

VALLEY CLEAN ENERGY ALLIANCE**Staff Report – Item 12**

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Mitch Sears, Chief Executive Officer
Edward Burnham, Chief Financial Officer

SUBJECT: Update to Valley Clean Energy Employee Handbook (February 2026)

DATE: February 12, 2026

Recommendation

1. Adopt a resolution for updates to the VCE Handbook, as highlighted below and detailed in Attachment 1 - Employee Handbook (February 2026) Redline.

Background & Discussion

VCE's Employee Handbook includes policies and guidelines for human resources and benefits offered to employees. The VCE Employee Handbook is maintained to comply with the latest practices and remain competitive with compensation packages provided by other CCAs.

The Board adopted an Employee Handbook in January 2018 with an initial update in January 2019. The Handbook was updated on July 11, 2019, in coordination with legal counsel to maintain consistency with new laws and personnel requirements. The VCE Employee Handbook is updated annually to remain current.

Attachment 1 - Employee Handbook (February 2026) includes the following key updates (shown in redline highlights in the attachment):

- Parental Leave (PG 41) provides regular employees with additional paid parental leave for dedicated time to care for and nurture their newborn or newly adopted child.
- Medical contribution (PG 35-36) amounts to remain competitive and parity to market rates from \$2,479.00 to \$2,913.00 for insurance benefits.

Staff requests that the Board approve these changes detailed in the attached Employee Handbook (February 2026) redline to maintain best human resources practices and a competitive benefits package. The 2026 budget included an increased medical benefit to maintain employee medical coverage. VCE's legal counsel Richards Watson Gershon has reviewed and approved all changes in the attached updated Employee Handbook.

Attachments

1. Employee Handbook (February 2026) Redline
2. Employee Handbook (February 2026) Clean
3. Resolution 2026-XXX



VALLEY
CLEAN ENERGY

Employee Handbook

Updated

February ~~13~~2, ~~2025~~2026

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Welcome To Valley Clean Energy Alliance

DATE

Dear VCE Employee:

INSERT COVER LETTER HERE

Sincerely,

Mitch Sears
Chief Executive Officer

Introductory Policies

Introduction & Future Revisions

We hope you will find your employment with Valley Clean Energy Alliance (“VCE” or “Agency”) to be both rewarding and challenging. Our staff are key to VCE’s success and we carefully select our new employees. This handbook is not a contract, express or implied, nor does it guarantee employment for any specific length of time.

The policies included in this handbook are guidelines only and are subject to change as VCE deems appropriate. From time to time you may receive notice of new or modified policies, procedures, benefits, or programs. No oral statements or representations can in any way change or alter the provisions of this employee handbook.

Our Working Relationship

VCE does not offer tenure or any other form of guaranteed employment. Either VCE or the employee can terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause, with or without notice. This is called Employment At Will. This employment at will relationship exists regardless of any other written statements or policies contained in this handbook or any other Agency documents or any verbal statement to the contrary.

No one except VCE’s Chief Executive Officer (CEO) can enter into any kind of employment relationship or agreement that is contrary to the previous statement. To be enforceable, such relationship or agreement must be in writing, signed by the CEO, approved by the VCE Board.

Open Communication Policy

At VCE, courtesy, tact and consideration should guide each employee in relationships with fellow workers and the public. It is mandatory that each employee show maximum respect to every other person in the organization. The purpose of communication should be to help others and to make our business run as effectively as possible, thereby gaining the respect of our colleagues and customers.

Equal Employment Opportunity

VCE is an equal opportunity employer and makes employment decisions on the basis of merit and business need. VCE’s policies prohibit unlawful discrimination based on race, color, religious creed, gender, pregnancy (or related medical condition), genetic information, genetic characteristics, gender identity, gender expression, religion, marital status, military or veteran status, age, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, sexual orientation, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. All such discrimination is contrary to VCE policy.

Reasonable Accommodation.

When necessary under the California Fair Employment and Housing Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, VCE will reasonably accommodate an employee or applicant with a disability if the employee or applicant is otherwise qualified to safely perform all of the essential functions of the position.

We will make reasonable accommodations when requested to comply with applicable laws ensuring equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals with a disability. VCE will engage in a timely, good-faith, interactive process to determine a reasonable accommodation, if any, in response to a request for reasonable accommodation by an employee or applicant with a known physical or mental disability or known medical condition. VCE will consider all requests for accommodation, but retains discretion to determine what, if any, accommodation to provide.

Unlawful Harassment

VCE intends to provide a work environment that is pleasant, professional, and free from intimidation, hostility or other offenses which might interfere with work performance. Harassment of any sort - verbal, physical, or visual - will not be tolerated. This includes both sexual harassment as well as harassment based on an employee's status in a protected class. These classes include, but are not necessarily limited to race, color, religion, age, gender, genetic information, genetic characteristics, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, pregnancy (or related medical condition), national origin or ancestry, disability, medical condition, marital status, veteran status, military status, or any other protected status defined by law. This policy also prohibits unlawful harassment based on the perception that anyone has any of those characteristics, or is associated with a person who has or is perceived as having any of those characteristics. This policy extends to unlawful harassment of VCE employees by any other VCE employees, vendors, independent contractors, customers, or others with whom employees may come into contact with during their work for VCE.

Our workplace is not limited to our facilities, but may also include customer and vendor facilities, as well as anywhere a business-related function, or social function sponsored by VCE, is taking place.

What Is Workplace Harassment?

Workplace harassment can take many forms. It may be, but is not limited to, words, signs, offensive jokes, cartoons, pictures, posters, e-mail jokes, social media communication, messages or statements, pranks, intimidation, physical assaults or contact, or violence. It may also take the form of other vocal activity including derogatory statements not directed to the targeted individual but taking place within their hearing. Other prohibited conduct includes written material such as notes, photographs, cartoons, articles of a harassing or offensive nature, and taking retaliatory action against an employee for discussing or making a harassment complaint. In addition, this policy protects employees against conduct from all individuals in the workplace, such as fellow employees, supervisors, outside customers, vendors, independent contractors, or other non-employees who conduct business with our agency.

What Is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment may include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature. When this conduct creates an offensive, hostile and intimidating working environment, it may prevent an individual from effectively performing the duties of their position. It also encompasses such conduct when it is made a term or condition of employment or compensation, either implied or stated and when an employment decision is based on an individual's acceptance or rejection of such conduct.

It is important to note that harassment crosses age and gender boundaries and cannot be stereotyped. Among other perceived unconventional situations, sexual harassment may involve two women or two men. Harassment

may exist on a continuum of behavior. For instance, one example of harassment may be that of an employee showing offensive pictures to another employee.

Generally, two categories of harassment exist. The first, "quid pro quo," may be defined as the demand for sexual favors in exchange for improvement or continuance in your working conditions and/or compensation. The second category, "hostile, intimidating, offensive working environment," can be described as a situation in which unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal or other conduct creates an intimidating or offensive environment. Examples of a hostile, intimidating, and offensive working environment include, but are not limited to, pictures, cartoons, symbols, or items found to be offensive. An employee may have a claim of harassment even if he or she has not lost a job or other economic benefit.

Responsibility

All VCE employees, and particularly supervisors, have a responsibility for keeping our work environment free of harassment. Any employee who becomes aware of an incident of harassment, whether by witnessing the incident or being told of it, must report it to their immediate supervisor, the CEO or a management representative with whom they feel comfortable. When supervisors become aware of the existence of conduct that could violate this policy, they are obligated to take prompt and appropriate action, whether or not the recipient of the harassment wants VCE to do so.

Reporting

If you believe you have been harassed by any agency employee, customer, contractor, or other business contact, you are required to report it to your supervisor or any other member of management. While we encourage you to communicate directly with the alleged harasser, and make it clear that the harasser's behavior is unacceptable, it is not required that you do so. It is essential, however, to notify a member of management immediately even if you are not sure the offending behavior is considered harassment. Any incidents of harassment must be immediately reported. At any time if you feel that you are in immediate harm and do not have time to contact either the CEO or your supervisor, seek assistance from any management representative.

Appropriate investigation and disciplinary action will be taken. All reports will be promptly investigated. However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Any employee found to have harassed any employee will be subject to severe disciplinary action up to and including termination. VCE will also take any additional action necessary to appropriately remedy the situation. Retaliation of any sort will not be permitted. No adverse employment action will be taken for any employee making a good faith report of alleged harassment.

All employees must report any incidents immediately so that complaints can be quickly and fairly resolved. The California Department of Fair Employment and Housing ("DFEH") investigates and may prosecute complaints of harassment. Whenever an employee thinks he or she has been harassed or that he or she has been retaliated against for resisting or complaining, that employee may file a complaint with the DFEH. The nearest DFEH office is listed in the telephone book or on-line.

Harassment and Retaliation Prohibited

VCE prohibits any form of harassment on a protected basis that impairs an employee's working ability or emotional well-being at work. VCE also prohibits any employee from retaliating in any way against anyone who has raised any concern about harassment or discrimination against another individual. We will investigate any

complaint of harassment, discrimination, and retaliation and will take immediate and appropriate disciplinary action if any such conduct has been found within the workplace.

Employment Policies and Practices

Classification of Employees

A new hire will be classified as either “exempt” or “non-exempt.”

Non-exempt employees are entitled to overtime pay for hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours per workweek.

Exempt employees are those employees whose duties and responsibilities allow them to be “exempt” from provisions as provided by the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and any applicable state laws. If you are an exempt employee, you will be advised that you are in this classification at the time you are hired, transferred, or promoted. Participation in VCE’s benefits programs may be affected by your employment status or classification.

All employees of VCE whether exempt, non-exempt, full-time, part-time, or temporary are employed at-will.

1. The EXEMPT status applies to certain administrative, professional, and executive staff. Exempt employees qualify for exemption from overtime regulations under state and federal law and their salaries already take into account that they may work long hours.
2. The NON-EXEMPT status applies to all other regular employees. Non-exempt employees receive extra pay for overtime work (as described in the overtime section of this employee handbook). Employees working in non-exempt positions are compensated for the actual amount of time spent on their job and are entitled to receive time and one-half (1 ½) their regular rate of pay for each hour worked in excess of forty (40) hours in a work week.
3. FULL-TIME employees work on a regular basis for at least 40 hours per week. Full-time employees may or may not be EXEMPT. They are eligible for all benefits available through work at VCE, so long as they meet the applicable requirements, such as length of service.
4. PART-TIME employees are regularly scheduled to work fewer than 40.0 hours per week. Part-time employees who are regularly scheduled to work a minimum of 30 hours per week are entitled to all benefits as explained later in this employee handbook according to a prorated formula based on their average hours worked compared to a standard 40.0 hour workweek. Part-time employees who are regularly scheduled to work less than 30 hours per week are not eligible for benefits covered in this employee handbook, other than those required by law or as stipulated in writing signed by the CEO.
5. TEMPORARY EMPLOYEES are hired with the understanding that their employment will not continue beyond a stated date or beyond completion of a specified project or projects. Temporary employees will generally not be employed for more than 6 months. Temporary employees are not eligible for benefits covered in this employee handbook, other than those required by law or as stipulated in writing signed by the CEO.
6. INTERNS are employees who are gaining supervised practical experience in a professional field. Interns may be paid, but are not eligible for any benefits listed in this employee handbook except as required by law.

Recruitment

VCE will conduct an appropriate recruitment, depending on the needs of the organization and the position involved. Open positions may or may not be posted to solicit outside candidates. If you are aware of a vacancy and are interested in being considered for the position, you should discuss the matter with your current supervisor.

Rehired/Converted Employees

If you meet eligibility requirements for rehire at the time of your separation from VCE, you may apply for any open position for which you are qualified. Former employees will be considered along with all other applicants, and have no greater chance of being selected for employment than all other applicants.

If you are rehired by VCE or convert from part-time to full-time status, your length of service with VCE for all purposes will be calculated from the rehire date or the date of conversion to full-time status.

Employees who are involuntarily terminated for performance reasons or for violation of agency policy are ineligible for rehire. In addition, employees who voluntarily resign may still be ineligible for re-hire if VCE learns of circumstances that would have justified termination for performance-based reasons regardless of when that information is acquired.

Job Duties

Your supervisor will explain your job responsibilities and the performance standards expected of you. Your job responsibilities may change at any time during your employment; for example you may be asked to work on special projects or to assist with other work necessary or important to the operation of VCE. It is expected that VCE will have your cooperation and assistance in performing such additional work.

VCE also may, at any time, with or without notice, alter or change your job responsibilities, reassign or transfer your position, or assign you additional job responsibilities depending on business needs.

Work Schedules

VCE's normal business hours are 8:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Your supervisor will assign your individual work schedule, and you are expected to be ready to perform your work at the start of your scheduled shift. Flexible work schedules and telecommuting may be accommodated with the approval of your supervisor. Alternative work arrangements are not an entitlement or employee benefit. A supervisor may end the arrangement at any time for any reason or without cause. All changes to normal working hours, flexible work schedules, and telecommuting arrangements should be documented with your supervisor and HR representative.

On occasion, work schedules may fluctuate with customer demand and business needs. If a change in your work schedule is required, your supervisor will notify you at the earliest opportunity. You may be required to work overtime or hours other than those normally scheduled. Exempt employees are required to work as many hours as are necessary to complete the responsibilities of their positions.

Personnel Records

A personnel file will be confidentially maintained for each VCE employee. You may review your personnel file during regular business hours upon making a request to the CEO. An appointment will be made for the purpose of allowing the review.

VCE will treat your personnel records as confidential and private. However, there are certain times when information may be given to a person outside VCE. These include:

1. In response to a subpoena, court order, or order of an administrative agency;
2. To a governmental agency as part of an investigation by that agency of VCE's compliance with applicable law;
3. In a lawsuit, administrative proceeding, grievance, or arbitration in which you and VCE are parties;
4. In a workers' compensation proceeding;
5. To administer employee health benefit plans;
6. To a health care provider, when necessary;
7. To a first aid or safety personnel, when necessary; and
8. Information will be disclosed to prospective employers in accordance with the section on Employment Verification and References.

Please promptly notify the CEO of any changes in your personal data. Keeping your file up-to-date can be important with regard to pay, deductions, benefits and other matters. Coverage or benefits that you and your family may receive under VCE's benefits package could be negatively affected if the information in your personnel file is incorrect.

Inspection of Payroll Records

Employees and former employees have the right to inspect and obtain copies of their own payroll records as required by applicable law. All requests must be submitted in writing to VCE's CEO. Responses will be provided as required by law. Individuals who make a request may be asked to provide identification and may be required to pay for the cost of making the copies.

Layoffs and Work Reductions

VCE may implement layoffs. Employees will be selected for layoff at VCE's discretion based on a combination of factors, including, but not necessarily limited to: business needs, employee performance and productivity, qualifications, attendance, attitude, ability and willingness to work the required days and hours, and the ability to work cooperatively with others in the affected work unit.

The weight given to the above factors may vary depending upon the particular needs of the affected work unit and VCE as a whole at the time of the layoff.

Employment Termination

VCE strives to ensure a smooth transition for employees leaving VCE.

VCE and its employees have an employment relationship that is known as "employment at will." This means that employees are not required to work for VCE for any set period of time nor is VCE required to employ individuals

for any specific length of time. **The statements made in this policy do not alter, modify or limit the employment at will relationship.** An “at-will” employee is subject to termination of employment at any time VCE concludes it appropriate to do so.

Involuntary separation from service means that the termination action is being initiated by VCE, rather than by the employee. In general, employees who are discharged by VCE are not eligible for rehire. However, employees who are terminated due to layoff or restructuring may be eligible for rehire or recall at VCE’s discretion.

VCE will consider you to have voluntarily terminated your employment if you do any of the following:

1. Resign from VCE;
2. Fail to return from an approved leave of absence on the date specified by VCE, or;
3. Fail to report to work or call in for 3 consecutive work days

In the event that you resign voluntarily, we ask – but do not require – that you provide two weeks’ notice to allow for a smooth transition and training of any replacement personnel.

All agency property such as office equipment, credit cards, keys, manuals, computer equipment, and cell phones must be returned on or prior to the last day of employment. You should return these items to your immediate supervisor.

Final wages for time worked, plus any pay for unused but accrued PTO, will normally be paid on your last day of employment, but no later than the next regularly scheduled payday.

Employment Verification and References

When VCE receives a request for references or employment verification, VCE will disclose only the dates of employment and the title of the last position held. VCE will provide a prospective employer with your last earned wage or salary only at your written request. VCE will release additional information only with a signed authorization and waiver of liability in a form acceptable to VCE.

Only the CEO is authorized to respond to requests for employee references and verification of employment. No other supervisor or employee is authorized to provide references for current or former employees.

As an employee of VCE, all requests for information regarding another employee must be forwarded to the CEO.

Timekeeping and Attendance

Punctuality and Attendance

Regular attendance and punctuality are “essential functions” of your job. You are expected to maintain regular attendance during all scheduled work hours, report to work on a timely basis, and work through the end of your regularly scheduled workday. Chronic absenteeism or lateness will not be tolerated and will result in discipline, up to and including termination. In the event of an unscheduled absence, please abide by the following:

- You must personally call your supervisor prior to the start of your shift if you are unable to report to work, or will be late to work, on any particular day.

- You are expected to advise another management representative of your absence if you are not able to reach your supervisor and leave a telephone number where you can be reached.
- You may not have a relative or friend call in to report your absence, unless you are unable to call yourself due to a medical or other emergency.
- If you call after the start of your shift you will be considered tardy for that day.
- You are expected to provide your supervisor with explanation of your absence or tardiness and inform your supervisor of the expected duration of the absence. If you are absent for medical reasons, you do not need to disclose the underlying medical condition.
- With the exception of certain extenuating circumstances, you must call in each day you are scheduled to work and will not report to work.

Repeated absenteeism or tardiness (whether excused or not) is not tolerated. Continuing patterns of absences, early departures, or tardiness - regardless of the exact number of days—may warrant disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Emergency or extraordinary circumstances concerning an absence or tardiness will be considered, and we reserve the right to make an exception to this policy if, at our discretion, an exception is warranted. Repeated car failures, missing the bus, consistently failing to arrange back-up childcare or oversleeping do not constitute emergency or extraordinary circumstances. We reserve the right to determine what is considered excessive absenteeism. In all cases, we will make accommodations for qualified employees with disabilities where required by law.

If you fail to report for work for three (3) consecutive days without any notification to your supervisor, we will consider that you have abandoned your employment, and have resigned your position.

Timekeeping Requirements for Non-Exempt Staff

Applicable law requires VCE to keep an accurate record of time worked. Employee time records are official VCE records and must be accurately maintained. You must input your own time at the start and at the end of each workday, and at the start and end of each lunch hour. Completing another employee's time record or intentionally falsifying a time record is a serious violation and may result in immediate termination of employment. If a time record needs to be corrected, both you and your supervisor must initial the change in the time record to verify its accuracy.

Meal and Rest Periods for Non-Exempt Staff

Employees will generally be provided with at least a 30-minute lunch break per day, which can be scheduled by your supervisor to best accommodate the workday.

Overtime Time Provisions for Non-Exempt Staff

As necessary, you may be asked to work overtime. Only actual hours worked in a given workday or workweek will be counted in determining which hours constitute overtime. We will attempt to distribute overtime evenly and accommodate individual schedules. A supervisor must previously authorize all overtime work. Any overtime worked without prior authorization may be grounds for discipline. We provide compensation for all overtime hours worked by non-exempt employees as follows: All hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours in one workweek will be treated as overtime.

Hours worked for purposes of overtime do not include an unpaid meal period, or hours away from work due to PTO, sickness, holiday, jury duty, or other absences from work. No overtime compensation will be paid to exempt employees. Exempt employees may have to work hours beyond their normal schedules, as work demands require.

Make-Up Time for Non-Exempt Staff

Make-Up time is defined as when a non-exempt employee asks his or her supervisor for additional time off to attend to personal matters. If the request is granted, this time off will be without pay. If you wish to make up this missed time, you may submit a "Make-Up Time Request Form" to your supervisor before the make-up time is worked. It is within the supervisor's discretion to grant the request. Make-Up time must be worked in the same workweek as the missed time (including prior to the missed time) in order not to incur overtime. You may not work over forty (40) hours total in the week including make-up time.

Exempt Employee Time Off

Exempt employees of VCE are paid a salary, which compensates them for working as many hours as required to complete their job duties. Exempt employees do not receive overtime pay. We realize, however, that in instances of extraordinary additional pressure or increased work hours, it may be appropriate for supervisors to recognize the exempt employee's efforts by granting the employee extra time-off separate from and in addition to the employee's accrued PTO time. In order to achieve consistency among supervisors and fairness to the exempt employees, supervisors should use the following guidelines when exercising their discretion to grant additional time off:

1. Limit the amount of additional time-off to no more than two days;
2. Require the employee to take the time-off in the week immediately following the increased hours whenever possible and;
3. Do not allow employees to accumulate any granted but unused time-off

Lactation Accommodation

VCE will provide a reasonable amount of break time to accommodate an employee desiring to express breast milk for the employee's infant child. The break time shall, if possible, run concurrently with any break time already provided to the employee. VCE shall provide the employee with the use of a room or other location, other than a toilet stall, in close proximity to the employee's work area, for the employee to express milk in private. If special arrangements are made to provide a non-exempt employee extra time beyond her normal rest period, the time will be unpaid.

Payment of Wages

Paydays are semi-monthly, the 15th and last day of the month. There are 24 pay periods in a year. The workday (a 24-hour, consecutive period) begins at 12:01 a.m. and ends at midnight. The workweek begins on Sunday and ends on Saturday.

If a regular payday falls on a weekend or holiday, you will be paid on the first day of work prior to the regularly scheduled payday. If there is an error on your check, please report it immediately to your supervisor.

For your convenience, we offer a direct deposit option.

Advances

We do not permit advances against paychecks or against unaccrued PTO.

Payroll Deductions, Wage Attachments and Garnishments

VCE makes certain deductions from every employee's paycheck. Among these are applicable federal, state, and local income taxes, social security and Medicare taxes, state disability insurance contributions, and paid family leave contributions. By law, VCE is also required to honor legal attachments and garnishments of an employee's wages or salaries. If your wages are attached, we will withhold the specified amount to satisfy the terms of the attachment.

Reporting Time Pay

Reporting time pay will be paid under the following conditions:

1. Reporting time pay to non-exempt is owed when you report to work at your regularly scheduled time, but you are given less than half the usual or scheduled day's work. In this case, you will be paid for at least half of the hours you were scheduled to work, but never less than two hours pay, and never more than four hours pay.
2. Reporting time pay is also owed if you are required to report to work a second time in any one (1) workday and are given less than two (2) hours work on the second reporting. In this case you will receive at least two (2) hours pay for the second appearance.

