Iowa Department for the Blind

Employee Manual

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# Preamble

The Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) Employee manual is a public statement of the common set of values and principles used to promote and maintain high standards of behavior and promote a collegial and productive work environment. This document is intended to supplement the State of Iowa Employee Handbook. IDB staff are required to sign both the State of Iowa Employee Handbook and this manual within two weeks of beginning employment with IDB.

IDB is committed to furthering the ability of persons who are blind to function competently, independently, and successfully not only in their own environments but also as fully integrated and participating citizens in the broader society. To this end, all staff, working at all professional levels, shall treat persons who are blind with dignity and respect and will provide the best possible services which can be offered, based upon the most current techniques and training principles available at the time. It is the ongoing objective of IDB staff to act in an ethical manner. Any action in violation of either the spirit or purpose of this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

It is the responsibility of each IDB staff member to review and to come fully to understand these policies, work rules, and procedures. A lack of knowledge or understanding of policy may not be used as a defense against a charge of unethical conduct. The work rules, procedures and policies described in this manual are not conditions of employment. This manual does not create an express or implied contract between IDB and any employee.

# Definitions

0.01. “Blind” means any person who is totally blind or any person who is functionally blind — that is, a person who is partially blind and who uses alternative techniques to enable him or her to perform a majority of life’s essential activities or functions competently, independently, competitively and successfully.

0.02. “IDB” means the Iowa Department for the Blind

0.03. “Staff” means anyone employed by the Iowa Department for the Blind as an employee or contractor.

0.04. “Client" means a blind person as defined in section 0.01 above who is a child or student receiving transition services; an adult receiving Vocational Rehabilitation services, Rehabilitation Teaching services or Independent Living services from the Iowa Department for the Blind.

0.05. “Instructor” means any staff member engaged in providing adjustment to blindness training to a client. This means Center Instructors, VRTs, and ILRTs. This does not include RTSs.

0.06. "Case Manager" means anyone responsible for determining client eligibility for services and developing a rehabilitation plan.

0.07. “Patron” is anyone receiving any services from the Iowa Library for the Blind and Print Disabled

0.08. “Purchaser” is anyone recommending or authorizing the purchase of any goods or services on behalf of IDB or a client.

0.09. “Key” is any physical key, key card, dongle, or other object that allows access to any building, room, drawer, storage and retrieval system, or device.

0.10. “Logon information” is any username, password, passphrase, passcode, secret question or answer, account name, or account number that allows access to a physical or electronic resource or source of information.

0.11. “Indirect service staff” are staff members who are not involved in instruction, case management, or the provision of direct services to patrons.

0.12. “Direct service staff” includes instructors, case managers, BEP Business Counselors, VR specialists staff providing direct service to library patrons.

0.13. “Violence” for the purposes of this manual is equivalent to the definition provided in the state employee handbook.

0.14. “A dangerous weapon” is any instrument or device designed primarily for use in inflicting death or injury upon a human being or animal, and which is capable of inflicting death or injury upon a human being when used in the manner for which it was designed. Additionally, any instrument or device of any sort whatsoever which is actually used in such a manner as to indicate that the individual intends to inflict death or injury upon the other, and which, when so used, is capable of inflicting death upon a human being, is a dangerous weapon. Dangerous weapons include, but are not limited to, any offensive weapon, pistol, revolver, or other firearm, dagger, razor, stiletto, switchblade knife, or knife having a blade exceeding five inches in length.

0.15. “Personal contact” means an encounter in which two or more persons are in visual or physical proximity to each other. Personal contact does not require a physical touching or oral communication, although it may include these types of contacts.

0.16. “Social media” includes, but is not limited to: video, wiki postings, Facebook, Twitter, Linked-In, YouTube, Instagram, Flickir, Medium, Slack, Tumblr, What's App, Snap Chat, chat rooms, personal blogs, podcasts, or other similar forms of online journals, diaries, or personal messaging systems.

0.17. “IDB’s IT resources” include all computer systems, tablets, phones, and associated software and functions; e.g., the Internet and Internet connections, email systems, and any IDB equipment connected to or used by such resources.

0.18. “Orientation Center Training” is participation in our Blindness Empowerment and Independence center training program wherein any participant with any vision must wear learning shades during all activities to ensure that the participant can perform all tasks non-visually.

0.19. “Readers and drivers” are non-employees engaged to provide reading and/or driving services to a staff member or client.

0.20. “Family member” means the employee’s spouse, children, grandchildren, foster children, stepchildren, legal wards, parents, grandparents, foster parents, stepparents, brothers, foster brothers, stepbrothers, sons-in-law, brothers-in-law, sisters, foster sisters, stepsisters, daughters-in-law, sisters-in-law, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, first cousins, corresponding relatives of the employee’s spouse and other persons who are members of the employee’s household.

0.21. An “in-grade increase” is a percentage increase in an employee’s annual salary related to job performance.

0.22. The “eligibility date” is the day on which an in-grade increase takes effect. It is generally the anniversary of the end of an employee's probationary period.

0.23. A “paper suspension” is a paid suspension where the employee continues to perform their regular job duties. A paper suspension carries the same weight as a “non-working” or unpaid suspension. A supervisor will decide whether to issue a paper or non-working suspension.

0.24. A “non-working suspension” is an unpaid suspension where the employee is not working and should not come into the building or log in to any IDB systems.

0.25. “Learning shades”, also called sleep shades, are a covering worn over the eyes to block all visual information.

0.26. “Actively participate” means to remain awake, listen to comments made by others, respond when spoken to, and add at least one substantive comment or question to the discussion.

0.27. “Business class” is the daily group discussion of blindness related topics and philosophy conducted for center students and staff in training or receiving continuing education.

0.28. A “written reprimand” is a letter that serves as written notice of disciplinary action. It is placed in the employee’s personnel file.

