facts of the complaint should be submitted to the Human Resources Director with copies provided to all parties concerned. There are specific timeframes for presenting grievances to the supervisor, department director, and Human Resources Director that are listed in the Human Resources Policies and Procedures Manual. Grievances alleging discrimination may be filed directly with the Human Resources Director or the County Personnel Commission following the requirements of the Appeals Policy and Procedures. Grievances alleging unlawful workplace harassment, including sexual harassment, should be submitted in writing to the Human Resources Director.

A grievance is defined as any matter of concern or dissatisfaction arising from the working conditions of an employee subject to the control of the County including alleged safety or health hazards, unsatisfactory facilities, surroundings, materials, or equipment, unfair supervisory practices, unjust treatment by fellow workers, or any other grievance relating to conditions of employment. Additionally,

allegations of discrimination on the basis of race, sex (including sexual harassment), age, color, religion, national origin, or disability in hiring, promotion, transfer, or training and violations of the FLSA, FMLA, or ADA are subject to the grievance procedure.

Actions not subject to the grievance procedure include performance appraisals, wages, salaries, fringe benefits, and oral and written warnings.

Notice of Resignation

If you decide to leave County service, applicants must be recruited for your job. Please give a written notice of resignation two weeks before your last day of work. A written resignation is preferred; however, a verbal resignation can be accepted in the absence of a written form.

Three Days Absence

If an employee is absent for three consecutive days without notification to their supervisor or Department Director, the employee will be deemed to have voluntarily resigned their position because of unavailability for continued employment. Extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the employee may be considered after evaluating the facts.

Solicitation and Fund-Raising Activities

The County fully supports efforts of employees to raise funds for charitable causes and non-profit organizations as long as these activities do not conflict with conducting County business during regular hours of operation. Therefore, soliciting, taking and delivering orders, receiving payments and related activities should be restricted to employee breaks and lunch hours. Employees are prohibited from selling products or conducting transactions that benefit the employee personally or his/her business both during and after work hours and on County property.

Operation of County Vehicles

The County has adopted the State Statutes governing the operation of vehicles. The law as stated in 14-247 Private Use of Publicly Owned Vehicles states it is unlawful for any officer, agent, or employee or agency of the State to use for private purposes whatsoever any motor vehicle belonging to the State, or any County. Unauthorized personnel are forbidden to ride in County vehicles. No alcoholic beverages may be carried in County vehicles except where law enforcement agencies are required to transport evidence in a criminal investigation.

BENEFITS

Vacation (Annual Leave)

Full time and part-time benefited employees accrue vacation on a bi-weekly basis determined by the length of County service. Vacation leave does not accrue while an employee is on leave without pay (LWOP) for any reason.

<u>Length of Service</u>	<u>Maximum Days Per Year</u>	<u>Maximum Hours Per Pay Period</u>	<u>Factor Per Hour</u>
(A) less than 2	10	3.080	.0385
(B) 2 but less than 5	12	3.696	.0462
(C) 5 but less than 10	15	4.616	.0577
(D) 10 but less than 15	18	5.544	.0693
(E) 15 or more	21	6.464	.0808

Hours calculated in above chart are rounded. The computer is programmed to accommodate any rounding errors in its computation.

Full-Time Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics who work 24 hours shifts on a fluctuating workweek accrue vacation on a bi-weekly basis determined by the length of County service as follows:

<u>Length of Service</u>	<u>Maximum Days Per Year</u>	<u>Maximum Hours Per Pay Period</u>
(H) less than 2	14	4.42 hours
(I) 2 but less than 5	17	5.31 hours
(J) 5 but less than 10	21	6.64 hours
(K) 10 but less than 15	26	7.97 hours
(L) 15 or more	30	9.29 hours

Days calculated in above chart are rounded.

The County wants you to use your vacation leave. However, your supervisor must approve the time.

Vacation leave is intended for a meaningful break in your work. Using all of your leave a day or less at a time may be permissible but does not accomplish the true purpose of vacation.

With the approval of your supervisor, annual leave may be used for personal reasons requiring absence from work. The minimum amount that can be taken is one-quarter hour units.