These provisions do not apply if you are on a paid "standby" or "on call" status. In some instances, you may not receive reporting time pay. Reporting time pay does not apply if public utilities fail, such as water, gas, electricity, or sewer and/or when work is interrupted by an "act of God" or other causes not within VCE's control.

Payment for Hours Worked During Business Travel for Non-Exempt Staff

Whenever possible, non-exempt employees traveling on agency business are expected to do so during normal working hours. In the very rare instance where your travel time constitutes overtime, you will be paid overtime as required by law. Non-exempt employees will be paid for all hours worked, including out of town travel time, at regular and overtime pay rates according to the law. Pay for travel time may be at a rate of pay that is less than the employee's normal rate of pay.

If you are non-exempt and traveling on business, you will not be paid for time between work assignments; e.g., if you stay the night in a hotel, pay begins when you begin to work, or are in transit. Travel is to be scheduled in advance, in writing by your supervisor, with the knowledge of the CEO.

Non-exempt travel may be approved on an as-needed basis, but only with prior authorization from your supervisor.

Pay for Mandatory Meetings for Non-Exempt Staff

VCE will pay you for your attendance at meetings, lectures and training programs if all of the following conditions are met:

1. Attendance is mandatory (i.e. required by VCE).

2. The meeting, course, or lecture is directly related to your job.
3. You are notified of the necessity for such meetings, lectures, or training programs by your supervisor (i.e. pre-approval by management is required)

If you meet the above conditions, you will be compensated at your regular rate of pay. If you are required to travel, then travel pay will be provided. You will not receive compensation for voluntary attendance in courses that are conducted outside of normal business hours and/or that are not directly related to your current job.

Standards of Conduct

Professional Business Conduct and Ethics

By accepting employment with VCE, you have a responsibility to VCE and to your fellow employees to adhere to certain codes of behavior and conduct. The purpose of these rules is to ensure that you understand what conduct is expected and necessary. When each person is aware that he or she can fully depend upon fellow workers to follow the rules of conduct, then our agency will be a better place for everyone to work.

Generally speaking, we expect you to act in a mature and responsible way at all times. VCE values honesty in communication and personal responsibility. To avoid any possible confusion, some of the more obvious unacceptable activities are noted below. If you have any questions concerning any work or safety rule, or any of the unacceptable activities listed, please ask for an explanation.

Occurrences of any of the following violations, because of their seriousness, may result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate suspension or termination:

Unacceptable Activities:

1. Generally, conduct which is disloyal, disruptive, or damaging to VCE.
2. Falsification of timekeeping records.
3. Dishonesty; falsification or misrepresentation on your application for employment or other work records; lying about sick or personal leave; falsifying reason for a leave of absence or other data requested by VCE; alteration of agency records or other agency documents.
4. Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, including marijuana.
5. Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of agency property or the property of fellow employees; unauthorized use of agency equipment and/or property for personal reasons.
6. Possession, distribution, solicitation, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs, including marijuana, in the workplace, while on duty, or while operating agency-owned vehicles or equipment.
7. Fighting, threatening, or coercing fellow employees on agency property or during working hours, for any purpose.
8. Boisterous or disruptive activity in the workplace.
9. Negligence or any careless action leading to damage of agency-owned or customer-owned property or which endangers the life or safety of another person.
10. Obscene or abusive language toward any supervisor, employee or customer; indifference or rudeness towards a customer or fellow employee; any disorderly/antagonistic conduct on agency premises.

11. Insubordination or other disrespectful conduct; refusing to obey instructions properly issued by your supervisor pertaining to your work; refusal to help out on a special assignment.
12. Violation of security or safety rules or failure to observe safety rules and/or practices; failure to wear required safety equipment; tampering with VCE equipment or safety equipment.
13. Creating or contributing to unsanitary conditions in the workplace.
14. Smoking in prohibited areas.
15. Any act of harassment, sexual, racial or other; telling sexist or racist jokes; making racial or ethnic slurs.
16. Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives or firearms, in the workplace.
17. Excessive absenteeism; failure to report an absence or late arrival.
18. Unauthorized absence from work station during the workday; sleeping or loitering during working hours.
19. Unauthorized use of telephones, mail system, or other agency-owned equipment.
20. Originating, spreading, or taking part in malicious gossip or rumors about employees of VCE.
21. Unauthorized disclosure of business "secrets" or confidential information; giving confidential or proprietary information to competitors or other organizations or to unauthorized VCE employees; breach of confidentiality of personnel or agency information.
22. Violation of agency rules or policies; any action that is detrimental to VCE's efforts to operate profitably.
23. Unsatisfactory or careless work; failure to meet production or quality standards as explained to you by your supervisor.
24. Soliciting during working hours and/or in working areas; selling merchandise or collecting funds of any kind for charities or others without authorization during business hours, or at a time or place that interferes with the work of another employee on agency premises.
25. Gambling on agency property.
26. Failure to immediately report any damage or accident involving agency equipment or vehicles.
27. Failure or refusal to comply with the work schedule, including mandatory overtime.
28. Using, removing, or borrowing agency equipment or property without prior authorization.
29. The use of abusive or threatening language or actions toward anyone.

This list is not exhaustive. Rather, we ask that you keep in mind at all times the need to conduct yourself with reasonable and proper regard for the welfare and rights of all our employees and for the best interests of the agency. This statement of prohibited conduct does not alter VCE's policy of at-will employment. Either you or VCE remains free to terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without reason or advance notice.

Performance Evaluations

VCE encourages an open dialogue between an employee and his or her supervisor on an informal, regular basis. We believe this type of interaction increases job satisfaction for both the employee and VCE.

Formal performance evaluations will be conducted annually or with frequency dependent on length of service, job position, past performance, changes in job duties, or recurring performance problems. After the review, you will be asked to sign the evaluation report to acknowledge that it has been presented to you and discussed with you by your supervisor, and that you are aware of its contents.

Positive performance evaluations do not guarantee increases in salary, bonuses, or promotions. Salary increases, bonuses, and promotions are solely within the discretion of VCE, and depend upon many factors in addition to performance. Having your compensation reviewed does not necessarily mean that you will be given an increase.

VCE uses a discretionary pay-for-performance compensation model to support the highest levels of organizational performance. The intent is to reward individual employee effort and results commensurate with their contributions and impact toward achieving the goals and objectives of the agency. The primary form of a performance reward is a merit increase. These base pay increases move an employee through their salary range and support the agency's retention goals by ensuring employee pay remains competitive with similar roles in the market. Employees who meet or exceed their goals and objectives, as evidenced by the employee receiving an overall rating of 2.0 (Effective) or higher on their year-end Performance Check-in, may be eligible to receive a merit increase (an adjustment in base salary) based on that performance. In limited cases, and with written justification from the supervisor, manager, and Director, an employee with an overall performance rating of less than 2.0 (Effective), may be considered for a reduced base salary.

Performance bonuses also may be used to reward employees when superior performance, as defined below, has been demonstrated in achieving goals and objectives. In most cases, performance bonuses are used to supplement merit increases, or instead of merit increases, when an employee is at or close to the top of their salary range. "Superior performance" is evidenced by an employee receiving a rating of 3.0 (Highly Effective) on one or more goals that, in total, represent at least 25% of the employee's assigned work during the year. "Superior performance" also may be evidenced by an employee receiving an overall rating of 2.5 or higher on their year-end Performance Check-in. Recommendations for performance bonuses must be justified in writing by the supervisor and/or manager and fully describe the efforts put forth by the employee that demonstrates superior performance.

The written justification, and approval of the bonus, are retained. Funding for performance bonuses is included in the annual budget or a budget amendment and approved by the Board of Directors. Performance bonuses are not guaranteed and may not be available due to budget constraints or other business reasons.

Compensation Equity

A pay equity increase may be granted to an employee under certain circumstances, such as the following: a significant lag in salary exists relative to market conditions or between employees with comparable job functions who have similar levels of experience, skills and knowledge, and demonstrated performance; an employee's assigned functions or work tasks increase the scope of the position but do not warrant reclassification; salary compression exists between supervisors and their employees; in order to address retention of employees with highly specialized skills or due to competitive job markets. In addition, a discretionary agency-wide pay equity adjustment for inflation in accordance with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Consumer Price Index (CPI) may be made at the option of the Board of Directors.

Recommendations for pay equity increases are prepared by the Director of Finance and Internal Operations and must be approved by the CEO. Employees approved for a pay equity increase will be notified, and adjustments may be paid retroactively to the first pay period of the current calendar year. Funding for pay equity increases is

included in the compensation identified in the annual budget and approved by the Board of Directors. Pay equity increases are discretionary and may not be available due to budget constraints or other business reasons

Problem Resolution

At some time, you may have a complaint or question about your job, your working conditions, or the treatment you are receiving. Your good-faith complaints and questions are of concern to us. We ask that you take your concerns first to your supervisor, following these steps:

1. Bring the situation to the attention of your immediate supervisor who will then review your concern and provide a solution or explanation.
2. If the problem remains unresolved, you may present it in writing to the CEO who will work towards a resolution.

This procedure, which we believe is important for both you and us, cannot result in every problem being resolved to your satisfaction. However, we value your input and you should feel free to raise issues of concern, in good faith, without the fear of retaliation.

Alcoholic Beverage Consumption

Due to the high risk and liability involved, VCE will not provide alcoholic beverages at social gatherings to VCE employees. This policy applies to the following:

1. Birthday parties;
2. Office parties;
3. Office picnics; and
4. Recreational activities (i.e. organized team sports)

Drug and Alcohol Abuse and Testing

VCE is concerned about the use of alcohol, illegal drugs, or controlled substances as it affects the workplace. We comply with state and federal drug abuse regulations, including the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988. Use of these illegal substances (whether illegal under California or federal law) whether on or off the job can adversely affect your work performance, efficiency, and safety and health. The use or possession of these substances on the job constitutes a potential danger to the welfare and safety of other employees, and exposes VCE to the risks of property loss or damage, or injury to other persons. Furthermore, the use of prescription drugs and/or over-the-counter drugs also may affect your job performance and seriously impair your value to us. Any employee who is using prescription or over-the-counter drugs that may impair your ability to safely perform the job, or affect the safety or well-being of others, must notify a supervisor of such use immediately before starting or resuming work. All precautions necessary to preserve your privacy will be taken. You must adhere to the rules stated in this policy as a condition of employment. Failure to comply with this policy may result in discipline, including termination. The CEO has been designated to administer this policy, monitor the program and make reports as required by law.

If there is ever a reasonable basis to suspect you of violating the drug and alcohol policy and being under the influence during working hours, you will be requested to immediately submit to a drug and/or alcohol test. Suspicion will be based on objective symptoms, such as factors related to your appearance, behavior and speech. A reasonable basis may also exist if you are found to be in possession of illegal drugs, alcohol or paraphernalia connected with the use of an illegal drug. Possession of illegal drugs or alcohol is prohibited even if you have not used these substances.

The following rules and standards of conduct apply to all employees either on agency property, or during the workday (including meals and rest periods). The following are strictly prohibited by VCE:

1. Possession or use of alcohol or illegal drugs, including marijuana, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while on agency premises or at any time on duty.
2. Driving an agency vehicle or driving for agency business in a private vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, including marijuana.
3. Distribution, sale, or purchase of an illegal or controlled substance while on agency premises or at any time on duty.
4. Possession or use of an illegal or controlled substance, or being under the influence of an illegal or controlled substance while on agency premises or at any time while working.
5. Any drug or alcohol statute conviction. You must notify VCE within 5 days of such conviction.

In order to enforce this policy, we reserve the right to conduct searches of agency property and to implement measures necessary to deter and detect abuse of this policy.

In the event of suspicion of use in connection with an on the job accident, you may be asked to provide body substance samples (such as urine and/or blood) to determine the illicit or illegal use of drugs and alcohol. VCE will test for alcohol, cannabinoids, (THC), Opiates, i.e. codeine and morphine, Cocaine metabolites, Amphetamines, i.e. amphetamine and metamorphines, adulterants low creatine levels and Phencyclidine. VCE assures that any information concerning your drug and/or alcohol use will remain confidential. Refusal to submit to drug testing may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

If the results of your drug and/or alcohol test are positive, VCE will take disciplinary action which may include suspension or immediate termination. The disciplinary action will be based on the seriousness of the offense and your past performance. If you return to work after testing positive for drugs and/or alcohol, you may be required to consent to unannounced tests for drugs and/or alcohol for a specified period as a condition of continued employment. In the event that you test positive, you may request a second test to be performed by a reliable drug testing agency, at your expense.

Any conviction you receive on a charge of illegal sale or possession of any controlled substance will not be tolerated. In addition, we must keep people who use, sell, or possess controlled substances off VCE's premises in order to keep the controlled substances themselves off the premises.

Violation of the above rules and standards of conduct will not be tolerated. VCE may bring the matter to the attention of appropriate law enforcement authorities.

VCE's policy on drug and alcohol in no way limits or alters the at-will employment relationship.

Customer and Public Relations

The success of VCE depends upon the quality of the relationships between VCE, our employees, and our customers, suppliers and the general public. Our customers' impression of VCE and their interest and willingness to do business with us are formed by how you serve them.

The opinions and attitudes that customers have toward our agency can be affected for a long period of time by the actions of just one employee. It is sometimes easy to take a customer for granted, but when we do, we run the risk of not only losing that customer, but their associates, friends or family who also may be customers or prospective customers.

Here are several things you can do to help give customers a good impression of VCE:

1. Customers are to be treated courteously and given proper attention at all times. Never regard a customer's questions or concerns as an interruption or an annoyance. Customer inquiries, whether in person or by telephone, must be addressed promptly and professionally.
2. Never place a telephone caller on hold for an extended period of time. Direct incoming calls to the appropriate person and make sure that the call is answered.
3. Act competently and deal with customers in a courteous and respectful manner. Through your conduct, show your desire to assist the customer in obtaining the help that he or she needs. If you are unable to help a customer, find someone who can.
4. All correspondence and documents, whether to customers or others, must be neatly prepared and error-free. Attention to accuracy and detail in all paperwork demonstrates your commitment to those with whom we do business.
5. Never argue with a customer. If a problem develops or if a customer remains dissatisfied, ask your supervisor to intervene.
6. Communicate pleasantly and respectfully with other employees at all times.

These are the building blocks for your and VCE's continued success.

Confidentiality

It is your responsibility to safeguard confidential information obtained during your employment with us, including financial information obtained from customers and private information about other employees.

You may in no way reveal or divulge any such information unless it is necessary for you to do so in the performance of your duties. Access to confidential information should be on a "need-to-know" basis and must be authorized by your supervisor.

If you are questioned by someone outside VCE or your department and you are concerned about the appropriateness of giving them certain information, you are not required to answer. Instead, as politely as possible, refer the request to your supervisor or the CEO.

It is also important to remember that you may not disclose or use proprietary or confidential information except as your job requires. You may not keep or retain any originals or copies of reports, notes, proposals, customer

lists or other confidential and proprietary documents, equipment, supplies, or property belonging to VCE. Any and all copies or originals of reports, and notes belong to VCE and must be turned over to VCE within twenty-four (24) hours of termination of employment.

You are not permitted to remove or make copies of any VCE records, reports or documents without prior management approval. Do not post confidential information about VCE, customers, employees, or affiliates on any social media. Disclosure of confidential information could lead to termination, as well as other possible legal action.

Conflict of Interest

As an employee of VCE, you must avoid actual or potential conflicts of interest with VCE. If you are found to have a conflict of interest, you may be subject to discipline, including termination. You should contact your supervisor with any questions about this policy. Prohibited activities include, but are not limited to:

1. Having a direct or indirect financial relationship with a VCE customer, vendor, or supplier; however, no conflict will exist in the case of ownership of less than 1 percent of a publicly traded corporation.
2. Engaging in any other employment or personal activity during work hours, or using VCE's name, logo, equipment or property, including stationery, office supplies, computers, telephones, fax machines, postage, and office machines, for personal purposes.
3. Soliciting agency employees, suppliers, or customers to purchase goods or services of any kind for non-agency purposes, or to make contributions to any organizations or in support of any causes.
4. Soliciting or entering into any business or financial transaction with another employee whom the soliciting employee supervises, either directly or indirectly, such as hiring the employee to perform personal services or soliciting the employee to enter into an investment.

Solicitation

You are not permitted to solicit or distribute literature during working time. Working time includes both your working time and the working time of the employee to whom the solicitation or distribution is directed. Similarly, distribution of written solicitation material in working areas is prohibited at all times. If you wish to distribute fundraising items such as cookies, candy, and coupon books for sale, you may place them without solicitation in your workstation or VCE break rooms.

Media Contact

If you are contacted by a news organization regarding VCE business, please direct all media inquiries to your supervisor, the CEO, or the Director of Marketing.

Employment of Friends or Relatives

The employment of friends and relatives in the same area of an organization may cause conflicts of interest and appearances of impropriety. In addition, personal conflicts may impact the working relationship of the parties. Although VCE does not prohibit the hiring of friends and relatives of existing employees, VCE is committed to monitoring situations in which friends or relatives work in the same area. In the event of an actual or potential problem, VCE's response may include reassignment or termination of one or both of the individuals involved. For the purposes of this policy, a relative is any person who is related by blood or marriage, or whose

relationship with an employee is similar to that of persons who are related by blood or marriage, or one who is a domestic partner.

Personal Relationships in the Workplace

VCE desires to avoid misunderstandings, complaints of favoritism, claims of sexual harassment, and employee dissension that may result from personal or social relationships amongst employees. Therefore, VCE asks that if you become romantically involved with another employee that you disclose your relationship to a supervisor with whom you feel comfortable. This information will be kept as confidential as possible. For purposes of this provision, “romantically involved” will be interpreted broadly. VCE reserves the right to take necessary and appropriate action to resolve any potential conflict of interest arising out of romantic involvement among employees. Depending on the facts of the situation, such action may include reassignment or termination of one or both of the employees involved.

VCE is committed to maintaining a professional work environment where supervisors treat all employees fairly and impartially. Accordingly, supervisors are not allowed to date, or become romantically or intimately involved with, employees who report to them directly or indirectly. Also, spouses and immediate family members are prohibited from working in positions where they directly report to, or are reported to, by their spouses or family members. Personal relationships very often cause problems in the workplace, such as a lack of objectivity towards the subordinate’s job performance, the perception of favoritism by other employees (whether justified or not), and potential sexual harassment complaints.

For purposes of this policy, “immediate family” includes significant others (such as unmarried couples who live together), domestic partners, step-parent and step-child relationships, in-law relationships, grandparents and cousins (including analogous relationships with the parents and children of an employee’s significant other). This policy covers all family-like relationships, regardless of blood or legal relationships.

Employees who are currently dating one another, or employees who are married or related and report to or supervise each other, may request to be transferred in order to comply with this policy. When possible, VCE will attempt to accommodate such requests. Please understand, however, that VCE reserves the right not to transfer employees based on conflicting business considerations.

Unprofessional behavior in the workplace, such as sexually related conversations, inappropriate touching (i.e., kissing, hugging, massaging, sitting on laps) another employee, and any other behavior of a sexual nature, is prohibited.

If two employees marry or become related, causing actual or potential problems such as those described, only one of the employees will be retained with VCE unless reasonable accommodations can be made to eliminate the actual or potential conflict. The employees will have 30 days to decide which relative will stay with VCE. If this decision is not made in the time allowed the CEO will make the decision, taking the employment history and job performance of both employees as well as the business needs of VCE into account. Supervisors who have any questions about the application of this policy to an employee or applicant should contact the CEO.

Dress Policy

You are expected to dress and groom yourself in accordance with accepted social and business standards, particularly if your job involves dealing with customers or visitors in person. A neat, tasteful appearance contributes to the positive impression you make on our customers.

Business casual dress is generally expected which should include nice shoes, slacks, pantsuits, dresses, skirts, and shirts (and possibly suits and ties when appropriate). Violating dress code standards may subject you to appropriate disciplinary action.

Day-to-Day Operations

Employer and Employee Property

Routine inspections of agency property might result in the discovery of an employee's personal possessions. You are encouraged not to bring into the workplace any item of personal property which you do not want to reveal to VCE.

All desks, lockers, offices, work spaces, credenzas, cabinets, electronic mail (e-mail), telephone systems, office systems, computer systems, any and all electronically issued technology, agency vehicles and other areas or items belonging to VCE are open to VCE and its employees. **YOU SHOULD HAVE NO EXPECTATION OF PRIVACY IN ANY OF THESE AREAS.** Personal items and messages or information that you consider private should not be placed or kept in any of these places or areas belonging to VCE.

Storage areas, work areas, file cabinets, credenzas, computer systems and software, office telephones, cellular telephones, any and all electronically issued technology, modems, facsimile machines, copy and scanner machines, tools, equipment, desks, voice mail, and electronic mail are the property of VCE, and need to be maintained according to agency rules and regulations.

Desks and work areas must be kept clean, and are to be used for work-related purposes. VCE's property is subject to inspection at any time, with or without prior notice. Prior authorization must be obtained before any of VCE's property may be removed from the premises.

For security reasons, you should not leave personal belongings of value in the workplace. Personal items, lockers and desks are subject to inspection and search, with or without notice, and with or without your prior consent.

Terminated employees should remove any personal items at the time of separation. Personal items left in the workplace by previous employees are subject to disposal if not claimed at the time of your termination.

Electronic Systems and Privacy

Access to VCE's electronic systems is provided for work-related purposes. There should be NO expectation of privacy in connection with the use of electronic systems, including stored e-mail/voice mail/text messages or any messages sent electronically. All messages created, sent, received or stored in these systems are and remain the property of VCE. VCE reserves the right to retrieve and review any message composed, sent or received via the system. Please note that even when a message is deleted or erased, it is still possible to recreate the message; therefore, the ultimate privacy of messages cannot be ensured to anyone.

To safeguard and protect the proprietary, confidential and business-sensitive information of VCE, and to ensure that the use of all electronic systems and equipment is consistent with VCE's legitimate business interests, authorized representatives of VCE may monitor the use of such systems from time to time without notice, which may include printing and reading materials, files on the system, list servers, and equipment.

You should be aware that e-mail messages, like VCE correspondence, and any and all messages sent electronically may be read by other VCE employees and outsiders under certain circumstances. While it is impossible to list all of the circumstances, some examples are the following: (1) during system maintenance of the e-mail system, (2) when VCE has business needs to access the employee's mailbox, (3) when VCE receives a legal request that requires disclosure of e-mail messages, or (4) when VCE has reason to believe the employee is using e-mail in violation of VCE policies.