0.29 “Conflicts of interest” include purchases from a spouse, domestic partner, direct descendant, direct ascendant (parent, grandparent, great-grandparent, etc.), sibling, dependent, member of household, or business partner (collectively, “related parties”).

0.30 “Direct or indirect financial interest” means an ownership or other financial interest in a business entity; or any relationship, contractual or otherwise, which could result in a monetary or non-monetary gain to a purchaser.

0.31. “Confidential information” is defined as follows: \* Personal information defined by Iowa Code 715c. Personal information includes an individual’s first name/initial and last name in combination with one or more of the following:

* Social security number.
* Driver’s license number.
* Unique identification number (e.g., Iowa Student State ID or Medicaid ID).
* Financial account number, credit card number, or debit card number in combination with any required security code, access code, or password.
* Unique electronic identifier or routing code, in combination with any required security code, access code, or password.
* Unique biometric data, such as a fingerprint, retina or iris image, or other unique physical representation or digital representation of biometric data.
* Any information or record deemed confidential under Section 22.7 of Iowa Code Chapter 22, also known as the Iowa Open Records Law.
* All protected health information for agencies covered by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
* All protected credit card information as defined by the Payment Card Industry – Data Security Standard (PCI-DSS).
* Any other information that if lost, disclosed, corrupted, or accessed by unauthorized means would violate state or federal law.
* All information defined as confidential by contact/agreement with agency trading partners, customers, vendors or other entities.
* Any information deemed confidential under the administrative rules of the Department for the Blind (111–13.13(2), IAC).

0.32 "Merit staff" are staff members occupying positions deemed to be merit covered by the State of Iowa. The merit system is a system of human resource administration based upon merit principles to govern the appointment, compensation, promotion, welfare, development, transfer, layoff, removal, and discipline of its civil employees, and other incidents of state employment. Merit covered employees may be disciplined or discharged for just cause.

0.33 "Non-merit staff" are staff members occupying positions exempted from the State of Iowa merit system by statute. These positions are considered at-will and non-merit employees serve at the pleasure of your Appointing Authority. This means you may be disciplined or discharged for any lawful reason at any time without regard to cause or just cause.

0.34 "Flexing or using flex time" refers to the use of an alternative schedule on a temporary basis.

0.35 "Policies" are courses or principles of action adopted by the Iowa Commission for the Blind that govern and direct agency actions.

0.36 "Procedures" are established and official ways of conducting agency business. Procedures may be altered to deal with changing circumstances and do not require approval by the Iowa Commission for the Blind.

# Our Mission Statement

Empower blind Iowans to be gainfully employed and live independently.

# Our Vision Statement:

To be the world’s leader in blind rehabilitation services.

# Our Value Statements:

We value blind Iowans therefore:

* We believe in each individual’s ability to be independent.
* We act with a sense of urgency and responsiveness in serving every individual.
* We support each individual’s right to informed choices.
* We value engagement and independence for individuals of all ages.
* We promote a positive attitude toward blindness.
* We expect blind persons to achieve their full potential.
* We provide opportunities for blind persons to be fully contributing members of their communities.

All staff are valued and expected to demonstrate:

* Passion for what we do everyday.
* Commitment to make positive differences in the lives of blind Iowans.
* Respect for the contributions of each staff member.
* Ethical behavior, honesty, integrity and trustworthiness.
* Innovative and proactive approaches in serving each client.
* Progressive and professional leadership.
* Collaboration and teamwork that benefits each individual we serve.
* Collaboration with community, local, state and federal partners.

# Our Culture Statement

We use a client-centric approach to empower clients to achieve successful outcomes.

# Our Philosophy of Blindness

Empowerment and complete integration into the broader society are the aspirational objectives for clients and patrons of IDB services. The IDB staff strive at all times to help each client or patron achieve these objectives and become the very best that they are capable of becoming.

IDB staff understand that persons who are blind are members of a visible and identifiable minority and that, therefore, the primary problem faced by persons who are blind is attitudinal rather than physical—that is, there are widespread public misconceptions and misunderstandings about blindness which lead to beliefs and feelings of inferiority. While these public attitudes about blindness are socially constructed rather than factual, they are prominent in our society and in the emotions of clients of services for the blind. Therefore, each of the blindness services which are provided by IDB must be designed and intended to teach clients and patrons of services a new and constructive set of attitudes, based upon an understanding that the prevailing views about blindness are wrong and harmful.

The IDB staff member understands that the overarching objective of the services which are being provided is to enable the blind client to come emotionally, not just intellectually, to understand that they are a normal person who can be truly independent and self-sufficient.

The IDB staff member understands that quality training in the skills or alternative techniques of blindness is essential to freedom and independence for persons who are blind and that the skills should not merely be introduced, they should be mastered by the client. The IDB staff member also understands, however, that the simple skills of blindness such as Braille or cane travel are not ends unto themselves but are merely small parts of a larger objective, helping the client adjust fully to blindness.

The IDB staff member understands that the blind client must learn to cope calmly and unemotionally with the unusual or demeaning things other people will do or say because of the public’s misconceptions about blindness. Therefore, discussions concerning prevailing misunderstandings and misconceptions and the client’s responses to them are appropriately sprinkled throughout class or training sessions.

The IDB staff member understands that the blind client must learn to blend in and be acceptable and desirable to the broader society. Therefore, discussions are appropriate to help the client learn what it takes in the way of good habits regarding appearance, punctuality, reliability, courtesy and the like for the blind person to be enabled to blend in satisfactorily.

# IDB Work Rules

General work rules are defined as rules that guide the personal conduct of employees relating to accomplishing the duties assigned by management. All employees are required to review and follow the work rules in the State of Iowa Employee Handbook as well as the rules listed below. These rules are not intended to cover every possible situation or occurrence that might result in disciplinary action. Other rules are provided by statute, administrative procedures, past practice, or by management to meet specific conditions. Additional rules may be developed which concern only individual positions, classifications, and/or work units when such rules are required by the nature of the work performed. Violations of these or any of those other applicable rules may also result in appropriate disciplinary action.