You may carry 240 hours of accumulated annual leave from December 31st to January 1st of the next year. Annual leave in excess of 240 hours will be transferred to your sick leave balance. Employees who leave the County's employment will be paid for accumulated vacation days. At the employee's request, Rowan County will transfer accumulated vacation to another government agency, in lieu of payment, providing the other agency will accept the time. If an employee dies, a lump sum payment for accumulated vacation leave is made to the estate.

Eight hours of vacation shall be credited to the accumulated benefits of the full-time employee who does not use sick leave and who is not absent without leave for a period of approximately 26 consecutive work

weeks depending upon when the pay period ends. Part-time benefited employees shall be credited additional vacation hours based upon budgeted average daily work hours.

Holidays

County employees generally observe the following holidays:

New Year's Day	Labor Day
Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday	Veteran's Day
Good Friday	Thanksgiving (2 days)
Memorial Day	Christmas (3 days)
Independence Day	

When a holiday is on Saturday, Friday will be taken as the normal holiday. When a holiday is on Sunday, the following Monday will be taken as the normal holiday. Because of the variety of County services, all employees do not observe holidays on the same day. If your work requires a change from the holiday schedule above, your supervisor will tell you.

Seven (7) day twenty-four (24) hour operations: A separate holiday schedule will be adopted and posted for staff who work on a seven-day, twenty-four hour operation. The holiday schedule will differ from the normal schedule for regular employees when the specific date of a legal holiday observance falls on Saturday or Sunday. This separate holiday schedule for seven-day, twenty-four hour employees will be posted annually along with the regular holiday schedule.

Holiday Premium Pay

County employees receive at least eleven paid holidays each year. If you are required to work on a scheduled holiday, you will receive additional pay equal to one-half of your regular wage. You will also receive time off on another day (maximum of 8 hours).

Sick Leave

Full-time and part-time benefited employees accrue sick leave at a rate of .0462 per regular hour worked with a maximum of 3.696 hours per pay period, 12 days per year. Full-time Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics who work 24 hour shifts on a fluctuating workweek earn sick leave in the set amount of 5.31 hours per pay period. Sick leave does not accrue while an employee is on leave without pay (LWOP) for any reason, including worker's compensation.

There is no maximum accumulation of sick leave. Your sick leave is like a good insurance policy--it is there when you need it, and the more you save, the more valuable it becomes.

Sick leave may be requested for:

1) **Personal illness.**

2) **Death in the immediate family.** (The family is defined as spouse, parents, brother, sister, children, grandparents, grandchildren, individuals who stood *in loco parentis* to the employee when the employee was a child, and to children in which the employee stands *in loco parentis*. The step, half, and in-law relationships are included as appropriate based on this listing.) The employee may use a maximum of five days of accumulated sick leave.

3) **Illness of a member of the employee's immediate family.** (The family is defined as spouse, parents, children, mother-in-law, father-in-law, including step relationships and individuals who stood *in loco parentis* to the employee when the employee was a child, and to children in which

the employee stands *in loco parentis*. If other dependents are living in the employee's household, sick leave may also be taken.)

4) Actual period of disability connected with childbearing.

5) Medical appointments.

Your Department Director may ask you to submit a doctor's certificate to verify sick leave. When you retire, your accumulated sick leave days are changed into retirement credits. Twenty sick leave days or a portion thereof equal one month's service. Rowan County will transfer accumulated sick leave to another government agency, providing the other agency will accept the time.

Family Medical Leave

Employees who have been employed by Rowan County for at least 12 months and who have worked at least 1250 hours in the last year for Rowan County are eligible for up to 12 weeks of job-protected leave within a period of a year whether paid or unpaid for any of the following reasons:

1. Birth or placement for adoption or foster care of a child by employee.
2. Serious health condition of the employee, which prevents performance of duties.
3. Serious health condition of employee's spouse, child or parent for which the employee is needed for their care. Also included are individuals who stood *in loco parentis* to the employee when the employee was a child, and to children in which the employee stands *in loco parentis*.

Contact Human Resources for specifics about this leave.