Social Media Guidelines

VCE understands that various forms of communication occur through social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, blogs, and multimedia host sites such as YouTube. Such communications occur in social networking, blogs, and video sharing and similar media. It should be remembered that social media sites do not provide a private setting. Employees who communicate information through social media therefore should not expect that such information is private

Employees must remember that all existing policies apply to information disseminated through social media. These guidelines are intended to help employees understand some of the unintended outcomes of sharing information through social media.

Application of Policies

The employer's policies and standards apply to conduct that occurs in the workplace and while employees are on duty, wherever they happen to be. They also apply to activities that occur during an employee's own time, outside of work, if the activities have an actual or potential impact on the employee's performance, the performance of coworkers, or the employer. Employees should therefore understand that they are responsible for certain activities that occur off the employer's premises or on their own time both to the employer and third parties. Nothing in this policy prevents employees from exercising their broad rights to discuss the terms and conditions of employment with others, to take action with others to improve your working conditions, or to otherwise exercise their rights to engage in protected concerted activity.

General Policies

VCE's policies regarding workplace conduct and interpersonal interactions are embodied in a number of policies, including policies that protect VCE's legal interests and confidential information.

The policies also prohibit unlawful harassment and discrimination and require employees to use work time in an appropriate manner.

The principles set forth in VCE's policies apply equally to social media, even when the policies do not refer specifically to social media. Violations of any policy through social media or networking will be appropriately addressed when brought to management's attention.

Illustrations of some of the relevant policies and how they may apply to social media are provided below. The following guidelines apply to all employees when they are at work and away from work.

General expectations

- Employees may not post or transmit any material or information that includes confidential, proprietary or trade secret information, or information that is untrue, defamatory, obscene, profane, threatening, harassing, abusive, hateful or humiliating to another person or entity. This includes, but is not limited to, comments regarding VCE or its employees or customers. Employees should ask their supervisors and refer to agency policies if they have any questions about what is appropriate to include in communications involving social media.

Harassment

- VCE will not tolerate intimidation, bullying or threats of violence among co-workers and such acts, even if occurring outside of work, will result in serious consequences, including termination.
- VCE maintains a strict policy prohibiting harassment of any kind. Harassment is inappropriate and contrary to VCE policy if it is based upon any legally protected characteristic. It includes unwelcome verbal, physical, or visual conduct that creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile work environment or unreasonably interferes with work performance.

Reputation

- Employees should act responsibly and remember that untrue or defamatory postings can have serious consequences. Do not create fake blogs or false reviews of VCE or its customers.

Acceptable Use Guidelines

- E-mail and Internet access is provided to support VCE's business operations. Incidental use of e-mail and internet for personal reasons is permissible during non-working periods during the workday, provided it is not excessive and provided it does not interfere with VCE business. Any use that includes tapping into electronic social media should be consistent with VCE's values, policies and applicable laws.
- Participation in social media sites should be limited during work time; incidental use during break time is not prohibited by this policy. Under no circumstances may employees access social media sites while performing safety-sensitive functions such as driving.

Opinions

- Employees should not speak on behalf of VCE without proper authorization to do so. Employees should at all times make it clear that their opinions do not represent those of VCE. They should include disclaimers in online communications advising that they are not speaking officially or unofficially on behalf of the organization.
- Employees may not use VCE's logo or proprietary graphics to imply that you are speaking on behalf of VCE.

Questions

- Employees who have concerns regarding workplace conduct or inappropriate behavior or comments are encouraged to contact the CEO for further guidance.

Additional Guidance and Information

While VCE's policies offer very clear direction on some issues, there are other areas where common sense must prevail. When in doubt about posting, employees should consider the following:

- There is no expectation of privacy when engaging in social media networking activities. You may know everyone in the room when you have a conversation in person. This will not apply with social networking applications. You may not have full control over how your comments are perceived or shared.
- These are public forums. As a practical matter, it may be impossible to delete information that is shared. Comments may be publicly available for years.
- Even when you do not identify your employer by name in the communication or posting, some readers are likely to know where you work. Keep this in mind when you consider posting or transmitting comments that may be work-related. This should also be considered when creating your profile.
- Do not state or imply that the opinions you express are those of VCE, its management, or other employees. Include a disclaimer to this effect.

Telephone Usage

You may use agency telephones for local or personal calls within reason. You are not to charge long distance personal telephone calls to VCE. You are expected to limit personal calls so they do not become excessive or disruptive to your work or work area.

Cell Phone Usage

VCE realizes that in our fast-paced business environment, meeting our goals and staying in touch with our customers and co-workers is a necessary process in working efficiently. But, first and foremost, we want to preserve the safety of our employees and those in the community. California law limits the use of cell phones while driving to those having hands-free operation.

This law provides that, it is illegal to drive a motor vehicle while using a wireless telephone, unless that telephone is designed and configured to allow hands-free listening and talking operation, and is used in that manner while driving.

Additionally, writing, sending, or reading text-based communications on your cell phone while driving is also prohibited under California law. This includes text messaging, instant messaging, and e-mail. You will be responsible for any tickets you receive if you violate this law.

Use of a hands-free cell phone is required while driving for agency business. An option is that you pull over while driving to place or receive calls on your cellular phones. There is a great potential for harm to you and to others if this policy is violated.

Personal cell phone use is not needed or required for work purposes and should not be used for work.

Workplace Monitoring

Workplace monitoring, both human and electronic, may be conducted by VCE to ensure quality control, employee safety, compliance with VCE policies, security, and customer satisfaction.

Customer sites may also utilize video surveillance of non-private workplace areas. Video monitoring is used to identify safety concerns, maintain quality control, detect theft and misconduct, and discourage or prevent acts of harassment and workplace violence.

Because VCE is sensitive to your legitimate privacy rights, every effort will be made to see that workplace monitoring is done in an ethical and respectful manner.

Travel Expense Policy

VCE will reimburse you for work-related travel expenses such as transportation, overnight accommodations and meals. You should have your supervisor's approval before incurring travel expenses. All requests for reimbursement must be submitted to the CEO for approval along with supporting documents or original invoices.

Non-exempt employees will be paid for time spent traveling and in conference sessions. If you are required to use your personal automobile on work-related business, VCE will reimburse you for mileage at the current IRS reimbursement rate and for parking expenses. You should submit the appropriate expense form to the CEO for approval and then forward it to accounting for payment once per month. If you use your personal vehicle for work-related travel you are expected to maintain at least the minimum insurance required by law.

Education and Professional Development Assistance

VCE will support the professional development, educational advancement, and career growth of employees. As a result, the VCE will benefit from improved employee performance, higher levels of workforce engagement, and increased numbers of qualified internal candidates for promotional opportunities. The availability of funding for the assistance is subject to the annual budget process. All regular full-time employees who have served a minimum of six months with the agency must pay for any expense upfront and will receive reimbursement of approved and eligible expenses upon successful completion of coursework. The employee must repay the entire amount of the reimbursement benefit paid to them if they voluntarily separate from the agency within 12 months of receiving the benefit. Employees may be reimbursed for up to \$5,000 per year to offset the cost of coursework.

Agency Property and Equipment

Equipment essential to accomplishing job duties is often expensive and may be difficult to replace. When using agency property, you are expected to exercise care, arrange for required maintenance, and follow all operating instructions, safety standards, and guidelines.

VCE requires that all equipment be in proper working order and safe to work with at all times. If any equipment appears to be damaged, defective, or in need of repair, do not use it until a qualified technician certifies that it is repaired and safe. Never try to fix broken equipment yourself. Please notify your supervisor of any equipment breakdown as soon as it happens. If the breakdown requires emergency repairs, your supervisor will help you

deal with the emergency situation as soon as possible. Prompt reporting of damages, defects, and the need for repairs could prevent possible personal injury and deterioration of equipment. Please ask your supervisor if you have any questions about your responsibility for maintenance and care of equipment used on the job.

If you are authorized to operate an agency vehicle in the course of your assigned work, or if you operate your own vehicle in performing your job, you must adhere to the following rules:

1. You must be a licensed California driver and must maintain at least the minimum insurance required by law.
2. You must maintain weekly mileage reports.
3. You are responsible for following all the manufacturer's recommended maintenance schedules so as to maintain valid warranties, and for following the manufacturer's recommended oil change schedule.
4. VCE provides insurance on agency vehicles. However, you will be considered completely responsible for any accidents, fines, moving or parking violations.
5. If involved in an accident do not admit fault, only provide required insurance and personal DMV information.
6. You must keep VCE vehicle clean at all times.
7. Persons not authorized or employed by VCE cannot operate or ride in an agency vehicle.
8. Prior to operation of any agency vehicle, your supervisor will train you on the appropriate steps to take if you are involved in an accident, such as filling out the accident report, getting names and phone numbers of witnesses and so on.

If you are required to drive an agency vehicle or your own vehicle for agency business, you will also be required to show proof of a current, valid driver's license and current effective auto insurance coverage prior to the first day of employment.

If you drive your own vehicles on agency business you will be reimbursed at the current IRS reimbursement rate.

You are responsible for all agency property, materials, or written information issued to you or in your possession. You may be asked to sign an acknowledgment of receipt of agency property issued to you. All agency property must be returned on or before your last day of work. You may be responsible for the replacement cost of agency property not returned.

Agency cars are for agency business only, and only authorized employees may drive agency cars. Employee spouses, children, friends or anyone other than the employee may not operate these vehicles, unless an emergency arises. A violation of these rules, or excessive or avoidable traffic and parking violations may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Personal Use of Agency Property

You are not allowed to use agency owned property for personal use. The definition of "agency owned" assets includes, but is not limited to, facilities, computers, and their related equipment, labelers, copy machines, postage meter, any type of supplies including office supplies, tools, vehicles, credit cards, etc. These assets are provided to you for agency related business only.

Please also remember that all desks, lockers, cabinets, computers and vehicles that belong to VCE will be open to all agency employees. Personal items, messages or information that you consider private should not be placed or kept in telephone systems, office systems, agency computer systems, office work spaces, desks, and credenzas or file cabinets.

If you are issued an agency credit card you are responsible for the use of that card. Under no circumstances will VCE allow you to sign an agency credit card unless the card being signed is issued in your name. Signing another employee's credit card will result in liability for the expense and may subject you to immediate termination. If you hold an agency credit card you may only give permission to another employee to make an authorized business purchase or reservation using your card with prior approval from the CEO of VCE. Any holders of agency credit cards or authorized users who transact a non-business related charge may be subject to immediate termination. Receipts for all credit card transactions must be given to the Finance Director along with an explanation of the purchase.

Driving Record and Insurance

As a condition of employment, we require you to maintain an acceptable driving record if you drive for agency business. Any accidents or traffic violations must be reported to a supervisor immediately if they occur during the course of your duties. You will be responsible for any tickets you receive while driving on agency business whether in an agency vehicle or your own personal vehicle. Failure to report an on-the-job motor vehicle accident, no matter how minor, will lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Additionally, you are required to maintain the level of insurance required by the state of California. A copy of your insurance card must be on file before you will be allowed to drive for agency business.

Health and Safety

Safety is everybody's business. Safety is to be given primary importance in every aspect of planning and performing all VCE activities. We want to protect you against injury and illness, as well as minimize the potential loss of production. To achieve our goal of maintaining a safe workplace, everyone must be safety conscious at all times. In compliance with California law, and to promote the concept of a safe workplace, we maintain an Injury and Illness Prevention Plan (IIPP). The IIPP is available for your review from the Director of Finance & Internal Operations. The Director of Finance & Internal Operations has responsibility for implementing, administering, monitoring, and evaluating the safety program. Its success depends on the alertness and personal commitment of all.

You will receive a copy of VCE's general safety rules and will receive health and safety training as part of this program. A complete copy of the Safety Program is kept by the CEO and is available for your review.

Smoking Policies

Smoking, use of e-cigarettes or vapor products is not allowed in any enclosed area of the building, or within 25 feet of any entrance of the building or in any agency vehicle. In fairness to those who do not smoke, smoking is allowed only during breaks and lunch and only outside of the office or building.

Security

To provide for the safety and security of you, our customers and our facilities, only authorized visitors are allowed in the work areas. To ensure the safety of our guests, we encourage family and friends to check in when visiting you at the workplace.

The following security procedures should always be followed to ensure your safety and the safety of your fellow employees, and to ensure the confidentiality of VCE's information. At no time should unauthorized persons be allowed to roam unescorted through VCE's office. It is a matter of courtesy to accompany customers and guests to and from the exits and other office to which they may be destined. If strangers are encountered in our office who do not satisfactorily identify themselves or the person with whom they will be meeting, escort them to the front of the office. If they resist, contact your supervisor immediately.

Be aware of persons loitering for no apparent reason in other non-office areas (e.g., in parking areas, walkways, entrances/exits and service areas). Report any suspicious persons or activities to your supervisor. Secure your desk at the end of the day or when called away from your work area for an extended length of time and do not leave valuable and/or personal articles in or around your workstation that may be accessible. Please report any lost facility keys to your supervisor immediately.

Workplace Violence

VCE recognizes that violence in the workplace is a growing nationwide problem necessitating a firm, careful response by all employers. The costs of workplace violence are great, both in human and financial terms.

VCE has adopted the following policies to ensure the safety of its employees and to provide guidance on dealing with violence in the workplace. If qualified, you may provide first aid to injured persons. You are required to:

1. Immediately report all indirect and direct threats of violence to a supervisor.
2. Immediately report all suspicious individuals or activities to a supervisor.
3. Never put yourself or others in peril.
4. Immediately call 911 and seek shelter if you hear a violent commotion near your workstation.
5. Cooperate fully with security, law enforcement, and medical personnel who respond to a call for help.
6. Direct all inquiries from the media about violence on VCE premises to your supervisor or the CEO.

The CEO of VCE will make the sole determination of whether, and to what extent, threats or acts of violence will be acted upon by the agency. In making this determination, we may undertake a case-by-case analysis in order to ascertain whether there is a reasonable basis to believe that workplace violence has occurred. No provision of this policy shall alter the at-will nature of employment at VCE.

Off-Duty Use of Facilities

You are prohibited from being on agency premises, or making use of agency facilities, while not on duty. You are expressly prohibited from using agency facilities, agency property or agency equipment for personal use.

Parking

You are encouraged to use the parking areas designated for our employees. Remember to lock your car every day and park within the specified areas.

Courtesy and common sense in parking will help eliminate accidents, personal injuries, and damage to your vehicle and to the vehicles of other employees. If you should damage another car while parking or leaving, immediately report the incident, along with the license numbers of both vehicles and any other pertinent information you may have, to your supervisor. VCE cannot be and is not responsible for any loss, theft or damage to your vehicle or any of its contents. You will be responsible for any parking tickets you receive while driving on agency business whether in an agency vehicle or your own personal vehicle.

Employee Suggestion Program

We encourage you to bring forward your suggestions and good ideas about how our agency can be made a better place to work and our service to customers enhanced. When you see an opportunity for improvement, please talk it over with your supervisors. All suggestions are valued and listened to.

Employee Benefits

Benefits

VCE has developed and invested in an employee benefit program to supplement your regular wages. VCE will continue these benefits as agency resources allow; however, we reserve the right to change or eliminate any benefit program at any time (including increasing the employee's share of the cost).

Our benefit program consists of programs which may include health, dental, and vision coverage, life insurance, paid time off (PTO) and holiday pay. In addition, there are a number of programs available to employees through other sources such as State Disability, Paid Family Leave, Unemployment Insurance, Social Security and Workers' Compensation. Eligibility to participate in some of these programs is determined by your employee classification and length of continued service with VCE.

Official Health Plan Documents

The employee handbook contains a number of brief summaries of the benefit programs that the employer provides for eligible employees. The purpose of these summaries is simply to acquaint you with the general provisions of the applicable plans; they do not contain full statements of all of the terms, conditions, and limitations of the plans. If there are any real or apparent conflicts between the brief information in the handbook and the terms, conditions and limitations of the official plan documents, the provisions of the official plan documents will be considered accurate. You are encouraged to review all plan documents carefully to familiarize yourself with all of the provisions of the plans.

Paid Time Off (PTO)

Eligibility

Paid Time Off (PTO) is an all purpose time-off policy for eligible employees to use for the following: vacation; the

diagnosis, care, treatment of an existing health condition; preventative care of an employee or family member; for employees who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking to seek aid, treatment, or related assistance; illness or injury; and personal business. A family member is defined as a spouse, registered domestic partner (RDP), grandparent, grandchild, sibling, in-law, parent, step-parent, legal guardian, or child (regardless of age or dependency status). Personal business also includes time spent for jury duty, bereavement, and time off to vote. Regular full-time employees are eligible to earn and use PTO as described in this policy.

PTO begins accruing upon your date of hire. Employees may begin using PTO upon your 90th day of employment. At that time, you can request the use of earned PTO including that accrued during the waiting period.

Accrual

Regular, full-time employees accrue 6.67 hours of PTO per pay period (24 pay periods per year) in your first year of eligibility – 160 hours. After your first anniversary, and thereafter, you will receive an additional eight (8) hours per year, which will accrue at an additional rate of .34 hours per pay period. Once you have worked for the agency for ten (10) years, you will not accrue any additional PTO.

The length of eligible service is calculated on the basis of a "benefit year." This is the 12-month period that begins when you start to earn PTO. You will not earn PTO while you are out on an unpaid leave of absence. Therefore, your benefit year may be extended if you go out on a leave of absence other than a military leave of absence. Military leave has no effect on this calculation. (See individual leave of absence policies for more information.)

Scheduling PTO

PTO can be used in minimum increments of one (1) hour for non-exempt employees. Exempt employees may use PTO in ½ day or 1 full day increments. If you have an unexpected need to be absent from work you should notify your direct supervisor before the scheduled start of your workday, if possible. Your direct supervisor must also be contacted on each additional day of unexpected absence.

To schedule planned PTO, you need to request advance approval from your supervisor. Requests will be reviewed based on a number of factors, including business needs and staffing requirements.

PTO is paid at your base pay rate at the time of absence. It does not include overtime or any special forms of compensation such as incentives, commissions, bonuses, or shift differentials.

PTO will be used to supplement any payments that you are eligible to receive from state disability insurance, or workers' compensation. The combination of any such disability payments and PTO cannot exceed your normal weekly earnings.

PTO Payout

The CEO may, in his or her sole discretion, authorize a cash payout of up to 60 hours of PTO annually to an employee who meets the following criteria: (a) the employee used an equal or greater amount of hours in the preceding 12 months; and (b) the employee will maintain a minimum PTO balance of 120 hours after the

payout. Such requests will be granted at the sole discretion of the CEO in the interest of work program effectiveness and subject to VCE's fiscal capability.

PTO Caps

Employee can accumulate PTO up to a balance of twice the annual PTO for which they are entitled. Once that limit is reached, employee will no longer accrue PTO until time is taken, and the employee's accrual falls below the cap.

Upon termination of employment, you will be paid for unused PTO that has been earned through your last day of work.

Sick Leave

Employees will earn sick leave in accordance with this policy.

Sick leave is a form of insurance that is accumulated in order to provide a cushion for incapacitation due to illness. It is to be used only for the diagnosis, care, treatment of an existing health condition or preventative care of an employee, family member or for employees who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking to seek aid, treatment, or related assistance. A family member is defined as a spouse, registered domestic partner (RDP), grandparent, grandchild, sibling, in-law, parent, step-parent, legal guardian, or child (regardless of age or dependency status).

On the employee's hire date, all employees will receive 24 hours of paid sick leave. Regular, full-time employees accrue 3.34 hours (10 days annually) of PTO per pay period (24 pay periods per year) and these employees can use their PTO for paid sick leave. Regular, full-time employees can accumulate PTO up to a balance of 160 (20 days). Employees who are not eligible for the PTO policy as outlined above will be credited with 24 hours of paid sick leave at the commencement of each employment year up to 40 hours. Employees will also accrue 1 hour of paid sick leave per every 30 hours worked until the employee has accrued the equivalent of 5 days or 40 hours of paid sick leave, whichever is greater. Any unused sick leave is not paid out on separation of employment.

Employees may begin using sick leave upon their 90th day of employment.

When wishing to use sick leave, you should personally call your supervisor prior to the start of your shift on the day you are scheduled to work. Sick leave is not to be taken in less than two (2) hour increments and does not accrue when you are out on sick leave.

A paid absence is not counted as a basis for computing overtime.

If you are receiving State Disability Insurance (SDI) or Workers' Compensation payments, then you can integrate sick pay (meaning that you can supplement your wage replacement benefits with a portion of your sick leave to equal your full wage). Under no circumstances can you receive more than your customary wage.

Sick leave is not granted for the purpose of accompanying or taking pets to procure medical attention.

Unused sick leave has no cash value and will not be paid at termination.

Holidays

We observe the following paid holidays for full-time employees:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday
- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day
- Floating Holiday (2)

Eligibility for holiday pay begins upon date of hire. You must also be regularly scheduled to work on the day on which the holiday is observed, and must work your regularly scheduled working days immediately preceding and immediately following the holiday, unless an absence on either day is approved in advance by your supervisor.

When a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, it is usually observed on the preceding Friday or the following Monday. Holiday observance will be announced in advance.

If you are on a paid absence due to PTO when a holiday occurs, you will receive holiday pay. Non-exempt employees who work on holidays, due to customer job requirements, will receive regular earned wages. Part-time employees and interns are not eligible for holiday pay.

Insurance Benefits

Medical, Dental and Vision Insurance: We provide access to medical, dental & vision insurance plans for eligible employees and their dependents. You may be required to provide adequate proof of the dependent relationship in order to add the dependents to VCE's insurance policies. Typically, proof of the relationship may be established through a copy of a birth certificate, adoption documents, marriage license, or certificate of registered domestic partnership. We cannot guarantee your domestic partner relationship will be kept confidential.