Appropriate disciplinary action will be determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the specific facts and circumstances involved. See ([link to disciplinary procedures])

When these rules refer to “authorized” or “unauthorized” conduct, the authorization shall be defined as verbal or written approval or disapproval by the appropriate supervisory authority. These rules typically apply only when you are engaged in the performance of state duties, unless otherwise specified.

Employees are expected to conduct themselves within the requirements of these and other work rules issued under the authority of state and federal laws and rules, and as provided by applicable collective bargaining agreements; however, employees should not carry out any instructions that would result in infractions of health or safety regulations or the violation of any local, state or federal regulations, laws, or rules. Upon the receipt of an illegal or health-threatening instruction, employees must report the concern to a higher-level supervisor immediately. Such higher-level supervisor may include without limitation the Director of the agency. Concerns involving the Director should be brought to the Iowa Commission for the Blind.

## Section 1: Professional Conduct & Job Performance

1.01 IDB staff will follow all policies and procedures included in this manual.

1.02 All IDB staff are required to follow all legal instructions and work directives provided by their supervisors. Direct instructions issued via email are equivalent to a work directive.

1.03 Poor work is not acceptable. Employees are expected to perform their work properly and efficiently and to meet performance standards.

1.04 Employees are expected to seek, accept and accurately complete assignments within deadlines and not neglect job duties.

1.05 Employees are expected to be attentive to their responsibilities and shall not loaf, loiter, sleep or engage in unauthorized personal business while on work time.

1.06 IDB Staff will enter correct dates of service into all case management and library information systems to ensure the integrity of all client and patron records.

1.07 The IDB staff member shall take responsibility for maintaining and improving competence by participating regularly in professional development and training opportunities. Including continuing education requirements.

1.08 The IDB staff member shall provide appropriate supervision to all readers, drivers, contractors, volunteers, and temporary employees who they employ or supervise.

1.09 IDB staff will not withhold or limit services to any client or patron based on race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identification, disability, political affiliation, or consumer group membership.

1.10 All IDB staff members shall take reasonable precautions to avoid imposing or inflicting harm upon the client or patron with whom that staff member is working.

1.11 All IDB staff members shall maintain relationships that do not exploit clients sexually, physically, emotionally, financially, socially or in any other manner.

1.12 All IDB Staff shall not, by their conduct, provide a basis for the impression that any person can influence them or enjoy their favor in the performance of their duties, or that they are affected by the kinship, rank, position, or influence of any party or person in the performance of their duties.

1.13 Employees shall not use, or attempt to use, their position to secure privileges or exemptions for themselves or others.

1.14 All IDB staff members shall accurately represent their credentials, qualifications, educational background, experience, training and competence.

1.15 All IDB staff members shall accurately represent the qualifications, views, contributions and recommendations of colleagues.

1.16 All IDB staff members shall provide clients and patrons with accurate information regarding available employment, education, or adjustment to blindness services.

1.17 All IDB staff members shall refrain from using or participating in the use of any form of communication that contains false, unprofessional, or fraudulent statements or claims concerning colleagues or IDB policies and actions.

1.18 All IDB staff shall refrain from posting disparaging or defamatory statements about IDB’s policies and administration, including social media communications that damage the agency’s goodwill and reputation.

1.19 The IDB staff member shall disclose any professional, personal, financial, business or volunteer affiliations that potentially could pose a conflict of interest on the IDB conflict of interest form. Any concerns regarding potential conflicts of interest should be discussed with the staff member’s supervisor. \*\*Note: A internal IDB conflict of interest form ([will be linked here to be used to report this and other necessary items]) \*\*

1.20 All purchasers, case managers, and instructors will complete and sign the Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form at the beginning of each state fiscal year and when a change occurs that alters the contents of the form.

1.21 Any IDB staff employing a reader or driver must obtain a signed confidentiality agreement from each reader driver that they employ.

1.22 No IDB staff may employ any family member as a reader, driver, or other service claimed on a travel reimbursement form.

1.23 No case manager or instructor may employ any family member of any active client to whom the staff member is currently providing service as a reader, driver, or other service claimed on a travel reimbursement form.

1.24 No IDB staff will be permitted to impact case services provided to any family member or anyone with whom they are having a physical or romantic relationship. Any such potential conflict of interest must be reported on the staff member’s conflict of interest disclosure form.

1.25 No IDB staff shall sell any goods or services to any client to whom they are providing any case service or has provided any case service in the last six months. This does not include participating in fundraisers where the ultimate recipient of the payment is a non-profit, charity, or school. This also does not include sales that are transacted via anonymizing sales platforms such as Amazon or Etsy.

1.26 No IDB staff shall buy any goods or services from any client to whom they are providing any case service or has provided any case service in the last six months. This does not include participating in fundraisers where the ultimate recipient of the payment is a non-profit, charity, or school. This also does not include sales that are transacted via anonymizing sales platforms such as Amazon or Etsy.

1.27 No IDB staff will be permitted to directly supervise any family member or anyone with whom that supervisor is having a physical or romantic relationship.

1.28 All IDB staff will obtain and maintain any state or private credentials required for the services which are being provided.

1.29 Only the director or the director’s designee is authorized to speak for IDB with respect to a reference for or comment about the work performance or character of a current or former employee.

1.30 The IDB staff member shall take adequate measures to prevent, and correct any accidental, unintentional or inadvertent breaches of this policy manual and report any breaches to their supervisor for curative action.

## Section 2: Safety and Security Rules

2.01 All IDB staff will ensure the security and proper use of all keys, confidential information, and logon information to which they have access.

2.02 All IDB staff members shall follow information security, physical security, and social media procedures in carrying out their job duties.