Servicemember Family Leave

The National Defense Authorization Act of 2008 amended the FMLA to provide eligible employees two important new leave rights related to military service: Qualifying Exigency Leave and Military Caregiver Leave.

Contact Human Resources for specifics about this leave.

Military Leave

Reservists in the United States Armed Forces and the National Guard are entitled to leave with pay, not to exceed 80 working hours in each calendar year for full-time employees, when ordered to federal or state duty or for training. Part-time benefited employees receive a pro-rated amount of military leave based upon the budgeted hours for their position. You must notify your supervisor, in writing, as far in advance as possible of scheduled call-ups or training. A copy of your military orders must accompany your notification to your supervisor or be provided as soon as you receive them. Rowan County's military duty policy is in accordance with The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA) and subsequent revisions to that law.

Civil Leave

You will be given leave with pay to serve jury duty or when subpoenaed as a witness. It is the responsibility of the employee to inform the supervisor when the duty is scheduled and the expected duration.

- 1) **Jury Duty:** You must provide your supervisor with pertinent information regarding your call, including the date for reporting and the court of jurisdiction. Time spent serving on jury duty during

your regularly scheduled work shall be with pay and without charge to accrued leave. Any fees received shall be retained.

- 2) **Job-Related Civil Leave:** When an employee attends court in connection with official duties, no leave is required. Fees received as a witness while serving in an official capacity shall be turned into the Finance Department. If court is on a day that would normally be an off day, the time is to be considered as working time and included in the total hours worked per week.
- 3) **Court Attendance:** When an employee is subpoenaed or directed by proper authority to appear as a witness, civil leave with pay shall be granted. Any fees received shall be retained. An employee who is a party (plaintiff or defendant) in a court procedure is not considered a witness and therefore, the appropriate accrued leave must be used for the purpose of attending court.

Personal Leave

As required by North Carolina General Statute 95-28.3 referred to as Leave for Parental Involvement in Schools Law, benefited employees are given the opportunity to visit their children and/or grandchildren in school and to participate in their school activities. Four (4) hours of leave per fiscal year (July – June) will be granted. The employee should submit a written request at least 48 hours prior to the time of leave.

Benefited employees who do not have school-aged children or grandchildren may use this leave for other personal needs or events.

Leave Without Pay

Leave without pay, normally not over six months, may be granted upon written request and approval by your supervisor and department director. The written request must include the reason for the leave and your anticipated return to work date. You will be obligated to return to duty at the end of this leave. All paid leave including floating holiday, accrued comp time, and vacation leave must be used before going on leave without pay. For leave related to illness, all accrued sick leave must be used as well prior to beginning leave without pay. County-paid health insurance ceases during leave without pay, except for approved FMLA purposes. However, employees have the option to continue their health insurance by paying the premium. Sick leave and vacation leave are not earned during leave without pay. If you need further information about this policy, please contact Human Resources.

Shared Leave Program

Some prolonged serious medical conditions cause employees to exhaust all available leave. The Shared Leave Program allows fellow employees to donate some of their vacation leave to help provide assistance to employees in need. The recipient must be a regular benefited employee with two years of consecutive service and have a prolonged catastrophic and life-threatening medical condition that requires absence from work for at least twenty consecutive workdays. Employees on worker's compensation or short/long-term disability are not eligible. Pregnancy, elective surgery, and short-term conditions do not qualify as a covered medical condition.

Local Government Retirement

The County provides benefits for you and your family in case of disability, retirement, or death after you have completed certain service requirements. The benefits are available in addition to Social Security. You contribute 6 cents of each dollar you earn and no income tax is paid on this until you retire. The County adds almost an equal amount towards your Retirement benefits.

After five years, you have a "vested interest". This means that, if you leave County service, you may leave your contributions in the system and draw a retirement income beginning at age 60. After 30 years

in the retirement system (at any age), or you reach age 60 and complete 25 years of service, or you reach age 65 and complete 5 years of service an employee can retire with full benefits.

An employee can retire with reduced benefits after age 50 if he or she has 20 or more years in the system and after age 60 with 5 years of creditable service. Law Enforcement Officers can retire with full benefits at age 55 with 5 or more years of service and with reduced benefits at age 50 with 15 years of service.