Full-time employees and part-time employees who are regularly scheduled to work a minimum of 30 hours per week are eligible for VCE's medical, dental, and vision insurance coverage. Each employee becomes eligible on the first of the month after the employee has started employment with VCE. VCE will contribute up to \$2,479 per month per employee towards VCE's medical, dental and vision insurance for a full-time employee and dependents coverage. VCE will contribute a prorated amount for part-time employees based on the average hours worked (for example, if the part-time employee is regularly scheduled to work 30 hours per week, VCE's contribution toward the cost of VCE's medical, dental and vision insurance coverage for the part time employee

and his/her eligible dependents would be prorated to 75% of the full-time equivalent, i.e., \$1,859). The employee is responsible for any premiums due for VCE coverage(s) that are in excess of the VCE contribution amount. Deductions from the employee's paycheck will be made to cover this cost. Information describing medical, dental and vision insurance benefits will be given to you when you become eligible to participate in the program. Eligible employees who elect not to receive medical insurance coverage from VCE must provide proof of adequate medical coverage from an alternate source within 30 days of becoming eligible through VCE for the benefit. Such election will be effective as of the employee's eligibility date and will remain in effect until the start of the next open enrollment period. Employees who have declined VCE medical insurance coverage and want to continue to decline coverage must provide proof of adequate medical coverage once per year, no later than 30 days prior to VCE's open enrollment period. Full time employees who decline to accept VCE medical, dental, and vision insurance benefits shall receive a payment of \$550 per month in lieu of coverage; part -time employees who are eligible for VCE medical, dental and vision insurance and decline to accept VCE medical, dental, and vision insurance shall receive a prorated payout based on the employee's regularly scheduled hours (i.e., an employee who is regularly scheduled to work 30 hours per week will receive 75% of the full-time equivalent, or \$412.5.)

During any leave of absence such as personal leave, Workers' Compensation leave or other disability leave, VCE-provided health benefits will continue through the end of the month during which leave commenced. At that point, the employee will be provided with the option to continue coverage at the employee's own expense pursuant to Cal-COBRA. For the duration of any pregnancy disability leave of absence, health and life insurance benefits will be continued for the duration of your approved pregnancy disability leave as required by applicable law.

Please direct any questions you have regarding your medical, dental and/or vision insurance to the CEO.

Retirement Plan: We provide a 401(A) and 457B defined contribution retirement plans for eligible employees in order to assist in planning for your retirement. Eligible employees may enroll following 6 months of employment. Retirement plan participants can participate in loan programs permitted under the plan guidelines. For more information regarding eligibility, contributions, benefits and tax status, contact the CEO. All eligible participants will receive a summary plan description.

Disability Insurance: VCE furnishes private long-term disability policies. For more information, contact the CEO.

Life and Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance: If you are a regular full-time employee of VCE, you will be provided our group life insurance coverage paid for by the organization. This insurance is payable in the event of your death, in accordance with the policy, while you are insured. You may change your beneficiary whenever you wish by submitting the appropriate documents to the Human Resources Consultant. Refer to the literature provided by our insurance agency for details on your life insurance coverage.

Paid Family Leave (PFL) Insurance: All employees who take time off to care for a seriously ill family member (child, parent, grandparent, grandchildren, in-laws, spouse or registered domestic partner) or bond with a new child may be eligible to receive replacement wages for up to six weeks during any 12-month period, under California's Paid Family Leave program. This program is funded with employee contributions through the State

Disability Insurance (SDI) Program. Such contributions are deducted from each employee's paycheck. Even though employees may be eligible to receive Paid Family Leave insurance benefits, a leave of absence must still be requested and approved as defined in our leave policies. Please understand that this leave does not mandate any guarantee that your job will be available when you are ready to return.

State Disability Insurance: If you are unable to work due to a non-work related medical condition or injury you may be entitled to State Disability Insurance (SDI). SDI benefits are paid by the state and are financed from mandatory payroll tax deductions from all employees' wages. Questions regarding SDI benefits should be directed to the CEO or the state's Employment Development Department.

Unemployment Compensation: We contribute each year to the California Unemployment Insurance Fund on behalf of our employees.

Social Security: Social Security is an important part of every employee's retirement benefit. We pay a matching contribution to each employee's Social Security taxes.

Workers' Compensation: VCE purchases a workers' compensation insurance policy to protect you while you are employed by us. The policy covers you in case of occupational injury or illness. It is your responsibility to notify a member of management immediately if injured. Please refer to the Workers' Compensation policy for additional information.

We provide workers' compensation insurance for our employees as required by state law. The insurance provides important protection for employees who suffer a work-related injury. We encourage you to report all workplace injuries immediately and to take advantage of the benefits provided by our workers' compensation insurance if you are injured on the job.

Workers' compensation insurance provides important protection for employees who suffer an injury at work. Unfortunately, we understand that some employees are encouraged to file fraudulent workers' compensation claims. For your own protection, you should know that the California Insurance Frauds Protection Act provides that it is unlawful for any person to:

"Make or cause to be made any knowingly false or fraudulent material statement or material representation for the purpose of obtaining . . . compensation . . . and shall be punished by imprisonment in county jail for one year, or in the state prison for two, three or five years, or by a fine not exceeding Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000.00) . . . or by both imprisonment and fine."

Our policy is to investigate all questionable workers' compensation claims. If they appear to be fraudulent, they are referred to the Bureau of Fraudulent Claims and the District Attorney's office.

Section 125 (Cafeteria Plan): Through the flexible spending account or the health savings account, you may designate an annual dollar amount of your before-tax income to pay for certain eligible expenses. Particular care should be taken to assure that the funds required in the flexible spending account are not over estimated as unused funds cannot be returned to the participant at the end of the plan year. Please refer to the booklets for information about the program. If you need additional information or change forms, please speak with the CEO.

Domestic Partners

VCE believes that basic medical/dental/vision coverage should be available to employees and their dependents. To recognize non-traditional family arrangements and to demonstrate our commitment to our community of employees and their families, VCE has instituted a Domestic Partners Policy. This policy gives you the opportunity to cover a long-term, significant same sex partner under our benefits plans, as well as opposite sex partners for employees over 62 years of age. VCE wishes to make it clear that it cannot guarantee confidentiality of the relationship once a domestic partner is covered under our policy. See the CEO for more information.

Cal-COBRA

The California Continuation Benefits Replacement Act (Cal-COBRA) gives qualified employees and their dependents the opportunity to continue health insurance coverage under VCE's health plan when a "qualifying event" would normally result in the loss of eligibility. Some common qualifying events are resignation, termination of employment, or death of an employee; a reduction in an employee's hours or a leave of absence; an employee's divorce or legal separation; and a dependent child no longer meeting eligibility requirements. Under Cal-COBRA, you or the beneficiary pays the full cost of coverage at VCE's group rates. In addition, you or the beneficiary may be required to pay an administration fee. Our plan administrator will provide you with a written notice describing rights granted under Cal-COBRA when you become eligible for coverage under our plan. The notice contains important information about your rights and obligations.

Recreational Activities and Programs

VCE or its insurer will not be liable for payment of workers' compensation benefits for any injury that arises out of your voluntary participation in any off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activity that is not part of your work-related duties.

Leaves of Absence

Occasionally, for medical, personal, or other reasons, you may need to be temporarily released from the duties of your job with VCE. It is the policy of VCE to allow its eligible employees to apply for and be considered for certain specific leaves of absence.

All requests for leaves of absence shall be submitted in writing to your supervisor. Each request shall provide sufficient detail such as the reason for the leave, the expected duration of the leave, and the relationship of family members, if applicable. When you become aware of your need for leave, requests should be provided at least 30 days in advance. If your need for leave is not foreseeable, you should follow VCE's customary notice and procedural requirements for requesting leave. Failure to return to work as scheduled from an approved leave of absence or to inform your supervisor of an acceptable reason for not returning as scheduled will be considered a voluntary resignation of employment. While on a leave of absence you may not obtain other employment or apply for unemployment insurance. If either of these instances occurs, you may be viewed as having voluntarily resigned from VCE.

You will not accrue PTO while you are on an unpaid leave of absence. There are several types of leaves for which you may be eligible.

Medical Leaves of Absence

A medical leave of absence may be granted for non-work related temporary medical disabilities (other than pregnancy, childbirth and related medical conditions) until the end of the month in which the leave began with a doctor's written certificate of disability (unless leave of a longer duration is required by law). Requests for leave should be made in writing as far in advance as possible, but, requests should be provided at least 30 days in advance. If your need for leave is not foreseeable, you should follow VCE's customary notice and procedural requirements for requesting leave. If you are granted a medical leave, you are required to use any accrued sick pay. You also may use any PTO previously accrued.

A medical leave begins on the first day your doctor certifies that you are unable to work and ends when your doctor certifies that you are able to return to work. Your supervisor will supply you with a form for your doctor to complete, showing the date you were disabled and the estimated date you will be able to return to work. Upon your return, you must present a doctor's certificate showing fitness to return to work. If you need a medical-related leave longer than VCE can, consistent with business necessity and reasonable accommodation, approve, you will be advised.

For the duration of any leave of absence, health and life insurance benefits ordinarily provided by VCE, and for which you are otherwise eligible, will be continued until the last day of the month in which the leave begins. For the duration of a pregnancy disability leave, health and life insurance benefits ordinarily provided by VCE, and for which you are otherwise eligible, will be continued for the duration of your pregnancy disability leave. During this time, you will be required to contribute your portion of the premium on the same basis as you would have been required during your normal working relationship, including payment of any premium for the dependent coverage you have elected.

If you wish to continue these benefits you may do so by electing to continue the benefit through the CAL-COBRA provisions, and by paying the applicable premiums.

You will not accrue PTO while you are on an unpaid medical leave of absence.

If returning from a non-work related medical leave, you will be offered the same position held at the time of leaving, if available. However, we cannot guarantee that your job or a similar job will be available upon your return. If VCE is unable to provide a job for you at the end of your leave, we will end your employment, but you will be eligible to apply for any opening that may arise for which you are qualified.

Bereavement Leave

VCE provides regular full-time and regular part-time employees up to three (3) days' paid bereavement leave in the event of a death in your immediate family. For purposes of this policy, "immediate family" includes your spouse, parent, child, sibling; your spouse's parent, child, or sibling; your long-time companion or domestic partner; and your grandparents or grandchildren. If you need to take time off due to the death of an immediate family member you should contact your supervisor. Your supervisor may approve additional unpaid time off.

Bone Marrow and Organ Donation Leave

Employees who are donating an organ to another person may take a leave of absence not exceeding 30 business days (and which may be taken in one or more periods) in any one-year. Employees who are donating their bone marrow to another person may take a leave of absence not exceeding 5 business days (and which may be taken in one or more periods) in any one year.

Requests for leave should be made in writing as far in advance as possible. You must provide a written medical certification from your health care provider to VCE that shows that you are a bone marrow or organ donor and that there is a medical necessity for the donation.

Bone Marrow and Organ Donation leave is a paid leave; however, you are required to use up to 5 days of accrued but unused sick or PTO leave for bone marrow donation, and up to 2 weeks of accrued but unused sick or PTO leave for organ donation.

For the duration of a Bone Marrow or Organ Donation leave of absence, health and life insurance benefits ordinarily provided by VCE, and for which you are otherwise eligible, will be continued until the last day of the month in which the leave begins. During this time, you will be required to contribute your portion of the premium on the same basis as you would have been required during your normal working relationship, including payment of any premium for the dependent coverage you have elected.

When you are ready to return to work after a Bone Marrow or Organ Donation leave, you must provide certification from your medical care provider that you are able to safely perform all of the essential functions of your position with or without reasonable accommodation. Except as otherwise allowed by law, you are entitled, upon return from leave, to be reinstated in the position you held before the Bone Marrow or Organ Donation leave, or to be placed in a comparable position with comparable benefits, pay, and terms and conditions of employment.

Civil Air Patrol Leave

Employees who volunteer for the California Wing of the Civil Air Patrol are allowed up to ten days of unpaid leave each year. This leave covers employees who are needed to respond to an emergency operational mission who have been employed by VCE for at least 90 days immediately preceding the requested leave. VCE reserves the right to verify the need for the leave with the Air Patrol.

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Victim Leave

VCE takes threats and actions of domestic abuse and sexual assault against our employees very seriously, and wants employees to feel free to obtain services to keep themselves and their dependents safe.

If at any time you need to be absent from work because you have been a victim of domestic violence or sexual assault, and you need to take time off to ensure your safety, seek medical treatment, or receive counseling as a result of domestic violence or sexual assault, please let your supervisor or the CEO know immediately. Your privacy will be protected to the greatest extent possible. You may use accrued PTO or sick leave in lieu of unpaid time off for these purposes.

Jury Duty or Witness Leave

You may want to fulfill your civic responsibilities by serving on a jury or as a witness as required by law. Absences from work due to jury or witness services may be taken as PTO, or you may request unpaid leave for the length of absence. VCE will comply with all federal and state requirements for jury and witness pay for exempt employees. You may be requested to provide written verification from the court clerk of having served as a juror or witness.

Prior to taking jury duty or witness leave, you must provide the jury duty or witness summons to your supervisor. You must provide the summons as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made to cover your absence. You are expected to report for work whenever the court schedule permits, including reporting for half- or partial work days. If you are called for jury duty during a particularly busy time, VCE may ask you to request the court postpone your mandatory jury duty to a more convenient time for VCE. You may receive fees and transportation reimbursement from the court for appearing as a juror or witness. You will retain all fees paid for appearing as a juror or witness, plus any transportation reimbursements received.

Military Leave

If you wish to serve in the military and take military leave you should contact the CEO for information about your rights before and after such leave. You are entitled to reinstatement upon completion of military service provided you return or apply for reinstatement within the time allowed by law.

~~Pregnancy-Parental Disability~~ Leave

VCE recognizes the importance of supporting employees in their journey of parenthood and promoting worklife balance. This policy establishes guidelines for parental leave, which encompasses both maternity and paternity leave, to provide employees with the opportunity to bond with their newborn or newly adopted child and to adjust to the demands of parenthood.

Eligibility: This policy applies to all full-time employees and covers both biological and adoptive parents.

Parental Leave:

VCE offers 4 weeks (1 month) of fully paid parental leave at the employee's base salary (less applicable taxes), providing them with dedicated time to care for and nurture their newborn or newly adopted child. Employees must provide reasonable notice and share their expected dates of absence with their manager and Human Resources. During parental leave, employees will retain access to applicable benefits, as outlined in our employee benefit policies. Employees may choose to take parental leave all at once or in increments, subject to discussion and agreement with their managers.

- Maternity Leave: Time off before and after childbirth.
- Paternity Leave: Time off for non-birth parents, enabling them to support their partners and bond with their newborn or newly adopted child.
- Adoption Leave: Time off for employees who adopt a child to provide them with time to integrate the child into their family and establish a nurturing environment.

Parental leave may run concurrently with applicable federal (FMLA) and state (PDL, CFRA) leave requirements and regulations. Contact Human Resources for more details.

Pregnancy Disability (Eligibility and Terms) of Leave

Female employees are entitled to an unpaid Pregnancy Disability Leave (PDL) during the time they are disabled due to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. This leave will be for the period of disability, up to four months or 17 1/3 workweeks. You are “disabled by pregnancy” if you are unable because of pregnancy to work at all, are unable to perform the essential functions of your job, or to perform these functions without undue risk to successful completion of your pregnancy, or to other persons.

Leave may be taken intermittently or on a reduced work schedule when medically advisable, as determined by your medical care provider. Medical certification is required, and the length of Pregnancy Disability Leave will depend on the medical necessity for the leave. If you need intermittent leave or leave on a reduced schedule, VCE may require you to transfer, during the period of the intermittent or reduced schedule leave, to an available alternative position for which you are qualified and which better accommodates your recurring periods of leave. Transfer to an alternative position may include altering an existing job to better accommodate your need for intermittent leave or a reduced work schedule.

Applying For Leave

If possible, you should give at least 30 days’ notice requesting a pregnancy-related leave. This notice must provide and include the expected date on which the leave will begin, written certification from your medical care provider stating the anticipated delivery date and the duration of the leave.

Return to Work

Before returning to work, you must provide a release from your medical care provider certifying that you are able to safely perform all of the essential functions of your position with or without reasonable accommodation. VCE will reinstate you to your position unless:

1. Your job has ceased to exist for legitimate business reasons;
2. Your job could not be kept open or filled by a temporary employee without substantially undermining VCE’s ability to operate safely and efficiently;
3. You have directly or indirectly indicated your intention not to return;
4. You are no longer able to perform the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodation;
5. You have exceeded the length of the approved leave; or
6. You are no longer qualified for the job.

If VCE cannot reinstate you to the position you held before the pregnancy disability leave began, VCE will offer you a comparable position, provided that a comparable position exists and is available, and provided that filling the available position would not substantially undermine VCE’s ability to operate safely and efficiently.

Integration With Other Benefits

A pregnancy disability leave is unpaid, but you are required to use your accrued sick leave during the leave. In addition, you may elect to use accrued PTO during the leave. Sick leave and PTO will supplement any State Disability Insurance benefits. VCE will maintain group medical benefits during a pregnancy disability leave as required by law. No additional PTO, sick leave or holiday pay will accrue during the leave (except during the time period you are using sick leave or PTO). You may also, however, be eligible for short term disability benefits.

Continuation of Medical Benefits

For the duration of your PDL leave of absence, health and life insurance benefits ordinarily provided by VCE, and for which you are otherwise eligible, will be continued for the duration of your pregnancy disability leave. During this time, you will be required to contribute your portion of the premium on the same basis as you would have been required during your normal working relationship, including payment of any premium for the dependent coverage you have elected. If you fail to return to work at the conclusion of PDL leave and wish to continue these benefits, you may do so by electing to continue the benefit through the Cal-COBRA provisions, and by paying the applicable premiums.

School Appearance Leave

If you are the parent or guardian of a child who has been suspended from school and you receive a notice from your child's school requesting that you attend a portion of a school day in the child's classroom, you may take unpaid time to appear at the school, unless you use accrued PTO. Before your planned absence, you must give reasonable notice to your supervisor that you have been requested to appear by your child's school.

Time Off for Victims of a Violent or Serious Crime

Under certain circumstances, employees who are victims of serious crimes may take time off work to participate in judicial proceedings. Qualified family members of such crime victims may also be eligible to take time off from work to participate in judicial proceedings. The law defines a serious crime to include violent or serious felonies, such as felonies involving theft or embezzlement, crimes involving vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated, child abuse, physical abuse of an elder or dependent adult, stalking, solicitation for murder, hit-and-run causing death or injury, driving under the influence causing injury, and sexual assault. When possible, you must provide us with advance notice of the need for the time off. Your privacy will be protected to the greatest extent possible. Time away from work for non-exempt employees will be without pay, unless you wish to use your accrued PTO or sick leave to cover the period of absence.

Time Off To Vote

If you do not have sufficient time outside of working hours to vote in a statewide election, you may, without loss of pay, take off up to two hours of working time to vote. Such time must be at the beginning or end of the regular working shift, whichever allows the most free time for voting and the least time off from working, unless otherwise mutually agreed. You must notify us at least two working days in advance to arrange a voting time.

Volunteer Emergency Duty Leave

VCE will allow unpaid time off to employees who perform emergency duty as a volunteer firefighter, reserve peace officer, emergency rescue personnel, an officer, employee, or member of a disaster medical response entity sponsored or requested by the state. If you are a volunteer firefighter, or perform other emergency

personnel duties, please alert your supervisor so that he or she may be aware of the fact that you may have to take time off for emergency duty. When possible, you must provide us with advance notice of the need for the time off. Time away from work will be without pay, unless you wish to use your accrued PTO or sick leave to cover the period of absence.

Workers' Compensation

We, in accordance with state law, provide insurance coverage for employees in case of a work related injury. To ensure that you receive any workers' compensation benefits to which you may be entitled, you will need to:

1. Immediately report any work-related injury to your supervisor.
2. Seek medical treatment and follow-up care if required.
3. Complete a written Employee's Claim Form (DWC Form 1) and return it to your supervisor.

Provide us with certification from your health care provider regarding the need for workers' compensation disability leave and your ability to return to work from the leave.

Return to Work Policy

VCE is committed to returning injured employees to modified or alternative work as soon after a work related injury as possible. Temporarily modifying your job or providing you with an alternative position will do this. Your medical condition along with any limitations or restrictions given by the attending physician will be considered as a priority when identifying the modified/alternative position.

The program is intended to provide our employees with an opportunity to continue as valuable members of our team while recovering from a work related injury. We want to minimize any adverse effects of an ongoing disability on our employees. This program is intended to promote speedy recovery, while keeping the employees' work patterns and income consistent. At the same time, we benefit from having our employees providing a service and contributing to the overall productivity of our business. VCE retains discretion to decide whether to provide modified duty.

Receipt and Acknowledgment of VCE Employee Handbook

I have received my copy of VCE's employee handbook. I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to read and familiarize myself with the policies and procedures contained in the handbook.

At-Will Employment

I further understand that my employment is at-will, and neither VCE nor I have entered into a contract regarding the duration of my employment. I am free to terminate my employment with VCE at any time, with or without cause. Likewise, VCE has the right to terminate my employment with or without cause, at the discretion of VCE. No employee of VCE can enter into an employment contract for a specified period of time, or make any agreement contrary to this policy without the written approval from the CEO.

Future Revisions

We reserve the right to revise, modify, delete or add to any and all policies, procedures, work rules or benefits stated in this employee handbook or in any other document, except for the policy of at-will employment. Any written changes to this employee handbook will be distributed to all employees so that you will be aware of the new policies

or procedures. No oral statements or representations can in any way change or alter the provisions of this employee handbook.

Receipt and Acknowledgement of VCE Handouts

Illness and Injury Prevention Plan

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the VCE’s Illness & Injury Prevention Plan and that I agree to abide by these policies.

Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy

I certify that I have read VCE’s Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy and agree to abide fully by its terms. I understand that as a condition of my employment, I may be subjected to drug testing and that my privacy rights are thereby limited. I also understand that I must notify VCE of any conviction for a drug violation that occurs within five days after such a conviction. I understand that any violation of the policy may result in serious disciplinary action, including immediate termination.

Employee’s Printed Name _____ Position _____

Employee’s Signature _____ Date _____

Receipt and Acknowledgement of VCE Handouts

Sexual Harassment Prevention Handout

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the enclosed pamphlet on sexual harassment prevention in the workplace and reporting procedures in the event that harassment occurs.

State Disability Insurance, Paid Family Leave and Unemployment Handouts

I acknowledge that I have received the enclosed pamphlets on state disability insurance, paid family leave and unemployment insurance as provided by the Employment Development Department.

Workers' Compensation Handout

I acknowledge that I have received the enclosed pamphlet on workers' compensation benefits as provided by the California Chamber of Commerce.

Employee's Printed Name _____

Position _____

Employee's Signature _____

Date _____



VALLEY
CLEAN ENERGY

Employee Handbook

Updated
February 12, 2026

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Welcome To Valley Clean Energy Alliance

DATE

Dear VCE Employee:

INSERT COVER LETTER HERE

Sincerely,

Mitch Sears
Chief Executive Officer

Introductory Policies

Introduction & Future Revisions

We hope you will find your employment with Valley Clean Energy Alliance (“VCE” or “Agency”) to be both rewarding and challenging. Our staff are key to VCE’s success and we carefully select our new employees. This handbook is not a contract, express or implied, nor does it guarantee employment for any specific length of time.