2.03 All IDB staff are required to observe all safety rules and report accidents immediately.

2.04 When the fire alarm is activated, all staff are required to exit the building in accordance with the evacuation procedures.

2.05 IDB staff will secure all IDB issued physical keys and key cards in their possession. Any lost or stolen key or key card should be reported to the employee’s supervisor and the facilities engineer within 24 hours of discovery.

2.06 All IDB issued smart phones must contain a complex passcode containing at least one letter rather than a 4 or 6 digit numeric passcode only.

2.07 All IDB issued cell phones must be set so that email messages, text messages, and other notifications potentially containing client information are not visible on the lock screen.

2.08 IDB staff will not store information deemed confidential (0.31.) on any unencrypted media, transmit such information via unencrypted email, or store such information in any unencrypted cloud service not owned and controlled by IDB. Including, but not limited to, Dropbox, iCloud, or Google Drive.

2.09 Email with confidential information shall not be sent by unauthorized personnel nor shall confidential agency information be transmitted using personal email accounts.

2.10 IDB staff will not store logon information on any non-IDB issued computers, phones, or other equipment.

2.11 Logon information will not be stored in any unlocked place or unencrypted media. It will also not be stored with the device to which it allows access.

2.12 No IDB contract covered staff will be required to check their email outside of work hours or using any non-IDB issued device.

2.13 If any IDB staff chooses to check their work email on any non-IDB issued device, they may not save their logon information on that device. They are also wholly and solely responsible for ensuring that the account is properly logged out and no confidential information is obtained by anyone other than its intended recipient.

2.14 Any IDB staff choosing to share any work calendar over which they have control with any account outside of the blind.state.ia.us domain must refrain from using any confidential information in any shared field.

2.15 Any lost or stolen IDB issued phones, computers, or other equipment must be reported directly to the IDB staff member’s supervisor and CTO within 24 hours of detection.

2.16 Any breach of information security must be reported directly to the IDB staff member’s supervisor and the CTO within 24 hours of detection.

2.17 All paper files containing confidential information must be secured when not in use. If they must be left in a vehicle, they must be stored in the trunk. If left in an office, that office must be locked or they must be stored in a locked file cabinet or drawer.

2.18 All state vehicles must be locked when not occupied.

2.19 IDB staff are prohibited from using IDB’s IT resources and communication systems for personal social media purposes, entertainment, or personal business.

2.20 IDB employees may not use personal devices such as phones, laptops, or tablets for social media, entertainment, or personal business purposes while on work time. However, employees may use their personal equipment and resources on non-work time; e.g., lunch hour, or authorized breaks to engage in social media, entertainment, or personal business. Personal devices should never be connected to the IDB Wi-Fi network, but may be connected to the IDB\_guest network. IDB staff may use the idb-guest internet connection to stream music on their personal device during work time, if doing so does not interfere with their work performance.

2.21 When using social media for business or personal purposes, employees must protect the privacy of IDB, its employees, clients, patrons, suppliers, and vendors and are prohibited from disclosing personal employee and non-employee information and any other proprietary, confidential, privileged, or non-public information to which employees have access. Such information includes, but is not limited to, client or patron information and financial data.

2.22 Only staff who have completed training in the use of a personal mobility device may instruct any client or patron in the use of that device.

2.23 IDB staff may only assist in the operation of a personal mobility device at the request of the client, patron, volunteer, colleague, or member of the public visiting the IDB building. Any IDB staff member who is requested to assist in the operation of a personal mobility device may do so if that IDB staff member feels comfortable providing the requested assistance. Any IDB staff member who provides assistance to an individual will follow the direction given by the individual in the course of providing the requested assistance.

## Section 3: Calendaring and Leave Rules

3.01 Working during a holiday, using compensatory time, flexing, or working any hours different from an IDB staff members regular work schedule must be approved by a supervisor in advance to working or using the applicable time.

3.02 Supervisors may request doctor’s notes or copies of obituaries for any funeral or sick leave request that has not been approved as FMLA leave.

3.03 Unscheduled absences must be reported no later than 30 minutes before the start of the work shift.

3.04 All staff are expected to comply with their manager’s calendaring directives. Supervisors have the right to set calendaring requirements for their work units and these requirements may limit or require calendar sharing.

3.05 All IDB staff must allow title and location level sharing of their calendars with all supervisors.

3.06 Employees’ calendars shall reflect significant times of at least 30 minutes in length when an employee plans to be absent from work or unavailable for most job functions.

3.07 IDB will not pay for or reimburse teleworking employees for expenses related to land line phones or internet access.

Policies 

# Hiring Policy

IDB prohibits discrimination in its employment policies and practices on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or pregnancy or pregnancy-related condition consistent with applicable state and federal policies and regulations. It is also the policy of the executive branch of state government in the State of Iowa to apply affirmative action measures to correct the underutilization of females, minorities, and persons with disabilities in the state employment system whenever remedial measures are appropriate. The agency is an equal employment opportunity and affirmative action employer.

IDB is committed to improving its overall diversity and will actively recruit job candidates who are part of racial and ethnic minorities, women, and people with disabilities. Because we recognize the positive impact having good blind role models has on our clients, we are committed to hiring competent blind people in all parts of our agency. We also encourage and promote the hiring of qualified blind people throughout state government. We are committed to assisting other state agencies in the removal of technological, societal and other barriers that might have limited the employment of blind persons within state government.

It is the policy of the Iowa Department for the Blind to conduct background checks on all staff and volunteers who have any exposure to confidential information, direct client or patron contact, or responsibility for handling public funds prior to making an offer of employment.

# Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

Regulations for the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (34 CFR 361.38), require the Iowa Department for the Blind (“IDB”) to adopt and implement policies and procedures to safeguard the confidentiality of all personal information, including photographs and lists of names. All personally identifiable information in the possession of IDB is to be used only for purposes directly related to the rehabilitation of the individual. IDB is also required to comply with public law 93–282, concerning the confidentiality of alcohol and drug abuse patient records, Code of Iowa section 228.1 on the release of mental health information, Code of Iowa section 141A.9 on the release of HIV/AIDS information, and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

The IDB staff member shall protect and keep confidential all privileged forms of written, verbal and electronic communication concerning the client, unless written consent has been provided by the client, or unless otherwise mandated by local, state or federal laws or regulations.

If research is to be conducted using information gathered by IDB staff members, through the provision of their services, the IDB staff member shall obtain informed consent from the blind client or clients with whom they are working before using any personal information which might be published as a result of the research. Only statistical information may be used without the client’s consent.

# Driver Policy

approved 12/3/19

## Driving for Employees

Drivers for IDB employees are contractors with that specific employee. This means that all arrangements and payment are handled by the employee. IDB will reimburse employees for hourly driver time and private mileage at the rate set forth in the Driver Procedures document.as outlined below.

In order to drive for an IDB employee, a driver must submit their driver’s license to the accounting department for a state driving record check. If the driver does not pass the driving record check, information will be sent to the driver and the recommending staff person. If the driver passes the driving record check, the driver will be informed of this and the driver’s name will be added to the approved driver list.

Driving time and mileage for purposes of payment begins and ends at the employee’s official domicile (the employee’s official work address) or DAS Fleet Services. Fleet Services is usually the start and end point when a State of Iowa vehicle is used. The employee domicile is the start and end point when a personal vehicle is used. For single-day trips, paid driver time includes all time between these points, regardless of employee lunch breaks. For overnight trips, driving time ends upon arrival at the hotel and begins upon leaving the hotel the next day.

Driver meals are only reimbursed for overnight trips. For day trips, employees and drivers are encouraged to discuss plans for bringing or purchasing food to meet everyone’s preference. Overnight meal and lodging reimbursement is governed by the same State of Iowa policies for employee reimbursement.

## Driving for Clients

Drivers for IDB clients are contracted by IDB. This means that arrangements and payment are handled by the department. Arrangements are generally made by the employee authorizing the client service.

In order to drive for IDB clients, except in cases where the client has chosen to have a family member drive for him/her, drivers must first be approved to drive for IDB employees. At this time the driver must complete a W–9 and return it to the accounting department before driving for anyone. Drivers will first be utilized by employees to familiarize them with State of Iowa driving procedures, assess their interactions with blind persons, and provide any training required. Upon the recommendation of IDB employees of potential client drivers to the IDB Education and Training Director, drivers will be asked to complete a background check paid for by the department. Drivers will not be allowed to drive clients until they have passed the background check.

Driver time and mileage begins either at the driver’s domicile, the IDB building, or Fleet Services as appropriate. For drivers living in the Des Moines metro area, which includes Polk, Dallas, Warren and Madison counties, their official domicile is the Iowa Department for the blind building at 524 4th St. For drivers not located in the Des Moines metro area, their official domicile is their home address.

For drivers utilizing a State of Iowa Fleet services vehicle where their driving time begins prior to 6:30 AM Monday, prior to 7 AM Tuesday through Friday, or any time Saturday, Sunday and official State of Iowa holidays, drivers may charge up to one half hour to pick up the keys the previous working day. In these cases, keys should be picked up between 4 and 4:30 PM.

While driving clients, drivers are not to stop for anything other than emergencies, fuel and restroom breaks unless prior arrangements have been made. Drivers should not stop for clients to purchase snacks and other food without prior approval by the arranging IDB employee.

IDB employees write authorizations for client driving based on the mileage between the locations involved and the time anticipated to travel between those locations and pick up and drop off clients. Delays greater than fifteen minutes as a result of clients not being ready, traffic, hazardous road conditions or other issues must be reported to the authorizing employee or their designee as soon as possible.

Upon completion of a driving trip, drivers are expected to submit an invoice to the IDB accounting department. Invoices must include the clients driven, times and miles covered. Invoices are expected to be received within one week of the provision of service. The invoice must include the driver’s original signature. IDB will make all efforts to process the invoice and provide payment within thirty days of receipt of invoice.

# Purchasing & Procurement Policy

Purchasers are strictly prohibited from accepting a bribe or succumbing to other attempts to exert undue influence with respect to the purchaser’s job responsibilities.

All purchasers shall comply with the provisions of Iowa Code chapters 8A, 26, 68B, and all other applicable procurement laws, rules, and policies in performing their procurement responsibilities, including those outlined in this policy. In the event of a conflict between this policy and applicable law, the applicable law shall take precedence.

An individual may have a conflict of interest even though a private advantage was not sought or actually gained.

Iowa Code section 68B.2Aƒ (1) prohibits state employees from engaging in outside employment or activities which may conflict with the employee’s official duties and responsibilities. The statute contains a list of things that are deemed to be unacceptable conflicts of interest. However, employees should keep in mind that the list is not exhaustive; unacceptable conflicts of interest exist in other situations. Iowa Code section 68B.3 prohibits a state employee from selling goods or services to a state agency if the sale is in excess of $2,000 in any one occurrence, unless the sale is made after public notice and a competitive bidding process. Even if the sale is permissible, the state employee must disclose the sale by filing a report with the Iowa Ethics and Campaign Disclosure Board within twenty days of the sale. These provisions apply to all transactions, including those which involve a targeted small business in which an employee has a direct or indirect financial interest or other interest, as such terms are defined in this policy.

Purchasers shall not knowingly solicit or acquire goods or services from a related party. A supplier or service provider in a proposed procurement with the state is a related party of a purchaser conducting the procurement if the purchaser:

* Has any direct or indirect financial interest or other interest, as such terms are defined below, in the supplier or service provider; or
* Controls or actively influences the activities of, the supplier or service provider, or who has a related party who owns or controls or actively influences the activities of the supplier or service provider; or
* Has an immediate family member who is employed by the supplier or service provider in a management or sales capacity.