After five (5) years of creditable service, if you become totally and permanently disabled for your job, as approved by the Medical Review Board, you become eligible for disability retirement benefits. Your disability benefit is based on the same formula as at service retirement.

If you cease to be a County employee (except by death or retirement), you may withdraw all your retirement contributions. You will receive interest if you have at least five (5) years in the retirement system. You may receive your contributions 60 days after you receive your final paycheck. Withdrawal may be subjected to Federal and State withholding tax. If you return later to County service, you may buy back this time toward retirement after five (5) years of full time service.

Retirement Death Benefit

After one year of employment, members of the Local Government Employees Retirement System automatically are eligible for a death benefit. It is free, but cannot be transferred if you should leave County service. If an employee dies before age 70 while still in active service, their beneficiary is paid an amount that equals the highest 12 months' salary in a row during the 24 months before death, but no less than \$25,000 and no more than \$50,000.

401-k Plan

After you have successfully completed a probationary period, you may participate in the County sponsored Supplemental Retirement Income Plan. The County contributes a percentage of your salary to the plan and you have the option to contribute an additional amount to this plan through a pre-tax deduction. You have a choice of several investment options, each option being an insured investment or a mutual fund. For more information, contact Human Resources.

Health Insurance

You may elect to enroll in the County's health plan. There is a minimum of a 30 day waiting period with coverage beginning on the first day of the following month and a twelve month waiting period for pre-existing health conditions. A description of the benefits is available in the Plan Document, which may be obtained through Human Resources.

Employees hired as of January 22, 2012 pay a semi-monthly premium for individual coverage deducted from their paycheck.

If you wish to add coverage for dependents under the Rowan County health care plan, an additional payment can be deducted from your paycheck. You pay a month in advance for coverage.

Wellness Program

Wellness is important in the performance of job functions and enhances quality of life. The County adopted a Wellness Program to promote a healthy lifestyle to include not using tobacco products, eating nutritiously, and participating in moderate physical activity. A Wellness Committee, comprised of County employees, coordinates County activities to promote wellness.

Employees are encouraged to have a physical examination on a yearly basis. In order to promote a yearly physical, each employee receives four hours of leave for a wellness exam. This type of leave is independent of vacation or sick leave and is accrued on a fiscal year basis.

Supplemental Insurance

Accident, Cancer, Critical Illness, Short-Term Disability, Vision and Whole Life insurance policies are offered to County employees during an annual open enrollment. These plans are underwritten by private companies, which are responsible for contacting employees, explaining the different plans and coverages available. You may continue coverage through an individual policy if you leave employment with the County. Though you pay the full cost, group rates are usually lower than those of an individual policy.

Life Insurance

The County provides employees with a life insurance policy. The amount of life insurance will be payable to the beneficiary named by the employee. Employees may purchase additional coverage for themselves and their dependents.

Dental Insurance

Dental insurance is available for you and your family through payroll deduction.

Pre-tax Premium Plan and Flex Plan

Your medical, dental, and supplemental insurance payments are deducted from your paycheck before state and federal taxes are computed. The result is less tax taken out of your paycheck and more take home pay.

This same pre-tax benefit is offered in the form of flexible spending accounts. The Reimbursement Accounts were established to allow you to pay for out-of-pocket medical and/or dependent care expenses on a pre-tax basis. These out-of-pocket expenses may be on you or your eligible dependents and include expenses not reimbursed by an insurance plan. As a new employee you may enroll during your first pay period. Subsequent enrollment must be at the beginning of the fiscal year.

Because of the tax savings you enjoy through the Pre-Tax Plan, the Internal Revenue Service prohibits you from changing your election during the plan year unless you have a change in your family situation. You may make a change which is consistent with any of the following: marriage, divorce, or death of a spouse; birth, adoption, or death of a child; a change in your spouse's employment status; a change from part-time to full-time employment (or vice versa) by you or your spouse; or taking an unpaid leave of absence by you or your spouse. A request to change an election must be made within 30 days from the date of the family status change.