The policies included in this handbook are guidelines only and are subject to change as VCE deems appropriate. From time to time you may receive notice of new or modified policies, procedures, benefits, or programs. No oral statements or representations can in any way change or alter the provisions of this employee handbook.

Our Working Relationship

VCE does not offer tenure or any other form of guaranteed employment. Either VCE or the employee can terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause, with or without notice. This is called Employment At Will. This employment at will relationship exists regardless of any other written statements or policies contained in this handbook or any other Agency documents or any verbal statement to the contrary.

No one except VCE’s Chief Executive Officer (CEO) can enter into any kind of employment relationship or agreement that is contrary to the previous statement. To be enforceable, such relationship or agreement must be in writing, signed by the CEO, approved by the VCE Board.

Open Communication Policy

At VCE, courtesy, tact and consideration should guide each employee in relationships with fellow workers and the public. It is mandatory that each employee show maximum respect to every other person in the organization. The purpose of communication should be to help others and to make our business run as effectively as possible, thereby gaining the respect of our colleagues and customers.

Equal Employment Opportunity

VCE is an equal opportunity employer and makes employment decisions on the basis of merit and business need. VCE’s policies prohibit unlawful discrimination based on race, color, religious creed, gender, pregnancy (or related medical condition), genetic information, genetic characteristics, gender identity, gender expression, religion, marital status, military or veteran status, age, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, sexual orientation, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. All such discrimination is contrary to VCE policy.

Reasonable Accommodation.

When necessary under the California Fair Employment and Housing Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, VCE will reasonably accommodate an employee or applicant with a disability if the employee or applicant is otherwise qualified to safely perform all of the essential functions of the position.

We will make reasonable accommodations when requested to comply with applicable laws ensuring equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals with a disability. VCE will engage in a timely, good-faith, interactive process to determine a reasonable accommodation, if any, in response to a request for reasonable accommodation by an employee or applicant with a known physical or mental disability or known medical condition. VCE will consider all requests for accommodation, but retains discretion to determine what, if any, accommodation to provide.

Unlawful Harassment

VCE intends to provide a work environment that is pleasant, professional, and free from intimidation, hostility or other offenses which might interfere with work performance. Harassment of any sort - verbal, physical, or visual - will not be tolerated. This includes both sexual harassment as well as harassment based on an employee's status in a protected class. These classes include, but are not necessarily limited to race, color, religion, age, gender, genetic information, genetic characteristics, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, pregnancy (or related medical condition), national origin or ancestry, disability, medical condition, marital status, veteran status, military status, or any other protected status defined by law. This policy also prohibits unlawful harassment based on the perception that anyone has any of those characteristics, or is associated with a person who has or is perceived as having any of those characteristics. This policy extends to unlawful harassment of VCE employees by any other VCE employees, vendors, independent contractors, customers, or others with whom employees may come into contact with during their work for VCE.

Our workplace is not limited to our facilities, but may also include customer and vendor facilities, as well as anywhere a business-related function, or social function sponsored by VCE, is taking place.

What Is Workplace Harassment?

Workplace harassment can take many forms. It may be, but is not limited to, words, signs, offensive jokes, cartoons, pictures, posters, e-mail jokes, social media communication, messages or statements, pranks, intimidation, physical assaults or contact, or violence. It may also take the form of other vocal activity including derogatory statements not directed to the targeted individual but taking place within their hearing. Other prohibited conduct includes written material such as notes, photographs, cartoons, articles of a harassing or offensive nature, and taking retaliatory action against an employee for discussing or making a harassment complaint. In addition, this policy protects employees against conduct from all individuals in the workplace, such as fellow employees, supervisors, outside customers, vendors, independent contractors, or other non-employees who conduct business with our agency.

What Is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment may include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature. When this conduct creates an offensive, hostile and intimidating working environment, it may prevent an individual from effectively performing the duties of their position. It also encompasses such conduct when it is made a term or condition of employment or compensation, either implied or stated and when an employment decision is based on an individual's acceptance or rejection of such conduct.

It is important to note that harassment crosses age and gender boundaries and cannot be stereotyped. Among other perceived unconventional situations, sexual harassment may involve two women or two men. Harassment

may exist on a continuum of behavior. For instance, one example of harassment may be that of an employee showing offensive pictures to another employee.

Generally, two categories of harassment exist. The first, "quid pro quo," may be defined as the demand for sexual favors in exchange for improvement or continuance in your working conditions and/or compensation. The second category, "hostile, intimidating, offensive working environment," can be described as a situation in which unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal or other conduct creates an intimidating or offensive environment. Examples of a hostile, intimidating, and offensive working environment include, but are not limited to, pictures, cartoons, symbols, or items found to be offensive. An employee may have a claim of harassment even if he or she has not lost a job or other economic benefit.

Responsibility

All VCE employees, and particularly supervisors, have a responsibility for keeping our work environment free of harassment. Any employee who becomes aware of an incident of harassment, whether by witnessing the incident or being told of it, must report it to their immediate supervisor, the CEO or a management representative with whom they feel comfortable. When supervisors become aware of the existence of conduct that could violate this policy, they are obligated to take prompt and appropriate action, whether or not the recipient of the harassment wants VCE to do so.

Reporting

If you believe you have been harassed by any agency employee, customer, contractor, or other business contact, you are required to report it to your supervisor or any other member of management. While we encourage you to communicate directly with the alleged harasser, and make it clear that the harasser's behavior is unacceptable, it is not required that you do so. It is essential, however, to notify a member of management immediately even if you are not sure the offending behavior is considered harassment. Any incidents of harassment must be immediately reported. At any time if you feel that you are in immediate harm and do not have time to contact either the CEO or your supervisor, seek assistance from any management representative.

Appropriate investigation and disciplinary action will be taken. All reports will be promptly investigated. However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Any employee found to have harassed any employee will be subject to severe disciplinary action up to and including termination. VCE will also take any additional action necessary to appropriately remedy the situation. Retaliation of any sort will not be permitted. No adverse employment action will be taken for any employee making a good faith report of alleged harassment.

All employees must report any incidents immediately so that complaints can be quickly and fairly resolved. The California Department of Fair Employment and Housing ("DFEH") investigates and may prosecute complaints of harassment. Whenever an employee thinks he or she has been harassed or that he or she has been retaliated against for resisting or complaining, that employee may file a complaint with the DFEH. The nearest DFEH office is listed in the telephone book or on-line.

Harassment and Retaliation Prohibited

VCE prohibits any form of harassment on a protected basis that impairs an employee's working ability or emotional well-being at work. VCE also prohibits any employee from retaliating in any way against anyone who has raised any concern about harassment or discrimination against another individual. We will investigate any

complaint of harassment, discrimination, and retaliation and will take immediate and appropriate disciplinary action if any such conduct has been found within the workplace.

Employment Policies and Practices

Classification of Employees

A new hire will be classified as either “exempt” or “non-exempt.”

Non-exempt employees are entitled to overtime pay for hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours per workweek.

Exempt employees are those employees whose duties and responsibilities allow them to be “exempt” from provisions as provided by the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and any applicable state laws. If you are an exempt employee, you will be advised that you are in this classification at the time you are hired, transferred, or promoted. Participation in VCE’s benefits programs may be affected by your employment status or classification.

All employees of VCE whether exempt, non-exempt, full-time, part-time, or temporary are employed at-will.

1. The EXEMPT status applies to certain administrative, professional, and executive staff. Exempt employees qualify for exemption from overtime regulations under state and federal law and their salaries already take into account that they may work long hours.
2. The NON-EXEMPT status applies to all other regular employees. Non-exempt employees receive extra pay for overtime work (as described in the overtime section of this employee handbook). Employees working in non-exempt positions are compensated for the actual amount of time spent on their job and are entitled to receive time and one-half (1 ½) their regular rate of pay for each hour worked in excess of forty (40) hours in a work week.
3. FULL-TIME employees work on a regular basis for at least 40 hours per week. Full-time employees may or may not be EXEMPT. They are eligible for all benefits available through work at VCE, so long as they meet the applicable requirements, such as length of service.
4. PART-TIME employees are regularly scheduled to work fewer than 40.0 hours per week. Part-time employees who are regularly scheduled to work a minimum of 30 hours per week are entitled to all benefits as explained later in this employee handbook according to a prorated formula based on their average hours worked compared to a standard 40.0 hour workweek. Part-time employees who are regularly scheduled to work less than 30 hours per week are not eligible for benefits covered in this employee handbook, other than those required by law or as stipulated in writing signed by the CEO.
5. TEMPORARY EMPLOYEES are hired with the understanding that their employment will not continue beyond a stated date or beyond completion of a specified project or projects. Temporary employees will generally not be employed for more than 6 months. Temporary employees are not eligible for benefits covered in this employee handbook, other than those required by law or as stipulated in writing signed by the CEO.
6. INTERNS are employees who are gaining supervised practical experience in a professional field. Interns may be paid, but are not eligible for any benefits listed in this employee handbook except as required by law.

Recruitment

VCE will conduct an appropriate recruitment, depending on the needs of the organization and the position involved. Open positions may or may not be posted to solicit outside candidates. If you are aware of a vacancy and are interested in being considered for the position, you should discuss the matter with your current supervisor.

Rehired/Converted Employees

If you meet eligibility requirements for rehire at the time of your separation from VCE, you may apply for any open position for which you are qualified. Former employees will be considered along with all other applicants, and have no greater chance of being selected for employment than all other applicants.

If you are rehired by VCE or convert from part-time to full-time status, your length of service with VCE for all purposes will be calculated from the rehire date or the date of conversion to full-time status.

Employees who are involuntarily terminated for performance reasons or for violation of agency policy are ineligible for rehire. In addition, employees who voluntarily resign may still be ineligible for re-hire if VCE learns of circumstances that would have justified termination for performance-based reasons regardless of when that information is acquired.

Job Duties

Your supervisor will explain your job responsibilities and the performance standards expected of you. Your job responsibilities may change at any time during your employment; for example you may be asked to work on special projects or to assist with other work necessary or important to the operation of VCE. It is expected that VCE will have your cooperation and assistance in performing such additional work.

VCE also may, at any time, with or without notice, alter or change your job responsibilities, reassign or transfer your position, or assign you additional job responsibilities depending on business needs.

Work Schedules

VCE's normal business hours are 8:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Your supervisor will assign your individual work schedule, and you are expected to be ready to perform your work at the start of your scheduled shift. Flexible work schedules and telecommuting may be accommodated with the approval of your supervisor. Alternative work arrangements are not an entitlement or employee benefit. A supervisor may end the arrangement at any time for any reason or without cause. All changes to normal working hours, flexible work schedules, and telecommuting arrangements should be documented with your supervisor and HR representative.

On occasion, work schedules may fluctuate with customer demand and business needs. If a change in your work schedule is required, your supervisor will notify you at the earliest opportunity. You may be required to work overtime or hours other than those normally scheduled. Exempt employees are required to work as many hours as are necessary to complete the responsibilities of their positions.

Personnel Records

A personnel file will be confidentially maintained for each VCE employee. You may review your personnel file during regular business hours upon making a request to the CEO. An appointment will be made for the purpose of allowing the review.

VCE will treat your personnel records as confidential and private. However, there are certain times when information may be given to a person outside VCE. These include:

1. In response to a subpoena, court order, or order of an administrative agency;
2. To a governmental agency as part of an investigation by that agency of VCE's compliance with applicable law;
3. In a lawsuit, administrative proceeding, grievance, or arbitration in which you and VCE are parties;
4. In a workers' compensation proceeding;
5. To administer employee health benefit plans;
6. To a health care provider, when necessary;
7. To a first aid or safety personnel, when necessary; and
8. Information will be disclosed to prospective employers in accordance with the section on Employment Verification and References.

Please promptly notify the CEO of any changes in your personal data. Keeping your file up-to-date can be important with regard to pay, deductions, benefits and other matters. Coverage or benefits that you and your family may receive under VCE's benefits package could be negatively affected if the information in your personnel file is incorrect.

Inspection of Payroll Records

Employees and former employees have the right to inspect and obtain copies of their own payroll records as required by applicable law. All requests must be submitted in writing to VCE's CEO. Responses will be provided as required by law. Individuals who make a request may be asked to provide identification and may be required to pay for the cost of making the copies.

Layoffs and Work Reductions

VCE may implement layoffs. Employees will be selected for layoff at VCE's discretion based on a combination of factors, including, but not necessarily limited to: business needs, employee performance and productivity, qualifications, attendance, attitude, ability and willingness to work the required days and hours, and the ability to work cooperatively with others in the affected work unit.

The weight given to the above factors may vary depending upon the particular needs of the affected work unit and VCE as a whole at the time of the layoff.

Employment Termination

VCE strives to ensure a smooth transition for employees leaving VCE.

VCE and its employees have an employment relationship that is known as "employment at will." This means that employees are not required to work for VCE for any set period of time nor is VCE required to employ individuals

for any specific length of time. **The statements made in this policy do not alter, modify or limit the employment at will relationship.** An “at-will” employee is subject to termination of employment at any time VCE concludes it appropriate to do so.

Involuntary separation from service means that the termination action is being initiated by VCE, rather than by the employee. In general, employees who are discharged by VCE are not eligible for rehire. However, employees who are terminated due to layoff or restructuring may be eligible for rehire or recall at VCE’s discretion.

VCE will consider you to have voluntarily terminated your employment if you do any of the following:

1. Resign from VCE;
2. Fail to return from an approved leave of absence on the date specified by VCE, or;
3. Fail to report to work or call in for 3 consecutive work days

In the event that you resign voluntarily, we ask – but do not require – that you provide two weeks’ notice to allow for a smooth transition and training of any replacement personnel.

All agency property such as office equipment, credit cards, keys, manuals, computer equipment, and cell phones must be returned on or prior to the last day of employment. You should return these items to your immediate supervisor.

Final wages for time worked, plus any pay for unused but accrued PTO, will normally be paid on your last day of employment, but no later than the next regularly scheduled payday.

Employment Verification and References

When VCE receives a request for references or employment verification, VCE will disclose only the dates of employment and the title of the last position held. VCE will provide a prospective employer with your last earned wage or salary only at your written request. VCE will release additional information only with a signed authorization and waiver of liability in a form acceptable to VCE.

Only the CEO is authorized to respond to requests for employee references and verification of employment. No other supervisor or employee is authorized to provide references for current or former employees.

As an employee of VCE, all requests for information regarding another employee must be forwarded to the CEO.

Timekeeping and Attendance

Punctuality and Attendance

Regular attendance and punctuality are “essential functions” of your job. You are expected to maintain regular attendance during all scheduled work hours, report to work on a timely basis, and work through the end of your regularly scheduled workday. Chronic absenteeism or lateness will not be tolerated and will result in discipline, up to and including termination. In the event of an unscheduled absence, please abide by the following:

- You must personally call your supervisor prior to the start of your shift if you are unable to report to work, or will be late to work, on any particular day.

- You are expected to advise another management representative of your absence if you are not able to reach your supervisor and leave a telephone number where you can be reached.
- You may not have a relative or friend call in to report your absence, unless you are unable to call yourself due to a medical or other emergency.
- If you call after the start of your shift you will be considered tardy for that day.
- You are expected to provide your supervisor with explanation of your absence or tardiness and inform your supervisor of the expected duration of the absence. If you are absent for medical reasons, you do not need to disclose the underlying medical condition.
- With the exception of certain extenuating circumstances, you must call in each day you are scheduled to work and will not report to work.

Repeated absenteeism or tardiness (whether excused or not) is not tolerated. Continuing patterns of absences, early departures, or tardiness - regardless of the exact number of days—may warrant disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Emergency or extraordinary circumstances concerning an absence or tardiness will be considered, and we reserve the right to make an exception to this policy if, at our discretion, an exception is warranted. Repeated car failures, missing the bus, consistently failing to arrange back-up childcare or oversleeping do not constitute emergency or extraordinary circumstances. We reserve the right to determine what is considered excessive absenteeism. In all cases, we will make accommodations for qualified employees with disabilities where required by law.

If you fail to report for work for three (3) consecutive days without any notification to your supervisor, we will consider that you have abandoned your employment, and have resigned your position.

Timekeeping Requirements for Non-Exempt Staff

Applicable law requires VCE to keep an accurate record of time worked. Employee time records are official VCE records and must be accurately maintained. You must input your own time at the start and at the end of each workday, and at the start and end of each lunch hour. Completing another employee's time record or intentionally falsifying a time record is a serious violation and may result in immediate termination of employment. If a time record needs to be corrected, both you and your supervisor must initial the change in the time record to verify its accuracy.

Meal and Rest Periods for Non-Exempt Staff

Employees will generally be provided with at least a 30-minute lunch break per day, which can be scheduled by your supervisor to best accommodate the workday.

Overtime Time Provisions for Non-Exempt Staff

As necessary, you may be asked to work overtime. Only actual hours worked in a given workday or workweek will be counted in determining which hours constitute overtime. We will attempt to distribute overtime evenly and accommodate individual schedules. A supervisor must previously authorize all overtime work. Any overtime worked without prior authorization may be grounds for discipline. We provide compensation for all overtime hours worked by non-exempt employees as follows: All hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours in one workweek will be treated as overtime.

Hours worked for purposes of overtime do not include an unpaid meal period, or hours away from work due to PTO, sickness, holiday, jury duty, or other absences from work. No overtime compensation will be paid to exempt employees. Exempt employees may have to work hours beyond their normal schedules, as work demands require.

Make-Up Time for Non-Exempt Staff

Make-Up time is defined as when a non-exempt employee asks his or her supervisor for additional time off to attend to personal matters. If the request is granted, this time off will be without pay. If you wish to make up this missed time, you may submit a "Make-Up Time Request Form" to your supervisor before the make-up time is worked. It is within the supervisor's discretion to grant the request. Make-Up time must be worked in the same workweek as the missed time (including prior to the missed time) in order not to incur overtime. You may not work over forty (40) hours total in the week including make-up time.

Exempt Employee Time Off

Exempt employees of VCE are paid a salary, which compensates them for working as many hours as required to complete their job duties. Exempt employees do not receive overtime pay. We realize, however, that in instances of extraordinary additional pressure or increased work hours, it may be appropriate for supervisors to recognize the exempt employee's efforts by granting the employee extra time-off separate from and in addition to the employee's accrued PTO time. In order to achieve consistency among supervisors and fairness to the exempt employees, supervisors should use the following guidelines when exercising their discretion to grant additional time off:

1. Limit the amount of additional time-off to no more than two days;
2. Require the employee to take the time-off in the week immediately following the increased hours whenever possible and;
3. Do not allow employees to accumulate any granted but unused time-off

Lactation Accommodation

VCE will provide a reasonable amount of break time to accommodate an employee desiring to express breast milk for the employee's infant child. The break time shall, if possible, run concurrently with any break time already provided to the employee. VCE shall provide the employee with the use of a room or other location, other than a toilet stall, in close proximity to the employee's work area, for the employee to express milk in private. If special arrangements are made to provide a non-exempt employee extra time beyond her normal rest period, the time will be unpaid.

Payment of Wages

Paydays are semi-monthly, the 15th and last day of the month. There are 24 pay periods in a year. The workday (a 24-hour, consecutive period) begins at 12:01 a.m. and ends at midnight. The workweek begins on Sunday and ends on Saturday.

If a regular payday falls on a weekend or holiday, you will be paid on the first day of work prior to the regularly scheduled payday. If there is an error on your check, please report it immediately to your supervisor.

For your convenience, we offer a direct deposit option.

Advances

We do not permit advances against paychecks or against unaccrued PTO.

Payroll Deductions, Wage Attachments and Garnishments

VCE makes certain deductions from every employee's paycheck. Among these are applicable federal, state, and local income taxes, social security and Medicare taxes, state disability insurance contributions, and paid family leave contributions. By law, VCE is also required to honor legal attachments and garnishments of an employee's wages or salaries. If your wages are attached, we will withhold the specified amount to satisfy the terms of the attachment.

Reporting Time Pay

Reporting time pay will be paid under the following conditions:

1. Reporting time pay to non-exempt is owed when you report to work at your regularly scheduled time, but you are given less than half the usual or scheduled day's work. In this case, you will be paid for at least half of the hours you were scheduled to work, but never less than two hours pay, and never more than four hours pay.
2. Reporting time pay is also owed if you are required to report to work a second time in any one (1) workday and are given less than two (2) hours work on the second reporting. In this case you will receive at least two (2) hours pay for the second appearance.

These provisions do not apply if you are on a paid "standby" or "on call" status. In some instances, you may not receive reporting time pay. Reporting time pay does not apply if public utilities fail, such as water, gas, electricity, or sewer and/or when work is interrupted by an "act of God" or other causes not within VCE's control.

Payment for Hours Worked During Business Travel for Non-Exempt Staff

Whenever possible, non-exempt employees traveling on agency business are expected to do so during normal working hours. In the very rare instance where your travel time constitutes overtime, you will be paid overtime as required by law. Non-exempt employees will be paid for all hours worked, including out of town travel time, at regular and overtime pay rates according to the law. Pay for travel time may be at a rate of pay that is less than the employee's normal rate of pay.

If you are non-exempt and traveling on business, you will not be paid for time between work assignments; e.g., if you stay the night in a hotel, pay begins when you begin to work, or are in transit. Travel is to be scheduled in advance, in writing by your supervisor, with the knowledge of the CEO.

Non-exempt travel may be approved on an as-needed basis, but only with prior authorization from your supervisor.

Pay for Mandatory Meetings for Non-Exempt Staff

VCE will pay you for your attendance at meetings, lectures and training programs if all of the following conditions are met:

1. Attendance is mandatory (i.e. required by VCE).

2. The meeting, course, or lecture is directly related to your job.
3. You are notified of the necessity for such meetings, lectures, or training programs by your supervisor (i.e. pre-approval by management is required)

If you meet the above conditions, you will be compensated at your regular rate of pay. If you are required to travel, then travel pay will be provided. You will not receive compensation for voluntary attendance in courses that are conducted outside of normal business hours and/or that are not directly related to your current job.

Standards of Conduct

Professional Business Conduct and Ethics

By accepting employment with VCE, you have a responsibility to VCE and to your fellow employees to adhere to certain codes of behavior and conduct. The purpose of these rules is to ensure that you understand what conduct is expected and necessary. When each person is aware that he or she can fully depend upon fellow workers to follow the rules of conduct, then our agency will be a better place for everyone to work.