Other interests of a purchaser include serving as a compensated or non-compensated director, officer, consultant, broker, agent, employee, or representative of any business entity proposing to conduct business with the state, direct or indirect financial interest.

If a procurement project would involve a purchaser who has, or potentially may have, a related party conflict, the staff member shall advise the director in writing who, in turn, will assign the procurement project to a staff member not having a related party conflict.

If a procurement project would involve a purchaser from another state agency who has, or potentially may have, a related party conflict, the purchaser shall advise its agency management in writing. The agency management shall then assign the procurement project to a staff member who does not have a related party conflict. If the agency fails to do so, the purchaser shall provide a copy of the written notice to the director who, in turn, will discuss with agency management.

If a related party issue involving a purchaser is discovered either during the procurement process or after the Department has entered into a contract with the related party, the matter shall be referred to the purchaser’s management as described above. Management will review the matter and determine the appropriate response and actions with respect to the purchaser, the procurement process, and the contract with the related party.

If a purchaser conducts a known related party transaction, or fails to disclose a related party conflict, the purchaser may be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Purchasers shall disclose all real, apparent, or potential conflicts of interest for review as described below. Disclosures by Department purchasers shall be made to the director. Disclosures are required in three instances:

* Annual disclosures: At the beginning of each fiscal year, purchasers shall report direct, indirect or other financial interests that pose or may pose a real, apparent, or potential conflict of interest. These disclosures shall be updated both annually and as new reportable interests are obtained or as new reportable activities occur.
* Disclosure of related parties: At the beginning of each fiscal year, purchasers shall provide written notice of any known related party in which they hold a direct, indirect financial or other interest.
* Situational disclosures: situations such as a bid (formal or informal) or request for proposal may result in the discovery of a direct, indirect or other financial interest previously unknown or inadvertently overlooked and not disclosed that may pose a conflict of interest under this policy. Such situational disclosures shall be made as soon as practicable after the purchaser learns of the real, apparent, or potential conflict of interest.

When a disclosure is made under this policy, the actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest will be reviewed by the purchaser’s management. If a conflict of interest is found to exist, appropriate steps shall be taken by the parties to manage, reduce, or eliminate the conflict of interest.

As a routine part of conducting the annual audit IDB staff may be asked whether they know about fraudulent activity. IDB staff are welcome to report any suspicions of fraud to the CFO or to the director. You may also contact the state auditor’s office at (515)281–5834 whether or not department management is informed at all. Other means of reporting fraud also exist. Certain whistleblower protections in the Code are in sections 8A.417, 70A.28–29, and chapter 685.

No purchase of goods or services shall be made on behalf of IDB from any agency, community rehabilitation program, or other business holding a current certificate under 14C of the Fair Labor Standards Act which allows that employer to pay workers with disabilities less than the minimum wage.

# Staff Training & Continuing Education Policy

Because providing quality services to blind Iowans is a priority of our agency, we are committed to staff training and continuing education. All IDB staff will participate in staff training that consists of blindness skills and philosophy training as outlined in section 1, a new staff seminar and shadowing of staff in different work units as outlined in section 2, and continuing education as outlined in section3.

Staff members who do not successfully complete these requirements will not be retained beyond their probationary period. Continuing education requirements will be included in staff member’s IPPE.

## Section 1: Blindness Skills & Philosophy Training

All new permanent full-time staff hired by IDB will complete adjustment to blindness emersion training in our Blindness Empowerment and Independence Center. base Requirements for this training are as follows:

### Indirect Staff

* Actively participate in 20 business classes.
* Actively participate in 1 confidence building activity.
* Make a very small project in Industrial Arts such as a pen holder, phone stand, cutting board, picture frame, etc.
* Achieve other milestones as specified in individual goal document.

### Direct Staff

* Actively participate in a minimum of 55 business classes.
* Actively participate in 3 confidence building activities.
* Complete a small Industrial arts project such as an end table, spice rack, etc.
* Achieve other milestones as specified in individual goal document.

At the start of staff training, the staff member, supervisor, and Center Program Administrator will meet and create an individualized goal document based on the staff member's experience and job duties. Goals may be altered by the group as needed. It is expected that an indirect staff member will complete this training in approximately four weeks and a direct staff person will take approximately 12-16 weeks to achieve the needed level of competency to be successful in their jobs.

Some examples of goals that may be included in the goal document for an indirect staff member include but are not limited to:

* Write the braille alphabet on a braille writer.
* Complete a solo travel assignment that contains at least two crossings of a lighted intersection.
* Independently prepare French toast or grilled cheese on a stove top, a baked item or casserole in the oven, thoroughly clean their kitchen including washing dishes and cleaning the floor, and prepare a soup or pasta that requires chopping meat and/or vegetables.
* Send an email using Voiceover on an iPhone.

Examples of goals that may be included on a direct staff member's goal document may include but are not limited to:

* Write one page of contracted braille with 90% accuracy using a slate and stylus.
* Type and edit a one-page document using a computer with a screen reader.
* Complete a solo bus travel route.
* Prepare and serve a three-course meal for at least 6 guests.

The Director may alter, defer, or waive this requirement based on previous structured discovery training, experience, or operational needs.

Performance during staff training will be evaluated as follows:

1. How has this staff member demonstrated a positive attitude toward blindness? Give concrete examples.
2. Has the staff member treated blind students and colleagues as equals? Give examples.
3. Has the staff member overcome misconceptions regarding the capabilities of blind people and the hierarchy of sight? Give examples.
4. Has the staff member met goals and achieved milestones that they were proud of under learning shades? Give examples.