Worker's Compensation

County employees are fully covered under the Worker's Compensation laws. These laws provide payment for lost time and medical attention at County expense, if you suffer a job-related injury or illness.

It is your responsibility to claim compensation. Report an accident or occupational disease immediately to your supervisor. A claim will be filed with the North Carolina Industrial Commission.

Unemployment Compensation

County employees are covered by unemployment compensation. The local office of the Employment Security Commission will determine an employee's eligibility to receive these benefits if separated from County service.

Social Security

County employees contribute a set percentage of their salary to the Federal Social Security program. The County matches this amount. Payments cannot be withdrawn.

Local Government Employees' Credit Union

As an employee with Rowan County, you are eligible to join the Local Government Credit Union. The Credit Union is a cooperative, member owned financial institution that is operated by and for the benefit of Local Government Employees and their families.

Deposits made in the Credit Union are insured up to \$100,000 by the NCUA (National Credit Union Administration), a federal agency. The Credit Union offers a wide variety of financial services to meet your needs. There are branches and Automatic Teller Machines located throughout North Carolina.

Services include:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Statement Savings | Certificates of Deposit |
| Share Drafts | Wire Transfers |
| Money Market Savings | Home Mortgage Loans |
| Loan Services | Travelers Checks |
| Free Notary Services | Automated Teller Machine |
| VISA Card | Individual Retirement Accounts |
| Direct Deposit | |

Service Awards

To reward employees for their years of service, awards are given to eligible employees on an annual basis. Service awards are given for five years of service and in increments of five years thereafter.

Employee Assistance Program

The EAP is a professional, confidential counseling service available to help employees and their family members resolve personal issues and problems before they affect health, family relationships, or job performance. Employees can talk to an EAP counselor about marital issues, financial issues, child or elder issues, problems with co-workers, balancing work and family responsibilities, alcohol or drug abuse, or dealing with the every day stresses in their life. The County provides three free sessions with an EAP counselor. Sometimes, additional counseling or treatment may be required. The EAP counselor can help determine if extended services are needed or whether a referral is necessary.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

The County has a formal policy on disciplinary action and dismissal which departments are required to use when an employee's unsatisfactory performance or unacceptable personal conduct makes it necessary. Progressive discipline for unsatisfactory performance shall include two (2) written warnings. Employees can also be suspended without pay or demoted as disciplinary measures.

Dismissal For Grossly Inefficient Job Performance

An employee can be dismissed immediately for Grossly Inefficient Job Performance, which occurs in instances in which the employee fails to satisfactorily perform job requirements which results in the potential of death or serious harm to the public or to employees or involves the loss of or damage to County property or funds.

Personal Conduct

Employees who exhibit unacceptable personal conduct may be dismissed immediately without any prior warnings.

APPEAL RIGHTS

A regular employee, having completed a probationary period, who has been demoted, suspended, or dismissed shall have 15 calendar days after the Department Director's disciplinary action or dismissal of the employee to file a written appeal to the Human Resources Director. The written appeal must include the specific facts and reasons for the appeal, a response to the disciplinary actions taken, and the remedies that the employee seeks. If the employee is not satisfied with the final decision of the Human Resources Director, he/she may appeal within 30 calendar days of receipt of the Human Resources Director's decision to the County's Personnel Commission. The request should be filed in writing through the County Manager's Office.

DISCLAIMER

THIS HANDBOOK IS NOT INTENDED TO BE AN EXPRESS OR IMPLIED CONTRACT BETWEEN ROWAN COUNTY GOVERNMENT AND ANY OF ITS EMPLOYEES.

This handbook is intended to provide the eligible employee with a brief overview of the policies, procedures, and benefits provided by Rowan County. The specific ordinances and procedures are set by the County Commissioners and departments who determine the actual implementation of all such policies, benefits, and services. The County reserves the right to modify this handbook and amend or terminate any policies and procedures at any time. Rowan County reserves the right to eliminate, reduce, or otherwise change any employee benefit as approved by the Board of County Commissioners.



**Rowan County
Human Resources
130 West Innes Street
Salisbury NC 28144
(704) 216-8100**