Generally speaking, we expect you to act in a mature and responsible way at all times. VCE values honesty in communication and personal responsibility. To avoid any possible confusion, some of the more obvious unacceptable activities are noted below. If you have any questions concerning any work or safety rule, or any of the unacceptable activities listed, please ask for an explanation.

Occurrences of any of the following violations, because of their seriousness, may result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate suspension or termination:

Unacceptable Activities:

1. Generally, conduct which is disloyal, disruptive, or damaging to VCE.
2. Falsification of timekeeping records.
3. Dishonesty; falsification or misrepresentation on your application for employment or other work records; lying about sick or personal leave; falsifying reason for a leave of absence or other data requested by VCE; alteration of agency records or other agency documents.
4. Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, including marijuana.
5. Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of agency property or the property of fellow employees; unauthorized use of agency equipment and/or property for personal reasons.
6. Possession, distribution, solicitation, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs, including marijuana, in the workplace, while on duty, or while operating agency-owned vehicles or equipment.
7. Fighting, threatening, or coercing fellow employees on agency property or during working hours, for any purpose.
8. Boisterous or disruptive activity in the workplace.
9. Negligence or any careless action leading to damage of agency-owned or customer-owned property or which endangers the life or safety of another person.
10. Obscene or abusive language toward any supervisor, employee or customer; indifference or rudeness towards a customer or fellow employee; any disorderly/antagonistic conduct on agency premises.

11. Insubordination or other disrespectful conduct; refusing to obey instructions properly issued by your supervisor pertaining to your work; refusal to help out on a special assignment.
12. Violation of security or safety rules or failure to observe safety rules and/or practices; failure to wear required safety equipment; tampering with VCE equipment or safety equipment.
13. Creating or contributing to unsanitary conditions in the workplace.
14. Smoking in prohibited areas.
15. Any act of harassment, sexual, racial or other; telling sexist or racist jokes; making racial or ethnic slurs.
16. Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives or firearms, in the workplace.
17. Excessive absenteeism; failure to report an absence or late arrival.
18. Unauthorized absence from work station during the workday; sleeping or loitering during working hours.
19. Unauthorized use of telephones, mail system, or other agency-owned equipment.
20. Originating, spreading, or taking part in malicious gossip or rumors about employees of VCE.
21. Unauthorized disclosure of business "secrets" or confidential information; giving confidential or proprietary information to competitors or other organizations or to unauthorized VCE employees; breach of confidentiality of personnel or agency information.
22. Violation of agency rules or policies; any action that is detrimental to VCE's efforts to operate profitably.
23. Unsatisfactory or careless work; failure to meet production or quality standards as explained to you by your supervisor.
24. Soliciting during working hours and/or in working areas; selling merchandise or collecting funds of any kind for charities or others without authorization during business hours, or at a time or place that interferes with the work of another employee on agency premises.
25. Gambling on agency property.
26. Failure to immediately report any damage or accident involving agency equipment or vehicles.
27. Failure or refusal to comply with the work schedule, including mandatory overtime.
28. Using, removing, or borrowing agency equipment or property without prior authorization.
29. The use of abusive or threatening language or actions toward anyone.

This list is not exhaustive. Rather, we ask that you keep in mind at all times the need to conduct yourself with reasonable and proper regard for the welfare and rights of all our employees and for the best interests of the agency. This statement of prohibited conduct does not alter VCE's policy of at-will employment. Either you or VCE remains free to terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without reason or advance notice.

Performance Evaluations

VCE encourages an open dialogue between an employee and his or her supervisor on an informal, regular basis. We believe this type of interaction increases job satisfaction for both the employee and VCE.

Formal performance evaluations will be conducted annually or with frequency dependent on length of service, job position, past performance, changes in job duties, or recurring performance problems. After the review, you will be asked to sign the evaluation report to acknowledge that it has been presented to you and discussed with you by your supervisor, and that you are aware of its contents.

Positive performance evaluations do not guarantee increases in salary, bonuses, or promotions. Salary increases, bonuses, and promotions are solely within the discretion of VCE, and depend upon many factors in addition to performance. Having your compensation reviewed does not necessarily mean that you will be given an increase.

VCE uses a discretionary pay-for-performance compensation model to support the highest levels of organizational performance. The intent is to reward individual employee effort and results commensurate with their contributions and impact toward achieving the goals and objectives of the agency. The primary form of a performance reward is a merit increase. These base pay increases move an employee through their salary range and support the agency's retention goals by ensuring employee pay remains competitive with similar roles in the market. Employees who meet or exceed their goals and objectives, as evidenced by the employee receiving an overall rating of 2.0 (Effective) or higher on their year-end Performance Check-in, may be eligible to receive a merit increase (an adjustment in base salary) based on that performance. In limited cases, and with written justification from the supervisor, manager, and Director, an employee with an overall performance rating of less than 2.0 (Effective), may be considered for a reduced base salary.

Performance bonuses also may be used to reward employees when superior performance, as defined below, has been demonstrated in achieving goals and objectives. In most cases, performance bonuses are used to supplement merit increases, or instead of merit increases, when an employee is at or close to the top of their salary range. "Superior performance" is evidenced by an employee receiving a rating of 3.0 (Highly Effective) on one or more goals that, in total, represent at least 25% of the employee's assigned work during the year. "Superior performance" also may be evidenced by an employee receiving an overall rating of 2.5 or higher on their year-end Performance Check-in. Recommendations for performance bonuses must be justified in writing by the supervisor and/or manager and fully describe the efforts put forth by the employee that demonstrates superior performance.

The written justification, and approval of the bonus, are retained. Funding for performance bonuses is included in the annual budget or a budget amendment and approved by the Board of Directors. Performance bonuses are not guaranteed and may not be available due to budget constraints or other business reasons.

Compensation Equity

A pay equity increase may be granted to an employee under certain circumstances, such as the following: a significant lag in salary exists relative to market conditions or between employees with comparable job functions who have similar levels of experience, skills and knowledge, and demonstrated performance; an employee's assigned functions or work tasks increase the scope of the position but do not warrant reclassification; salary compression exists between supervisors and their employees; in order to address retention of employees with highly specialized skills or due to competitive job markets. In addition, a discretionary agency-wide pay equity adjustment for inflation in accordance with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Consumer Price Index (CPI) may be made at the option of the Board of Directors.

Recommendations for pay equity increases are prepared by the Director of Finance and Internal Operations and must be approved by the CEO. Employees approved for a pay equity increase will be notified, and adjustments may be paid retroactively to the first pay period of the current calendar year. Funding for pay equity increases is

included in the compensation identified in the annual budget and approved by the Board of Directors. Pay equity increases are discretionary and may not be available due to budget constraints or other business reasons

Problem Resolution

At some time, you may have a complaint or question about your job, your working conditions, or the treatment you are receiving. Your good-faith complaints and questions are of concern to us. We ask that you take your concerns first to your supervisor, following these steps:

1. Bring the situation to the attention of your immediate supervisor who will then review your concern and provide a solution or explanation.
2. If the problem remains unresolved, you may present it in writing to the CEO who will work towards a resolution.

This procedure, which we believe is important for both you and us, cannot result in every problem being resolved to your satisfaction. However, we value your input and you should feel free to raise issues of concern, in good faith, without the fear of retaliation.

Alcoholic Beverage Consumption

Due to the high risk and liability involved, VCE will not provide alcoholic beverages at social gatherings to VCE employees. This policy applies to the following:

1. Birthday parties;
2. Office parties;
3. Office picnics; and
4. Recreational activities (i.e. organized team sports)

Drug and Alcohol Abuse and Testing

VCE is concerned about the use of alcohol, illegal drugs, or controlled substances as it affects the workplace. We comply with state and federal drug abuse regulations, including the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988. Use of these illegal substances (whether illegal under California or federal law) whether on or off the job can adversely affect your work performance, efficiency, and safety and health. The use or possession of these substances on the job constitutes a potential danger to the welfare and safety of other employees, and exposes VCE to the risks of property loss or damage, or injury to other persons. Furthermore, the use of prescription drugs and/or over-the-counter drugs also may affect your job performance and seriously impair your value to us. Any employee who is using prescription or over-the-counter drugs that may impair your ability to safely perform the job, or affect the safety or well-being of others, must notify a supervisor of such use immediately before starting or resuming work. All precautions necessary to preserve your privacy will be taken. You must adhere to the rules stated in this policy as a condition of employment. Failure to comply with this policy may result in discipline, including termination. The CEO has been designated to administer this policy, monitor the program and make reports as required by law.

If there is ever a reasonable basis to suspect you of violating the drug and alcohol policy and being under the influence during working hours, you will be requested to immediately submit to a drug and/or alcohol test. Suspicion will be based on objective symptoms, such as factors related to your appearance, behavior and speech. A reasonable basis may also exist if you are found to be in possession of illegal drugs, alcohol or paraphernalia connected with the use of an illegal drug. Possession of illegal drugs or alcohol is prohibited even if you have not used these substances.

The following rules and standards of conduct apply to all employees either on agency property, or during the workday (including meals and rest periods). The following are strictly prohibited by VCE:

1. Possession or use of alcohol or illegal drugs, including marijuana, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while on agency premises or at any time on duty.
2. Driving an agency vehicle or driving for agency business in a private vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, including marijuana.
3. Distribution, sale, or purchase of an illegal or controlled substance while on agency premises or at any time on duty.
4. Possession or use of an illegal or controlled substance, or being under the influence of an illegal or controlled substance while on agency premises or at any time while working.
5. Any drug or alcohol statute conviction. You must notify VCE within 5 days of such conviction.

In order to enforce this policy, we reserve the right to conduct searches of agency property and to implement measures necessary to deter and detect abuse of this policy.

In the event of suspicion of use in connection with an on the job accident, you may be asked to provide body substance samples (such as urine and/or blood) to determine the illicit or illegal use of drugs and alcohol. VCE will test for alcohol, cannabinoids, (THC), Opiates, i.e. codeine and morphine, Cocaine metabolites, Amphetamines, i.e. amphetamine and metamorphines, adulterants low creatine levels and Phencyclidine. VCE assures that any information concerning your drug and/or alcohol use will remain confidential. Refusal to submit to drug testing may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

If the results of your drug and/or alcohol test are positive, VCE will take disciplinary action which may include suspension or immediate termination. The disciplinary action will be based on the seriousness of the offense and your past performance. If you return to work after testing positive for drugs and/or alcohol, you may be required to consent to unannounced tests for drugs and/or alcohol for a specified period as a condition of continued employment. In the event that you test positive, you may request a second test to be performed by a reliable drug testing agency, at your expense.

Any conviction you receive on a charge of illegal sale or possession of any controlled substance will not be tolerated. In addition, we must keep people who use, sell, or possess controlled substances off VCE's premises in order to keep the controlled substances themselves off the premises.

Violation of the above rules and standards of conduct will not be tolerated. VCE may bring the matter to the attention of appropriate law enforcement authorities.

VCE's policy on drug and alcohol in no way limits or alters the at-will employment relationship.

Customer and Public Relations

The success of VCE depends upon the quality of the relationships between VCE, our employees, and our customers, suppliers and the general public. Our customers' impression of VCE and their interest and willingness to do business with us are formed by how you serve them.

The opinions and attitudes that customers have toward our agency can be affected for a long period of time by the actions of just one employee. It is sometimes easy to take a customer for granted, but when we do, we run the risk of not only losing that customer, but their associates, friends or family who also may be customers or prospective customers.

Here are several things you can do to help give customers a good impression of VCE:

1. Customers are to be treated courteously and given proper attention at all times. Never regard a customer's questions or concerns as an interruption or an annoyance. Customer inquiries, whether in person or by telephone, must be addressed promptly and professionally.
2. Never place a telephone caller on hold for an extended period of time. Direct incoming calls to the appropriate person and make sure that the call is answered.
3. Act competently and deal with customers in a courteous and respectful manner. Through your conduct, show your desire to assist the customer in obtaining the help that he or she needs. If you are unable to help a customer, find someone who can.
4. All correspondence and documents, whether to customers or others, must be neatly prepared and error-free. Attention to accuracy and detail in all paperwork demonstrates your commitment to those with whom we do business.
5. Never argue with a customer. If a problem develops or if a customer remains dissatisfied, ask your supervisor to intervene.
6. Communicate pleasantly and respectfully with other employees at all times.

These are the building blocks for your and VCE's continued success.

Confidentiality

It is your responsibility to safeguard confidential information obtained during your employment with us, including financial information obtained from customers and private information about other employees.

You may in no way reveal or divulge any such information unless it is necessary for you to do so in the performance of your duties. Access to confidential information should be on a "need-to-know" basis and must be authorized by your supervisor.

If you are questioned by someone outside VCE or your department and you are concerned about the appropriateness of giving them certain information, you are not required to answer. Instead, as politely as possible, refer the request to your supervisor or the CEO.

It is also important to remember that you may not disclose or use proprietary or confidential information except as your job requires. You may not keep or retain any originals or copies of reports, notes, proposals, customer

lists or other confidential and proprietary documents, equipment, supplies, or property belonging to VCE. Any and all copies or originals of reports, and notes belong to VCE and must be turned over to VCE within twenty-four (24) hours of termination of employment.

You are not permitted to remove or make copies of any VCE records, reports or documents without prior management approval. Do not post confidential information about VCE, customers, employees, or affiliates on any social media. Disclosure of confidential information could lead to termination, as well as other possible legal action.

Conflict of Interest

As an employee of VCE, you must avoid actual or potential conflicts of interest with VCE. If you are found to have a conflict of interest, you may be subject to discipline, including termination. You should contact your supervisor with any questions about this policy. Prohibited activities include, but are not limited to:

1. Having a direct or indirect financial relationship with a VCE customer, vendor, or supplier; however, no conflict will exist in the case of ownership of less than 1 percent of a publicly traded corporation.
2. Engaging in any other employment or personal activity during work hours, or using VCE's name, logo, equipment or property, including stationery, office supplies, computers, telephones, fax machines, postage, and office machines, for personal purposes.
3. Soliciting agency employees, suppliers, or customers to purchase goods or services of any kind for non-agency purposes, or to make contributions to any organizations or in support of any causes.
4. Soliciting or entering into any business or financial transaction with another employee whom the soliciting employee supervises, either directly or indirectly, such as hiring the employee to perform personal services or soliciting the employee to enter into an investment.

Solicitation

You are not permitted to solicit or distribute literature during working time. Working time includes both your working time and the working time of the employee to whom the solicitation or distribution is directed. Similarly, distribution of written solicitation material in working areas is prohibited at all times. If you wish to distribute fundraising items such as cookies, candy, and coupon books for sale, you may place them without solicitation in your workstation or VCE break rooms.

Media Contact

If you are contacted by a news organization regarding VCE business, please direct all media inquiries to your supervisor, the CEO, or the Director of Marketing.

Employment of Friends or Relatives

The employment of friends and relatives in the same area of an organization may cause conflicts of interest and appearances of impropriety. In addition, personal conflicts may impact the working relationship of the parties. Although VCE does not prohibit the hiring of friends and relatives of existing employees, VCE is committed to monitoring situations in which friends or relatives work in the same area. In the event of an actual or potential problem, VCE's response may include reassignment or termination of one or both of the individuals involved. For the purposes of this policy, a relative is any person who is related by blood or marriage, or whose

relationship with an employee is similar to that of persons who are related by blood or marriage, or one who is a domestic partner.

Personal Relationships in the Workplace

VCE desires to avoid misunderstandings, complaints of favoritism, claims of sexual harassment, and employee dissension that may result from personal or social relationships amongst employees. Therefore, VCE asks that if you become romantically involved with another employee that you disclose your relationship to a supervisor with whom you feel comfortable. This information will be kept as confidential as possible. For purposes of this provision, “romantically involved” will be interpreted broadly. VCE reserves the right to take necessary and appropriate action to resolve any potential conflict of interest arising out of romantic involvement among employees. Depending on the facts of the situation, such action may include reassignment or termination of one or both of the employees involved.

VCE is committed to maintaining a professional work environment where supervisors treat all employees fairly and impartially. Accordingly, supervisors are not allowed to date, or become romantically or intimately involved with, employees who report to them directly or indirectly. Also, spouses and immediate family members are prohibited from working in positions where they directly report to, or are reported to, by their spouses or family members. Personal relationships very often cause problems in the workplace, such as a lack of objectivity towards the subordinate’s job performance, the perception of favoritism by other employees (whether justified or not), and potential sexual harassment complaints.

For purposes of this policy, “immediate family” includes significant others (such as unmarried couples who live together), domestic partners, step-parent and step-child relationships, in-law relationships, grandparents and cousins (including analogous relationships with the parents and children of an employee’s significant other). This policy covers all family-like relationships, regardless of blood or legal relationships.

Employees who are currently dating one another, or employees who are married or related and report to or supervise each other, may request to be transferred in order to comply with this policy. When possible, VCE will attempt to accommodate such requests. Please understand, however, that VCE reserves the right not to transfer employees based on conflicting business considerations.

Unprofessional behavior in the workplace, such as sexually related conversations, inappropriate touching (i.e., kissing, hugging, massaging, sitting on laps) another employee, and any other behavior of a sexual nature, is prohibited.

If two employees marry or become related, causing actual or potential problems such as those described, only one of the employees will be retained with VCE unless reasonable accommodations can be made to eliminate the actual or potential conflict. The employees will have 30 days to decide which relative will stay with VCE. If this decision is not made in the time allowed the CEO will make the decision, taking the employment history and job performance of both employees as well as the business needs of VCE into account. Supervisors who have any questions about the application of this policy to an employee or applicant should contact the CEO.

Dress Policy

You are expected to dress and groom yourself in accordance with accepted social and business standards, particularly if your job involves dealing with customers or visitors in person. A neat, tasteful appearance contributes to the positive impression you make on our customers.

Business casual dress is generally expected which should include nice shoes, slacks, pantsuits, dresses, skirts, and shirts (and possibly suits and ties when appropriate). Violating dress code standards may subject you to appropriate disciplinary action.

Day-to-Day Operations

Employer and Employee Property

Routine inspections of agency property might result in the discovery of an employee's personal possessions. You are encouraged not to bring into the workplace any item of personal property which you do not want to reveal to VCE.

All desks, lockers, offices, work spaces, credenzas, cabinets, electronic mail (e-mail), telephone systems, office systems, computer systems, any and all electronically issued technology, agency vehicles and other areas or items belonging to VCE are open to VCE and its employees. **YOU SHOULD HAVE NO EXPECTATION OF PRIVACY IN ANY OF THESE AREAS.** Personal items and messages or information that you consider private should not be placed or kept in any of these places or areas belonging to VCE.

Storage areas, work areas, file cabinets, credenzas, computer systems and software, office telephones, cellular telephones, any and all electronically issued technology, modems, facsimile machines, copy and scanner machines, tools, equipment, desks, voice mail, and electronic mail are the property of VCE, and need to be maintained according to agency rules and regulations.

Desks and work areas must be kept clean, and are to be used for work-related purposes. VCE's property is subject to inspection at any time, with or without prior notice. Prior authorization must be obtained before any of VCE's property may be removed from the premises.

For security reasons, you should not leave personal belongings of value in the workplace. Personal items, lockers and desks are subject to inspection and search, with or without notice, and with or without your prior consent.

Terminated employees should remove any personal items at the time of separation. Personal items left in the workplace by previous employees are subject to disposal if not claimed at the time of your termination.

Electronic Systems and Privacy

Access to VCE's electronic systems is provided for work-related purposes. There should be NO expectation of privacy in connection with the use of electronic systems, including stored e-mail/voice mail/text messages or any messages sent electronically. All messages created, sent, received or stored in these systems are and remain the property of VCE. VCE reserves the right to retrieve and review any message composed, sent or received via the system. Please note that even when a message is deleted or erased, it is still possible to recreate the message; therefore, the ultimate privacy of messages cannot be ensured to anyone.

To safeguard and protect the proprietary, confidential and business-sensitive information of VCE, and to ensure that the use of all electronic systems and equipment is consistent with VCE's legitimate business interests, authorized representatives of VCE may monitor the use of such systems from time to time without notice, which may include printing and reading materials, files on the system, list servers, and equipment.

You should be aware that e-mail messages, like VCE correspondence, and any and all messages sent electronically may be read by other VCE employees and outsiders under certain circumstances. While it is impossible to list all of the circumstances, some examples are the following: (1) during system maintenance of the e-mail system, (2) when VCE has business needs to access the employee's mailbox, (3) when VCE receives a legal request that requires disclosure of e-mail messages, or (4) when VCE has reason to believe the employee is using e-mail in violation of VCE policies.

Social Media Guidelines

VCE understands that various forms of communication occur through social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, blogs, and multimedia host sites such as YouTube. Such communications occur in social networking, blogs, and video sharing and similar media. It should be remembered that social media sites do not provide a private setting. Employees who communicate information through social media therefore should not expect that such information is private

Employees must remember that all existing policies apply to information disseminated through social media. These guidelines are intended to help employees understand some of the unintended outcomes of sharing information through social media.

Application of Policies

The employer's policies and standards apply to conduct that occurs in the workplace and while employees are on duty, wherever they happen to be. They also apply to activities that occur during an employee's own time, outside of work, if the activities have an actual or potential impact on the employee's performance, the performance of coworkers, or the employer. Employees should therefore understand that they are responsible for certain activities that occur off the employer's premises or on their own time both to the employer and third parties. Nothing in this policy prevents employees from exercising their broad rights to discuss the terms and conditions of employment with others, to take action with others to improve your working conditions, or to otherwise exercise their rights to engage in protected concerted activity.

General Policies

VCE's policies regarding workplace conduct and interpersonal interactions are embodied in a number of policies, including policies that protect VCE's legal interests and confidential information.

The policies also prohibit unlawful harassment and discrimination and require employees to use work time in an appropriate manner.

The principles set forth in VCE's policies apply equally to social media, even when the policies do not refer specifically to social media. Violations of any policy through social media or networking will be appropriately addressed when brought to management's attention.

Illustrations of some of the relevant policies and how they may apply to social media are provided below. The following guidelines apply to all employees when they are at work and away from work.

General expectations

- Employees may not post or transmit any material or information that includes confidential, proprietary or trade secret information, or information that is untrue, defamatory, obscene, profane, threatening, harassing, abusive, hateful or humiliating to another person or entity. This includes, but is not limited to, comments regarding VCE or its employees or customers. Employees should ask their supervisors and refer to agency policies if they have any questions about what is appropriate to include in communications involving social media.

Harassment

- VCE will not tolerate intimidation, bullying or threats of violence among co-workers and such acts, even if occurring outside of work, will result in serious consequences, including termination.
- VCE maintains a strict policy prohibiting harassment of any kind. Harassment is inappropriate and contrary to VCE policy if it is based upon any legally protected characteristic. It includes unwelcome verbal, physical, or visual conduct that creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile work environment or unreasonably interferes with work performance.