## Section 2: New Staff Seminar & Shadowing of Staff

New Staff Seminar will consist of 30 hours of small group classes covering the following topics:

* Agency history
* Consumer organizations
* Discussion of agency mission and philosophy
* Agency structure and purposes of each division

All new staff must spend at least one-half day with each of the following staff members as part of their new staff training:

* Library staff
* VR counselor
* VR teacher
* IL teacher
* Rehabilitation technology specialist

In addition, each new employee is expected to do each of the following before the completion of the probationary period:

* Attend at least one meeting of a local chapter of each of the consumer organizations
* Attend one meeting of the Iowa Commission for the Blind Board

## Section 3: Continuing Education Requirements

All IDB staff will, as part of their annual evaluation and IPPE development, meet with their supervisor to discuss their particular training needs for the coming year. The staff member and their supervisor will jointly create training completion expectations and those expectations will be written into the IPPE goals and evaluated in the next annual evaluation.

### Staff Requirements

All IDB staff will complete the following trainings annually:

* Cyber security training
* Sexual harassment and violence free workplace training

All IDB staff will complete and maintain certification:

* Mandatory reporter training
* Mental health first aid training

At least one volunteer from each work unit will obtain and maintain first aid certification.

At least two volunteers who work on each floor of the building will participate in quarterly evacuation chair training.

# Shift Differential Policy

Approved 3/22

1. IDB employees who meet ALL the following criteria are categorized as working shift 4 and will receive shift differential pay.

1. Are overtime eligible
2. Are assigned shifts that regularly rotate from week to week
3. Have a pre-defined schedule that is determined by the supervisor d. Have been assigned their schedule to meet programmatic needs
4. For shift differential to apply, an employee must work a majority of the shift’s assigned hours, and at least 4 hours, outside the hours of 6 AM - 6 PM.
5. A shift is defined as all hours worked with unpaid meal breaks no longer than 1 hour in length. Shifts may cross into 2 calendar days.
6. If it applies to a shift, shift differential applies to the entire shift worked even if not all hours fall into the category that applies.
7. Established Shift Timeframes a. Shift 1 applies when the majority of hours worked are between 6 AM and 6 PM. b. Shift 2 applies when a majority of the hours worked are between 6 PM and 12 AM. c. Shift 3 applies when the majority of hours worked are between 12 AM and 6 AM. If the number of hours worked divides equally between two shift categories, the higher number category is used.

# Social Media Policy

IDB employees authorized by their manager may use IDB’s I.T. resources to participate in social media at work as a means of generating interest in IDB, inviting relationships within the community, raising awareness of IDB’s service offerings, searching for potential new consumers, communicating with employees and consumers, publishing news or publicity statements, and advertising agency activities and events. Employees may use IDB’s logo and materials appropriately to the extent authorized by their manager.

When participating in social media for the purposes of generating interest in IDB, employees must ensure that the use of these communications maintains IDB’s identity, integrity, and reputation, reflects its vision, and furthers its mission, while minimizing any actual or potential legal risks, whether internal or external.

# Procedures

## Building and Facilities Procedures

The facilities engineer should be informed of any photography, surveillance, security testing, or other suspicious activity, occurring in the IDB buildings.

Any non-emergency building maintenance issue should be reported using the Maintenance Request Form at: [**https://iowadeptblind.wufoo.com/forms/z190vrq01nn2xiz/**](https://iowadeptblind.wufoo.com/forms/z190vrq01nn2xiz/)

## Meeting Rooms

If a meeting room is not reserved for an IDB program or activity, Non-profit organizations or state government agencies may request use of IDB meeting rooms. IDB does not allow use of IDB facilities for private or for-profit use.

Rooms available to be used by eligible organizations include the assembly room and the Director’s conference room. Groups may use other rooms in the building when working with IDB staff on collaborative programs.

The assembly room may be set with chairs in rows or chairs at round tables. IDB will not provide custom set-ups and groups are asked not to move tables.

IDB reserves the right to cancel a room reservation if IDB’s operational needs change and require use of the room at the scheduled time.

Groups using IDB’s meeting rooms are expected to bring their own computers and projectors. They may have use of our guest wifi network. There is a projection screen available in the assembly room and one can be provided in the director’s conference room. Please state whether or not you will require microphones and audio amplification at the time of the request.

Please contact the Executive Assistant to the Director regarding room reservation requests.

## Sleeping Room Reservations

1. As the primary function of the apartments and dorms of the Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) is to provide housing to students of the Blindness Empowerment and Independence Center, hereafter referred to as “Center”) and/or the Young Adult Transition Program Students"), these clients will be given first priority.
2. Other IL and VR clients receiving training, meeting with case managers, attending IDB programs, and looking for employment may be provided short-term lodging in the building as space is available and given second priority.
3. Department staff relocating from another state or city, attending meetings or training, or otherwise performing work duties will be given third priority. Any staff person staying in the building for more than 8 weeks must participate in apartment duty rotation.
4. Family members of center students may (after the first month of training) stay in the dorm rooms. The length of the stay is at the discretion of the center program administrator (PA).
5. Family members and guests of apartment staff will be given fifth priority for dorm room lodging. As a matter of curtesy, the front desk staff, Center Program Administrator, and all center students agency director, maintenance staff and apartment staff should be informed of any apartment staff guests who may have occasion to be in public areas of the building not accompanied by their host.
6. At the discretion of the PA, former center students and former IDB staff may be given lodging in the building in return for conducting business class, leading Center Student activities, or volunteering to assist with transition or independent living programs. Such arrangements must be made directly with the PA. These individuals will be expected to comply with all of the rules for apartment staff and dorm guests listed below, as well as all state and federal laws.

## Rules for Apartment Staff

Note: These rules are in addition to all stipulations listed in the apartment lease.