Reputation

- Employees should act responsibly and remember that untrue or defamatory postings can have serious consequences. Do not create fake blogs or false reviews of VCE or its customers.

Acceptable Use Guidelines

- E-mail and Internet access is provided to support VCE's business operations. Incidental use of e-mail and internet for personal reasons is permissible during non-working periods during the workday, provided it is not excessive and provided it does not interfere with VCE business. Any use that includes tapping into electronic social media should be consistent with VCE's values, policies and applicable laws.
- Participation in social media sites should be limited during work time; incidental use during break time is not prohibited by this policy. Under no circumstances may employees access social media sites while performing safety-sensitive functions such as driving.

Opinions

- Employees should not speak on behalf of VCE without proper authorization to do so. Employees should at all times make it clear that their opinions do not represent those of VCE. They should include disclaimers in online communications advising that they are not speaking officially or unofficially on behalf of the organization.
- Employees may not use VCE's logo or proprietary graphics to imply that you are speaking on behalf of VCE.

Questions

- Employees who have concerns regarding workplace conduct or inappropriate behavior or comments are encouraged to contact the CEO for further guidance.

Additional Guidance and Information

While VCE's policies offer very clear direction on some issues, there are other areas where common sense must prevail. When in doubt about posting, employees should consider the following:

- There is no expectation of privacy when engaging in social media networking activities. You may know everyone in the room when you have a conversation in person. This will not apply with social networking applications. You may not have full control over how your comments are perceived or shared.
- These are public forums. As a practical matter, it may be impossible to delete information that is shared. Comments may be publicly available for years.
- Even when you do not identify your employer by name in the communication or posting, some readers are likely to know where you work. Keep this in mind when you consider posting or transmitting comments that may be work-related. This should also be considered when creating your profile.
- Do not state or imply that the opinions you express are those of VCE, its management, or other employees. Include a disclaimer to this effect.

Telephone Usage

You may use agency telephones for local or personal calls within reason. You are not to charge long distance personal telephone calls to VCE. You are expected to limit personal calls so they do not become excessive or disruptive to your work or work area.

Cell Phone Usage

VCE realizes that in our fast-paced business environment, meeting our goals and staying in touch with our customers and co-workers is a necessary process in working efficiently. But, first and foremost, we want to preserve the safety of our employees and those in the community. California law limits the use of cell phones while driving to those having hands-free operation.

This law provides that, it is illegal to drive a motor vehicle while using a wireless telephone, unless that telephone is designed and configured to allow hands-free listening and talking operation, and is used in that manner while driving.

Additionally, writing, sending, or reading text-based communications on your cell phone while driving is also prohibited under California law. This includes text messaging, instant messaging, and e-mail. You will be responsible for any tickets you receive if you violate this law.

Use of a hands-free cell phone is required while driving for agency business. An option is that you pull over while driving to place or receive calls on your cellular phones. There is a great potential for harm to you and to others if this policy is violated.

Personal cell phone use is not needed or required for work purposes and should not be used for work.

Workplace Monitoring

Workplace monitoring, both human and electronic, may be conducted by VCE to ensure quality control, employee safety, compliance with VCE policies, security, and customer satisfaction.

Customer sites may also utilize video surveillance of non-private workplace areas. Video monitoring is used to identify safety concerns, maintain quality control, detect theft and misconduct, and discourage or prevent acts of harassment and workplace violence.

Because VCE is sensitive to your legitimate privacy rights, every effort will be made to see that workplace monitoring is done in an ethical and respectful manner.

Travel Expense Policy

VCE will reimburse you for work-related travel expenses such as transportation, overnight accommodations and meals. You should have your supervisor's approval before incurring travel expenses. All requests for reimbursement must be submitted to the CEO for approval along with supporting documents or original invoices.

Non-exempt employees will be paid for time spent traveling and in conference sessions. If you are required to use your personal automobile on work-related business, VCE will reimburse you for mileage at the current IRS reimbursement rate and for parking expenses. You should submit the appropriate expense form to the CEO for approval and then forward it to accounting for payment once per month. If you use your personal vehicle for work-related travel you are expected to maintain at least the minimum insurance required by law.

Education and Professional Development Assistance

VCE will support the professional development, educational advancement, and career growth of employees. As a result, the VCE will benefit from improved employee performance, higher levels of workforce engagement, and increased numbers of qualified internal candidates for promotional opportunities. The availability of funding for the assistance is subject to the annual budget process. All regular full-time employees who have served a minimum of six months with the agency must pay for any expense upfront and will receive reimbursement of approved and eligible expenses upon successful completion of coursework. The employee must repay the entire amount of the reimbursement benefit paid to them if they voluntarily separate from the agency within 12 months of receiving the benefit. Employees may be reimbursed for up to \$5,000 per year to offset the cost of coursework.

Agency Property and Equipment

Equipment essential to accomplishing job duties is often expensive and may be difficult to replace. When using agency property, you are expected to exercise care, arrange for required maintenance, and follow all operating instructions, safety standards, and guidelines.

VCE requires that all equipment be in proper working order and safe to work with at all times. If any equipment appears to be damaged, defective, or in need of repair, do not use it until a qualified technician certifies that it is repaired and safe. Never try to fix broken equipment yourself. Please notify your supervisor of any equipment breakdown as soon as it happens. If the breakdown requires emergency repairs, your supervisor will help you

deal with the emergency situation as soon as possible. Prompt reporting of damages, defects, and the need for repairs could prevent possible personal injury and deterioration of equipment. Please ask your supervisor if you have any questions about your responsibility for maintenance and care of equipment used on the job.

If you are authorized to operate an agency vehicle in the course of your assigned work, or if you operate your own vehicle in performing your job, you must adhere to the following rules:

1. You must be a licensed California driver and must maintain at least the minimum insurance required by law.
2. You must maintain weekly mileage reports.
3. You are responsible for following all the manufacturer's recommended maintenance schedules so as to maintain valid warranties, and for following the manufacturer's recommended oil change schedule.
4. VCE provides insurance on agency vehicles. However, you will be considered completely responsible for any accidents, fines, moving or parking violations.
5. If involved in an accident do not admit fault, only provide required insurance and personal DMV information.
6. You must keep VCE vehicle clean at all times.
7. Persons not authorized or employed by VCE cannot operate or ride in an agency vehicle.
8. Prior to operation of any agency vehicle, your supervisor will train you on the appropriate steps to take if you are involved in an accident, such as filling out the accident report, getting names and phone numbers of witnesses and so on.

If you are required to drive an agency vehicle or your own vehicle for agency business, you will also be required to show proof of a current, valid driver's license and current effective auto insurance coverage prior to the first day of employment.

If you drive your own vehicles on agency business you will be reimbursed at the current IRS reimbursement rate.

You are responsible for all agency property, materials, or written information issued to you or in your possession. You may be asked to sign an acknowledgment of receipt of agency property issued to you. All agency property must be returned on or before your last day of work. You may be responsible for the replacement cost of agency property not returned.

Agency cars are for agency business only, and only authorized employees may drive agency cars. Employee spouses, children, friends or anyone other than the employee may not operate these vehicles, unless an emergency arises. A violation of these rules, or excessive or avoidable traffic and parking violations may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Personal Use of Agency Property

You are not allowed to use agency owned property for personal use. The definition of "agency owned" assets includes, but is not limited to, facilities, computers, and their related equipment, labelers, copy machines, postage meter, any type of supplies including office supplies, tools, vehicles, credit cards, etc. These assets are provided to you for agency related business only.

Please also remember that all desks, lockers, cabinets, computers and vehicles that belong to VCE will be open to all agency employees. Personal items, messages or information that you consider private should not be placed or kept in telephone systems, office systems, agency computer systems, office work spaces, desks, and credenzas or file cabinets.

If you are issued an agency credit card you are responsible for the use of that card. Under no circumstances will VCE allow you to sign an agency credit card unless the card being signed is issued in your name. Signing another employee's credit card will result in liability for the expense and may subject you to immediate termination. If you hold an agency credit card you may only give permission to another employee to make an authorized business purchase or reservation using your card with prior approval from the CEO of VCE. Any holders of agency credit cards or authorized users who transact a non-business related charge may be subject to immediate termination. Receipts for all credit card transactions must be given to the Finance Director along with an explanation of the purchase.

Driving Record and Insurance

As a condition of employment, we require you to maintain an acceptable driving record if you drive for agency business. Any accidents or traffic violations must be reported to a supervisor immediately if they occur during the course of your duties. You will be responsible for any tickets you receive while driving on agency business whether in an agency vehicle or your own personal vehicle. Failure to report an on-the-job motor vehicle accident, no matter how minor, will lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Additionally, you are required to maintain the level of insurance required by the state of California. A copy of your insurance card must be on file before you will be allowed to drive for agency business.

Health and Safety

Safety is everybody's business. Safety is to be given primary importance in every aspect of planning and performing all VCE activities. We want to protect you against injury and illness, as well as minimize the potential loss of production. To achieve our goal of maintaining a safe workplace, everyone must be safety conscious at all times. In compliance with California law, and to promote the concept of a safe workplace, we maintain an Injury and Illness Prevention Plan (IIPP). The IIPP is available for your review from the Director of Finance & Internal Operations. The Director of Finance & Internal Operations has responsibility for implementing, administering, monitoring, and evaluating the safety program. Its success depends on the alertness and personal commitment of all.

You will receive a copy of VCE's general safety rules and will receive health and safety training as part of this program. A complete copy of the Safety Program is kept by the CEO and is available for your review.

Smoking Policies

Smoking, use of e-cigarettes or vapor products is not allowed in any enclosed area of the building, or within 25 feet of any entrance of the building or in any agency vehicle. In fairness to those who do not smoke, smoking is allowed only during breaks and lunch and only outside of the office or building.

Security

To provide for the safety and security of you, our customers and our facilities, only authorized visitors are allowed in the work areas. To ensure the safety of our guests, we encourage family and friends to check in when visiting you at the workplace.

The following security procedures should always be followed to ensure your safety and the safety of your fellow employees, and to ensure the confidentiality of VCE's information. At no time should unauthorized persons be allowed to roam unescorted through VCE's office. It is a matter of courtesy to accompany customers and guests to and from the exits and other office to which they may be destined. If strangers are encountered in our office who do not satisfactorily identify themselves or the person with whom they will be meeting, escort them to the front of the office. If they resist, contact your supervisor immediately.

Be aware of persons loitering for no apparent reason in other non-office areas (e.g., in parking areas, walkways, entrances/exits and service areas). Report any suspicious persons or activities to your supervisor. Secure your desk at the end of the day or when called away from your work area for an extended length of time and do not leave valuable and/or personal articles in or around your workstation that may be accessible. Please report any lost facility keys to your supervisor immediately.

Workplace Violence

VCE recognizes that violence in the workplace is a growing nationwide problem necessitating a firm, careful response by all employers. The costs of workplace violence are great, both in human and financial terms.

VCE has adopted the following policies to ensure the safety of its employees and to provide guidance on dealing with violence in the workplace. If qualified, you may provide first aid to injured persons. You are required to:

1. Immediately report all indirect and direct threats of violence to a supervisor.
2. Immediately report all suspicious individuals or activities to a supervisor.
3. Never put yourself or others in peril.
4. Immediately call 911 and seek shelter if you hear a violent commotion near your workstation.
5. Cooperate fully with security, law enforcement, and medical personnel who respond to a call for help.
6. Direct all inquiries from the media about violence on VCE premises to your supervisor or the CEO.

The CEO of VCE will make the sole determination of whether, and to what extent, threats or acts of violence will be acted upon by the agency. In making this determination, we may undertake a case-by-case analysis in order to ascertain whether there is a reasonable basis to believe that workplace violence has occurred. No provision of this policy shall alter the at-will nature of employment at VCE.

Off-Duty Use of Facilities

You are prohibited from being on agency premises, or making use of agency facilities, while not on duty. You are expressly prohibited from using agency facilities, agency property or agency equipment for personal use.

Parking

You are encouraged to use the parking areas designated for our employees. Remember to lock your car every day and park within the specified areas.

Courtesy and common sense in parking will help eliminate accidents, personal injuries, and damage to your vehicle and to the vehicles of other employees. If you should damage another car while parking or leaving, immediately report the incident, along with the license numbers of both vehicles and any other pertinent information you may have, to your supervisor. VCE cannot be and is not responsible for any loss, theft or damage to your vehicle or any of its contents. You will be responsible for any parking tickets you receive while driving on agency business whether in an agency vehicle or your own personal vehicle.

Employee Suggestion Program

We encourage you to bring forward your suggestions and good ideas about how our agency can be made a better place to work and our service to customers enhanced. When you see an opportunity for improvement, please talk it over with your supervisors. All suggestions are valued and listened to.

Employee Benefits

Benefits

VCE has developed and invested in an employee benefit program to supplement your regular wages. VCE will continue these benefits as agency resources allow; however, we reserve the right to change or eliminate any benefit program at any time (including increasing the employee's share of the cost).

Our benefit program consists of programs which may include health, dental, and vision coverage, life insurance, paid time off (PTO) and holiday pay. In addition, there are a number of programs available to employees through other sources such as State Disability, Paid Family Leave, Unemployment Insurance, Social Security and Workers' Compensation. Eligibility to participate in some of these programs is determined by your employee classification and length of continued service with VCE.

Official Health Plan Documents

The employee handbook contains a number of brief summaries of the benefit programs that the employer provides for eligible employees. The purpose of these summaries is simply to acquaint you with the general provisions of the applicable plans; they do not contain full statements of all of the terms, conditions, and limitations of the plans. If there are any real or apparent conflicts between the brief information in the handbook and the terms, conditions and limitations of the official plan documents, the provisions of the official plan documents will be considered accurate. You are encouraged to review all plan documents carefully to familiarize yourself with all of the provisions of the plans.

Paid Time Off (PTO)

Eligibility

Paid Time Off (PTO) is an all purpose time-off policy for eligible employees to use for the following: vacation; the

diagnosis, care, treatment of an existing health condition; preventative care of an employee or family member; for employees who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking to seek aid, treatment, or related assistance; illness or injury; and personal business. A family member is defined as a spouse, registered domestic partner (RDP), grandparent, grandchild, sibling, in-law, parent, step-parent, legal guardian, or child (regardless of age or dependency status). Personal business also includes time spent for jury duty, bereavement, and time off to vote. Regular full-time employees are eligible to earn and use PTO as described in this policy.

PTO begins accruing upon your date of hire. Employees may begin using PTO upon your 90th day of employment. At that time, you can request the use of earned PTO including that accrued during the waiting period.

Accrual

Regular, full-time employees accrue 6.67 hours of PTO per pay period (24 pay periods per year) in your first year of eligibility – 160 hours. After your first anniversary, and thereafter, you will receive an additional eight (8) hours per year, which will accrue at an additional rate of .34 hours per pay period. Once you have worked for the agency for ten (10) years, you will not accrue any additional PTO.

The length of eligible service is calculated on the basis of a "benefit year." This is the 12-month period that begins when you start to earn PTO. You will not earn PTO while you are out on an unpaid leave of absence. Therefore, your benefit year may be extended if you go out on a leave of absence other than a military leave of absence. Military leave has no effect on this calculation. (See individual leave of absence policies for more information.)

Scheduling PTO

PTO can be used in minimum increments of one (1) hour for non-exempt employees. Exempt employees may use PTO in ½ day or 1 full day increments. If you have an unexpected need to be absent from work you should notify your direct supervisor before the scheduled start of your workday, if possible. Your direct supervisor must also be contacted on each additional day of unexpected absence.

To schedule planned PTO, you need to request advance approval from your supervisor. Requests will be reviewed based on a number of factors, including business needs and staffing requirements.

PTO is paid at your base pay rate at the time of absence. It does not include overtime or any special forms of compensation such as incentives, commissions, bonuses, or shift differentials.

PTO will be used to supplement any payments that you are eligible to receive from state disability insurance, or workers' compensation. The combination of any such disability payments and PTO cannot exceed your normal weekly earnings.

PTO Payout

The CEO may, in his or her sole discretion, authorize a cash payout of up to 60 hours of PTO annually to an employee who meets the following criteria: (a) the employee used an equal or greater amount of hours in the preceding 12 months; and (b) the employee will maintain a minimum PTO balance of 120 hours after the

payout. Such requests will be granted at the sole discretion of the CEO in the interest of work program effectiveness and subject to VCE's fiscal capability.

PTO Caps

Employee can accumulate PTO up to a balance of twice the annual PTO for which they are entitled. Once that limit is reached, employee will no longer accrue PTO until time is taken, and the employee's accrual falls below the cap.

Upon termination of employment, you will be paid for unused PTO that has been earned through your last day of work.

Sick Leave

Employees will earn sick leave in accordance with this policy.

Sick leave is a form of insurance that is accumulated in order to provide a cushion for incapacitation due to illness. It is to be used only for the diagnosis, care, treatment of an existing health condition or preventative care of an employee, family member or for employees who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking to seek aid, treatment, or related assistance. A family member is defined as a spouse, registered domestic partner (RDP), grandparent, grandchild, sibling, in-law, parent, step-parent, legal guardian, or child (regardless of age or dependency status).

On the employee's hire date, all employees will receive 24 hours of paid sick leave. Regular, full-time employees accrue 3.34 hours (10 days annually) of PTO per pay period (24 pay periods per year) and these employees can use their PTO for paid sick leave. Regular, full-time employees can accumulate PTO up to a balance of 160 (20 days). Employees who are not eligible for the PTO policy as outlined above will be credited with 24 hours of paid sick leave at the commencement of each employment year up to 40 hours. Employees will also accrue 1 hour of paid sick leave per every 30 hours worked until the employee has accrued the equivalent of 5 days or 40 hours of paid sick leave, whichever is greater. Any unused sick leave is not paid out on separation of employment.

Employees may begin using sick leave upon their 90th day of employment.

When wishing to use sick leave, you should personally call your supervisor prior to the start of your shift on the day you are scheduled to work. Sick leave is not to be taken in less than two (2) hour increments and does not accrue when you are out on sick leave.

A paid absence is not counted as a basis for computing overtime.

If you are receiving State Disability Insurance (SDI) or Workers' Compensation payments, then you can integrate sick pay (meaning that you can supplement your wage replacement benefits with a portion of your sick leave to equal your full wage). Under no circumstances can you receive more than your customary wage.

Sick leave is not granted for the purpose of accompanying or taking pets to procure medical attention.

Unused sick leave has no cash value and will not be paid at termination.

Holidays

We observe the following paid holidays for full-time employees:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday
- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day
- Floating Holiday (2)

Eligibility for holiday pay begins upon date of hire. You must also be regularly scheduled to work on the day on which the holiday is observed, and must work your regularly scheduled working days immediately preceding and immediately following the holiday, unless an absence on either day is approved in advance by your supervisor.

When a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, it is usually observed on the preceding Friday or the following Monday. Holiday observance will be announced in advance.

If you are on a paid absence due to PTO when a holiday occurs, you will receive holiday pay. Non-exempt employees who work on holidays, due to customer job requirements, will receive regular earned wages. Part-time employees and interns are not eligible for holiday pay.

Insurance Benefits

Medical, Dental and Vision Insurance: We provide access to medical, dental & vision insurance plans for eligible employees and their dependents. You may be required to provide adequate proof of the dependent relationship in order to add the dependents to VCE's insurance policies. Typically, proof of the relationship may be established through a copy of a birth certificate, adoption documents, marriage license, or certificate of registered domestic partnership. We cannot guarantee your domestic partner relationship will be kept confidential.

Full-time employees and part-time employees who are regularly scheduled to work a minimum of 30 hours per week are eligible for VCE's medical, dental, and vision insurance coverage. Each employee becomes eligible on the first of the month after the employee has started employment with VCE. VCE will contribute up to \$2,479 per month per employee towards VCE's medical, dental and vision insurance for a full-time employee and dependents coverage. VCE will contribute a prorated amount for part-time employees based on the average hours worked (for example, if the part-time employee is regularly scheduled to work 30 hours per week, VCE's contribution toward the cost of VCE's medical, dental and vision insurance coverage for the part time employee

and his/her eligible dependents would be prorated to 75% of the full-time equivalent, i.e., \$1,859). The employee is responsible for any premiums due for VCE coverage(s) that are in excess of the VCE contribution amount. Deductions from the employee's paycheck will be made to cover this cost. Information describing medical, dental and vision insurance benefits will be given to you when you become eligible to participate in the program. Eligible employees who elect not to receive medical insurance coverage from VCE must provide proof of adequate medical coverage from an alternate source within 30 days of becoming eligible through VCE for the benefit. Such election will be effective as of the employee's eligibility date and will remain in effect until the start of the next open enrollment period. Employees who have declined VCE medical insurance coverage and want to continue to decline coverage must provide proof of adequate medical coverage once per year, no later than 30 days prior to VCE's open enrollment period. Full time employees who decline to accept VCE medical, dental, and vision insurance benefits shall receive a payment of \$550 per month in lieu of coverage; part -time employees who are eligible for VCE medical, dental and vision insurance and decline to accept VCE medical, dental, and vision insurance shall receive a prorated payout based on the employee's regularly scheduled hours (i.e., an employee who is regularly scheduled to work 30 hours per week will receive 75% of the full-time equivalent, or \$412.5.)

During any leave of absence such as personal leave, Workers' Compensation leave or other disability leave, VCE-provided health benefits will continue through the end of the month during which leave commenced. At that point, the employee will be provided with the option to continue coverage at the employee's own expense pursuant to Cal-COBRA. For the duration of any pregnancy disability leave of absence, health and life insurance benefits will be continued for the duration of your approved pregnancy disability leave as required by applicable law.

Please direct any questions you have regarding your medical, dental and/or vision insurance to the CEO.

Retirement Plan: We provide a 401(A) and 457B defined contribution retirement plans for eligible employees in order to assist in planning for your retirement. Eligible employees may enroll following 6 months of employment. Retirement plan participants can participate in loan programs permitted under the plan guidelines. For more information regarding eligibility, contributions, benefits and tax status, contact the CEO. All eligible participants will receive a summary plan description.

Disability Insurance: VCE furnishes private long-term disability policies. For more information, contact the CEO.

Life and Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance: If you are a regular full-time employee of VCE, you will be provided our group life insurance coverage paid for by the organization. This insurance is payable in the event of your death, in accordance with the policy, while you are insured. You may change your beneficiary whenever you wish by submitting the appropriate documents to the Human Resources Consultant. Refer to the literature provided by our insurance agency for details on your life insurance coverage.

Paid Family Leave (PFL) Insurance: All employees who take time off to care for a seriously ill family member (child, parent, grandparent, grandchildren, in-laws, spouse or registered domestic partner) or bond with a new child may be eligible to receive replacement wages for up to six weeks during any 12-month period, under California's Paid Family Leave program. This program is funded with employee contributions through the State

Disability Insurance (SDI) Program. Such contributions are deducted from each employee's paycheck. Even though employees may be eligible to receive Paid Family Leave insurance benefits, a leave of absence must still be requested and approved as defined in our leave policies. Please understand that this leave does not mandate any guarantee that your job will be available when you are ready to return.

State Disability Insurance: If you are unable to work due to a non-work related medical condition or injury you may be entitled to State Disability Insurance (SDI). SDI benefits are paid by the state and are financed from mandatory payroll tax deductions from all employees' wages. Questions regarding SDI benefits should be directed to the CEO or the state's Employment Development Department.

Unemployment Compensation: We contribute each year to the California Unemployment Insurance Fund on behalf of our employees.

Social Security: Social Security is an important part of every employee's retirement benefit. We pay a matching contribution to each employee's Social Security taxes.

Workers' Compensation: VCE purchases a workers' compensation insurance policy to protect you while you are employed by us. The policy covers you in case of occupational injury or illness. It is your responsibility to notify a member of management immediately if injured. Please refer to the Workers' Compensation policy for additional information.

We provide workers' compensation insurance for our employees as required by state law. The insurance provides important protection for employees who suffer a work-related injury. We encourage you to report all workplace injuries immediately and to take advantage of the benefits provided by our workers' compensation insurance if you are injured on the job.

Workers' compensation insurance provides important protection for employees who suffer an injury at work. Unfortunately, we understand that some employees are encouraged to file fraudulent workers' compensation claims. For your own protection, you should know that the California Insurance Frauds Protection Act provides that it is unlawful for any person to:

"Make or cause to be made any knowingly false or fraudulent material statement or material representation for the purpose of obtaining . . . compensation . . . and shall be punished by imprisonment in county jail for one year, or in the state prison for two, three or five years, or by a fine not exceeding Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000.00) . . . or by both imprisonment and fine."

Our policy is to investigate all questionable workers' compensation claims. If they appear to be fraudulent, they are referred to the Bureau of Fraudulent Claims and the District Attorney's office.

Section 125 (Cafeteria Plan): Through the flexible spending account or the health savings account, you may designate an annual dollar amount of your before-tax income to pay for certain eligible expenses. Particular care should be taken to assure that the funds required in the flexible spending account are not over estimated as unused funds cannot be returned to the participant at the end of the plan year. Please refer to the booklets for information about the program. If you need additional information or change forms, please speak with the CEO.

Domestic Partners

VCE believes that basic medical/dental/vision coverage should be available to employees and their dependents. To recognize non-traditional family arrangements and to demonstrate our commitment to our community of employees and their families, VCE has instituted a Domestic Partners Policy. This policy gives you the opportunity to cover a long-term, significant same sex partner under our benefits plans, as well as opposite sex partners for employees over 62 years of age. VCE wishes to make it clear that it cannot guarantee confidentiality of the relationship once a domestic partner is covered under our policy. See the CEO for more information.

Cal-COBRA

The California Continuation Benefits Replacement Act (Cal-COBRA) gives qualified employees and their dependents the opportunity to continue health insurance coverage under VCE's health plan when a "qualifying event" would normally result in the loss of eligibility. Some common qualifying events are resignation, termination of employment, or death of an employee; a reduction in an employee's hours or a leave of absence; an employee's divorce or legal separation; and a dependent child no longer meeting eligibility requirements. Under Cal-COBRA, you or the beneficiary pays the full cost of coverage at VCE's group rates. In addition, you or the beneficiary may be required to pay an administration fee. Our plan administrator will provide you with a written notice describing rights granted under Cal-COBRA when you become eligible for coverage under our plan. The notice contains important information about your rights and obligations.

Recreational Activities and Programs

VCE or its insurer will not be liable for payment of workers' compensation benefits for any injury that arises out of your voluntary participation in any off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activity that is not part of your work-related duties.

Leaves of Absence

Occasionally, for medical, personal, or other reasons, you may need to be temporarily released from the duties of your job with VCE. It is the policy of VCE to allow its eligible employees to apply for and be considered for certain specific leaves of absence.

All requests for leaves of absence shall be submitted in writing to your supervisor. Each request shall provide sufficient detail such as the reason for the leave, the expected duration of the leave, and the relationship of family members, if applicable. When you become aware of your need for leave, requests should be provided at least 30 days in advance. If your need for leave is not foreseeable, you should follow VCE's customary notice and procedural requirements for requesting leave. Failure to return to work as scheduled from an approved leave of absence or to inform your supervisor of an acceptable reason for not returning as scheduled will be considered a voluntary resignation of employment. While on a leave of absence you may not obtain other employment or apply for unemployment insurance. If either of these instances occurs, you may be viewed as having voluntarily resigned from VCE.

You will not accrue PTO while you are on an unpaid leave of absence. There are several types of leaves for which you may be eligible.

Medical Leaves of Absence

A medical leave of absence may be granted for non-work related temporary medical disabilities (other than pregnancy, childbirth and related medical conditions) until the end of the month in which the leave began with a doctor's written certificate of disability (unless leave of a longer duration is required by law). Requests for leave should be made in writing as far in advance as possible, but, requests should be provided at least 30 days in advance. If your need for leave is not foreseeable, you should follow VCE's customary notice and procedural requirements for requesting leave. If you are granted a medical leave, you are required to use any accrued sick pay. You also may use any PTO previously accrued.

A medical leave begins on the first day your doctor certifies that you are unable to work and ends when your doctor certifies that you are able to return to work. Your supervisor will supply you with a form for your doctor to complete, showing the date you were disabled and the estimated date you will be able to return to work. Upon your return, you must present a doctor's certificate showing fitness to return to work. If you need a medical-related leave longer than VCE can, consistent with business necessity and reasonable accommodation, approve, you will be advised.

For the duration of any leave of absence, health and life insurance benefits ordinarily provided by VCE, and for which you are otherwise eligible, will be continued until the last day of the month in which the leave begins. For the duration of a pregnancy disability leave, health and life insurance benefits ordinarily provided by VCE, and for which you are otherwise eligible, will be continued for the duration of your pregnancy disability leave. During this time, you will be required to contribute your portion of the premium on the same basis as you would have been required during your normal working relationship, including payment of any premium for the dependent coverage you have elected.

If you wish to continue these benefits you may do so by electing to continue the benefit through the CAL-COBRA provisions, and by paying the applicable premiums.

You will not accrue PTO while you are on an unpaid medical leave of absence.

If returning from a non-work related medical leave, you will be offered the same position held at the time of leaving, if available. However, we cannot guarantee that your job or a similar job will be available upon your return. If VCE is unable to provide a job for you at the end of your leave, we will end your employment, but you will be eligible to apply for any opening that may arise for which you are qualified.

Bereavement Leave

VCE provides regular full-time and regular part-time employees up to three (3) days' paid bereavement leave in the event of a death in your immediate family. For purposes of this policy, "immediate family" includes your spouse, parent, child, sibling; your spouse's parent, child, or sibling; your long-time companion or domestic partner; and your grandparents or grandchildren. If you need to take time off due to the death of an immediate family member you should contact your supervisor. Your supervisor may approve additional unpaid time off.

Bone Marrow and Organ Donation Leave

Employees who are donating an organ to another person may take a leave of absence not exceeding 30 business days (and which may be taken in one or more periods) in any one-year. Employees who are donating their bone marrow to another person may take a leave of absence not exceeding 5 business days (and which may be taken in one or more periods) in any one year.

Requests for leave should be made in writing as far in advance as possible. You must provide a written medical certification from your health care provider to VCE that shows that you are a bone marrow or organ donor and that there is a medical necessity for the donation.

Bone Marrow and Organ Donation leave is a paid leave; however, you are required to use up to 5 days of accrued but unused sick or PTO leave for bone marrow donation, and up to 2 weeks of accrued but unused sick or PTO leave for organ donation.

For the duration of a Bone Marrow or Organ Donation leave of absence, health and life insurance benefits ordinarily provided by VCE, and for which you are otherwise eligible, will be continued until the last day of the month in which the leave begins. During this time, you will be required to contribute your portion of the premium on the same basis as you would have been required during your normal working relationship, including payment of any premium for the dependent coverage you have elected.

When you are ready to return to work after a Bone Marrow or Organ Donation leave, you must provide certification from your medical care provider that you are able to safely perform all of the essential functions of your position with or without reasonable accommodation. Except as otherwise allowed by law, you are entitled, upon return from leave, to be reinstated in the position you held before the Bone Marrow or Organ Donation leave, or to be placed in a comparable position with comparable benefits, pay, and terms and conditions of employment.

Civil Air Patrol Leave

Employees who volunteer for the California Wing of the Civil Air Patrol are allowed up to ten days of unpaid leave each year. This leave covers employees who are needed to respond to an emergency operational mission who have been employed by VCE for at least 90 days immediately preceding the requested leave. VCE reserves the right to verify the need for the leave with the Air Patrol.

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Victim Leave

VCE takes threats and actions of domestic abuse and sexual assault against our employees very seriously, and wants employees to feel free to obtain services to keep themselves and their dependents safe.

If at any time you need to be absent from work because you have been a victim of domestic violence or sexual assault, and you need to take time off to ensure your safety, seek medical treatment, or receive counseling as a result of domestic violence or sexual assault, please let your supervisor or the CEO know immediately. Your privacy will be protected to the greatest extent possible. You may use accrued PTO or sick leave in lieu of unpaid time off for these purposes.

Jury Duty or Witness Leave

You may want to fulfill your civic responsibilities by serving on a jury or as a witness as required by law. Absences from work due to jury or witness services may be taken as PTO, or you may request unpaid leave for the length of absence. VCE will comply with all federal and state requirements for jury and witness pay for exempt employees. You may be requested to provide written verification from the court clerk of having served as a juror or witness.

Prior to taking jury duty or witness leave, you must provide the jury duty or witness summons to your supervisor. You must provide the summons as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made to cover your absence. You are expected to report for work whenever the court schedule permits, including reporting for half- or partial work days. If you are called for jury duty during a particularly busy time, VCE may ask you to request the court postpone your mandatory jury duty to a more convenient time for VCE. You may receive fees and transportation reimbursement from the court for appearing as a juror or witness. You will retain all fees paid for appearing as a juror or witness, plus any transportation reimbursements received.

Military Leave

If you wish to serve in the military and take military leave you should contact the CEO for information about your rights before and after such leave. You are entitled to reinstatement upon completion of military service provided you return or apply for reinstatement within the time allowed by law.

Parental Leave

VCE recognizes the importance of supporting employees in their journey of parenthood and promoting worklife balance. This policy establishes guidelines for parental leave, which encompasses both maternity and paternity leave, to provide employees with the opportunity to bond with their newborn or newly adopted child and to adjust to the demands of parenthood.

Eligibility: This policy applies to all full-time employees and covers both biological and adoptive parents.

Parental Leave:

VCE offers 4 weeks (1 month) of fully paid parental leave at the employee's base salary (less applicable taxes), providing them with dedicated time to care for and nurture their newborn or newly adopted child. Employees must provide reasonable notice and share their expected dates of absence with their manager and Human Resources. During parental leave, employees will retain access to applicable benefits, as outlined in our employee benefit policies. Employees may choose to take parental leave all at once or in increments, subject to discussion and agreement with their managers.

- **Maternity Leave:** Time off before and after childbirth.
- **Paternity Leave:** Time off for non-birth parents, enabling them to support their partners and bond with their newborn or newly adopted child.
- **Adoption Leave:** Time off for employees who adopt a child to provide them with time to integrate the child into their family and establish a nurturing environment.

Parental leave may run concurrently with applicable federal (FMLA) and state (PDL, CFRA) leave requirements and regulations. Contact Human Resources for more details.

Pregnancy Disability (Eligibility and Terms) Leave

Female employees are entitled to an unpaid Pregnancy Disability Leave (PDL) during the time they are disabled due to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. This leave will be for the period of disability, up to four months or 17 1/3 workweeks. You are “disabled by pregnancy” if you are unable because of pregnancy to work at all, are unable to perform the essential functions of your job, or to perform these functions without undue risk to successful completion of your pregnancy, or to other persons.

Leave may be taken intermittently or on a reduced work schedule when medically advisable, as determined by your medical care provider. Medical certification is required, and the length of Pregnancy Disability Leave will depend on the medical necessity for the leave. If you need intermittent leave or leave on a reduced schedule, VCE may require you to transfer, during the period of the intermittent or reduced schedule leave, to an available alternative position for which you are qualified and which better accommodates your recurring periods of leave. Transfer to an alternative position may include altering an existing job to better accommodate your need for intermittent leave or a reduced work schedule.

Applying For Leave

If possible, you should give at least 30 days’ notice requesting a pregnancy-related leave. This notice must provide and include the expected date on which the leave will begin, written certification from your medical care provider stating the anticipated delivery date and the duration of the leave.

Return to Work

Before returning to work, you must provide a release from your medical care provider certifying that you are able to safely perform all of the essential functions of your position with or without reasonable accommodation. VCE will reinstate you to your position unless:

1. Your job has ceased to exist for legitimate business reasons;
2. Your job could not be kept open or filled by a temporary employee without substantially undermining VCE’s ability to operate safely and efficiently;
3. You have directly or indirectly indicated your intention not to return;
4. You are no longer able to perform the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodation;
5. You have exceeded the length of the approved leave; or
6. You are no longer qualified for the job.

If VCE cannot reinstate you to the position you held before the pregnancy disability leave began, VCE will offer you a comparable position, provided that a comparable position exists and is available, and provided that filling the available position would not substantially undermine VCE’s ability to operate safely and efficiently.

Integration With Other Benefits

A pregnancy disability leave is unpaid, but you are required to use your accrued sick leave during the leave. In addition, you may elect to use accrued PTO during the leave. Sick leave and PTO will supplement any State Disability Insurance benefits. VCE will maintain group medical benefits during a pregnancy disability leave as required by law. No additional PTO, sick leave or holiday pay will accrue during the leave (except during the time period you are using sick leave or PTO). You may also, however, be eligible for short term disability benefits.

Continuation of Medical Benefits

For the duration of your PDL leave of absence, health and life insurance benefits ordinarily provided by VCE, and for which you are otherwise eligible, will be continued for the duration of your pregnancy disability leave. During this time, you will be required to contribute your portion of the premium on the same basis as you would have been required during your normal working relationship, including payment of any premium for the dependent coverage you have elected. If you fail to return to work at the conclusion of PDL leave and wish to continue these benefits, you may do so by electing to continue the benefit through the Cal-COBRA provisions, and by paying the applicable premiums.

School Appearance Leave

If you are the parent or guardian of a child who has been suspended from school and you receive a notice from your child's school requesting that you attend a portion of a school day in the child's classroom, you may take unpaid time to appear at the school, unless you use accrued PTO. Before your planned absence, you must give reasonable notice to your supervisor that you have been requested to appear by your child's school.

Time Off for Victims of a Violent or Serious Crime

Under certain circumstances, employees who are victims of serious crimes may take time off work to participate in judicial proceedings. Qualified family members of such crime victims may also be eligible to take time off from work to participate in judicial proceedings. The law defines a serious crime to include violent or serious felonies, such as felonies involving theft or embezzlement, crimes involving vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated, child abuse, physical abuse of an elder or dependent adult, stalking, solicitation for murder, hit-and-run causing death or injury, driving under the influence causing injury, and sexual assault. When possible, you must provide us with advance notice of the need for the time off. Your privacy will be protected to the greatest extent possible. Time away from work for non-exempt employees will be without pay, unless you wish to use your accrued PTO or sick leave to cover the period of absence.

Time Off To Vote

If you do not have sufficient time outside of working hours to vote in a statewide election, you may, without loss of pay, take off up to two hours of working time to vote. Such time must be at the beginning or end of the regular working shift, whichever allows the most free time for voting and the least time off from working, unless otherwise mutually agreed. You must notify us at least two working days in advance to arrange a voting time.

Volunteer Emergency Duty Leave

VCE will allow unpaid time off to employees who perform emergency duty as a volunteer firefighter, reserve peace officer, emergency rescue personnel, an officer, employee, or member of a disaster medical response entity sponsored or requested by the state. If you are a volunteer firefighter, or perform other emergency

personnel duties, please alert your supervisor so that he or she may be aware of the fact that you may have to take time off for emergency duty. When possible, you must provide us with advance notice of the need for the time off. Time away from work will be without pay, unless you wish to use your accrued PTO or sick leave to cover the period of absence.

Workers' Compensation

We, in accordance with state law, provide insurance coverage for employees in case of a work related injury. To ensure that you receive any workers' compensation benefits to which you may be entitled, you will need to:

1. Immediately report any work-related injury to your supervisor.
2. Seek medical treatment and follow-up care if required.
3. Complete a written Employee's Claim Form (DWC Form 1) and return it to your supervisor.

Provide us with certification from your health care provider regarding the need for workers' compensation disability leave and your ability to return to work from the leave.

Return to Work Policy

VCE is committed to returning injured employees to modified or alternative work as soon after a work related injury as possible. Temporarily modifying your job or providing you with an alternative position will do this. Your medical condition along with any limitations or restrictions given by the attending physician will be considered as a priority when identifying the modified/alternative position.

The program is intended to provide our employees with an opportunity to continue as valuable members of our team while recovering from a work related injury. We want to minimize any adverse effects of an ongoing disability on our employees. This program is intended to promote speedy recovery, while keeping the employees' work patterns and income consistent. At the same time, we benefit from having our employees providing a service and contributing to the overall productivity of our business. VCE retains discretion to decide whether to provide modified duty.

Receipt and Acknowledgment of VCE Employee Handbook

I have received my copy of VCE's employee handbook. I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to read and familiarize myself with the policies and procedures contained in the handbook.

At-Will Employment

I further understand that my employment is at-will, and neither VCE nor I have entered into a contract regarding the duration of my employment. I am free to terminate my employment with VCE at any time, with or without cause. Likewise, VCE has the right to terminate my employment with or without cause, at the discretion of VCE. No employee of VCE can enter into an employment contract for a specified period of time, or make any agreement contrary to this policy without the written approval from the CEO.

Future Revisions

We reserve the right to revise, modify, delete or add to any and all policies, procedures, work rules or benefits stated in this employee handbook or in any other document, except for the policy of at-will employment. Any written changes to this employee handbook will be distributed to all employees so that you will be aware of the new policies

or procedures. No oral statements or representations can in any way change or alter the provisions of this employee handbook.

Receipt and Acknowledgement of VCE Handouts

Illness and Injury Prevention Plan

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the VCE’s Illness & Injury Prevention Plan and that I agree to abide by these policies.

Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy

I certify that I have read VCE’s Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy and agree to abide fully by its terms. I understand that as a condition of my employment, I may be subjected to drug testing and that my privacy rights are thereby limited. I also understand that I must notify VCE of any conviction for a drug violation that occurs within five days after such a conviction. I understand that any violation of the policy may result in serious disciplinary action, including immediate termination.

Employee’s Printed Name _____ Position _____

Employee’s Signature _____ Date _____

Receipt and Acknowledgement of VCE Handouts

Sexual Harassment Prevention Handout

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the enclosed pamphlet on sexual harassment prevention in the workplace and reporting procedures in the event that harassment occurs.

State Disability Insurance, Paid Family Leave and Unemployment Handouts

I acknowledge that I have received the enclosed pamphlets on state disability insurance, paid family leave and unemployment insurance as provided by the Employment Development Department.

Workers' Compensation Handout

I acknowledge that I have received the enclosed pamphlet on workers' compensation benefits as provided by the California Chamber of Commerce.

Employee's Printed Name _____

Position _____

Employee's Signature _____

Date _____

VALLEY CLEAN ENERGY ALLIANCE

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-___

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF VALLEY CLEAN ENERGY ALLIANCE APPROVING
2026 UPDATES TO THE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

WHEREAS, the Valley Clean Energy Alliance (“VCE”) was formed as a community choice aggregation agency (“CCA”) on November 16, 2016, under the Joint Exercise of Power Act, California Government Code sections 6500 et seq., among the County of Yolo, and the Cities of Davis and Woodland, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, provide electricity, carry out programs to reduce energy consumption, develop local jobs in renewable energy, and promote energy security and rate stability in all of the member jurisdictions. The City of Winters, located in Yolo County, was added as a member of VCE and a party to the JPA in December of 2019;

WHEREAS, on January 18, 2018, the Valley Clean Energy Employee Handbook was adopted;

WHEREAS, on January 23, 2019, the Board approved updates to the employment regulations and edits to payroll operational procedures to the Employee Handbook;

WHEREAS, on July 11, 2019, the Board approved updates to the Employee Handbook incorporating new laws and personnel requirements;

WHEREAS, on February 13, 2020 the Board approved updates to the Employee Handbook to reflect benefits eligibility date; and,

WHEREAS, on February 11, 2021, the Board approved updates to the Employee Handbook to adjust medical contributions amounts.

WHEREAS, on April 14, 2022, the Board approved updates to the Employee Handbook to update the General Manager to Executive Officer, working schedules, discretionary pay for performance, compensation equity adjustments, paid time off payout, retirement loan programs, and annual adjustment to medical contributions to maintain parity to costs.

WHEREAS, on February 9, 2023, the Board approved updates to the Employee Handbook to adjust medical contributions amounts.

WHEREAS, on January 11, 2024, the Board approved updates to the employee handbook to grant employees Sick Leave, additional (2) floating annual holidays for a total of 12 holidays days annually, and the annual adjustment to medical contributions to maintain parity to costs.

WHEREAS, on February 13, 2025, the Board Approved updates to the Employee Handbook to include a jury duty or witness leave section to grant regular employees the ability to fulfill their

civic responsibilities, grant education and professional development assistance up to \$5,000 per year, and the annual adjustment to medical contributions.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of Directors of the Valley Clean Energy Alliance resolves as follows:

1. Adopt changes to the Employee Handbook to add parental leave to provide regular employees with additional paid parental leave for dedicated time to care for and nurture their newborn or newly adopted child, and the annual adjustment to medical contributions to maintain parity in costs, as detailed in the attached February 2026 redline employee handbook.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED, at a regular meeting of the Valley Clean Energy Alliance, held on the ____ day of _____ 2026, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

_____, VCE Chair

Alisa M. Lembke, VCE Board Secretary