1. No drinking of alcohol while on duty.
2. Weekend reports are due to PA and Director by EOB the Monday immediately following weekend. These should include: \* activity – who, what, when, where, how \* issues – ongoing and resolved
3. Rules for All Staff, Apartment Staff Spouses, Volunteers, and Guests Staying In the Building
4. Staff member, Spouse guest, or volunteer will not enter a client room without another staff member present unless it is an emergency. Any such emergency must be reported to the PA in writing within 24 hours of occurrence.
5. Any emergency should be reported to the apartment staff on duty within an hour of occurrence.
6. No volunteer, staff member, apartment staff spouse, or guest may be alone with a center student or other agency client in any dorm room or apartment unless it is an emergency. Such emergencies must be reported to the PA in writing within 24 hours of occurrence.
7. Children under 14 should not be in public areas of the building unless accompanied by their host.
8. No guests, staff, or volunteers may park in the alley without permission from the PA.
9. Anyone wishing to use the gym needs to complete a gym form prior to use.
10. Staff, spouses, guests, and volunteers need to get permission from the PA to use the 2nd floor kitchens and computer lab.
11. Guests may not use the 2nd floor kitchens or computer lab when not accompanied by their host.
12. All common areas including kitchens, rec room, and gym must be returned to the condition they were in before use.
13. All guests should leave their rooms trash free, clean their room using the supplies found in the closet, and place stripped bedding on top of the bed before leaving.
14. No cigarettes, cigars, electronic cigarettes, or other smokeless tobacco may be used anywhere inside the building.
15. No alcohol is allowed in dorms or common areas.
16. Keys should not be given to any person to whom they were not issued.

## Conflict Resolution Procedures

If an employee has an issue with another employee, the employee will resolve this dispute using the following protocol: The staff member with the concern will speak directly with the colleague to address the issue. The two (or more) employees will develop a strategy or possible solutions to eliminate and/or remedy the issue. If the employees are unable to come to an agreement, the employees’ immediate supervisors will be informed. If the employees and their supervisors are unable to come to an agreement, the director will resolve the dispute.

## Disciplinary Action Procedures for Merit Staff

Generally, IDB will follow the concept of progressive discipline, beginning with less severe disciplinary measures for the first offense. However, the seriousness of the offense may dictate a more severe disciplinary action and could result in discharge at the first offense if such action is warranted by the situation. Disciplinary actions or measures for merit covered employees may include written reprimands, suspension, and discharge.

## Investigation Process for Merit Covered Employees

An allegation of a violation of any section of this manual may be submitted to the IDB staff member’s supervisor. The supervisor will conduct an investigation as outlined by the Department of Administrative Services and outlined in the Managers and Supervisors Manual. This manual can be found at: [**https://das.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/hr/documents/MS\_manual/ManagersSupervisorsManual.pdf**](https://das.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/hr/documents/MS_manual/ManagersSupervisorsManual.pdf)

If the investigation finds that one or more violations occurred, and there is just cause for disciplinary action, the supervisor may take disciplinary action.  
Merit covered employees may choose to appeal disciplinary decisions to the Public Employees Relations Board (IPERB).

## Progressive Discipline Process

IDB’s progressive discipline process is as follows:

* Step 1: Written reprimand. The reprimand will be placed in the employee’s personnel file.
* Step 2: One day suspension.
* Step 3: Three-day suspension and final warning of termination.
* Step 4: Termination

## Evaluations & Pay Increase Procedures

### Performance Evaluation Process

Clarity of performance expectations and constructive feedback are keys to enhancing successful performance on the job. These two concepts underlie the basic philosophy of the State of Iowa performance planning and evaluation process.

The Individual Performance Plan and Evaluation (IPPE) form is used to formally document this process and is comprised of two key elements: the Individual Performance Plan (IPP) and the Evaluation.

### Individual Performance Plan (IPP)

The IPP consists of three performance strategies. Each of these strategies contain action steps, performance criteria, and timetables for completion (when applicable.)

It is important that each staff member communicate and collaborate with their supervisor to create the Individual Performance Plan (IPP). The IPPE should be not only an evaluation instrument, but also a clear definition of what is expected that can guide the employee in the performance of their job duties. Supervisors and staff members should have conversations that give the staff member a clear sense of what performance would a meets and achieve an “exceeds” rating.

The process for creating the IPP and the IPP contents will vary from position to position. IPP contents should be targeted toward the specific responsibilities of the position and needs of those that position serves. Supervisors will make every effort to achieve agreement on the measures included in the IPP. Ultimately the final responsibility for the IPPs contents rests with the supervisor.

## Evaluations

While evaluations are tied to in-grade increases, it is important not to forget that they also serve as an opportunity for dialog and communication about opportunities for growth and professional development. The Evaluation consists of the rating for each strategy, the overall rating, and supervisor’s and employee’s comments. The available ratings are “meets expectations”, “does not meet expectations”, and “exceeds expectations.” These same options are used for rating overall performance.

All employees shall receive a formal performance evaluation review at the completion of a probationary period, and annually thereafter.

It is recommended that supervisors set up at least one check-in evaluation within the performance cycle. This will allow the supervisor and staff member to discuss the staff member’s strengths, achievements, and professional development needs. It is also an opportunity for the supervisor to provide coaching and guidance, receive feedback, and engage in dialog regarding how projects and activities are progressing.

### Preferred Timelines

* Employees should be given their annual evaluation no later than 10 workdays after their eligibility (step) date.
* Employees should receive their new IPPE no more than 10 workdays after the evaluation has been received.
* Employees should sign their evaluation and IPPE no more than five days after receipt.

### Pay Increases

The amount of funding available for in-grade increases will be evaluated and announced by the director at the beginning of each state fiscal year. The director will announce the percentage increase that will be given to each point level as outlined below.

Eligibility for step increases will be based on the number of points received by the employee on the employee's probationary or annual evaluation using the following formula:

* An “exceeds” rating on a goal earns two points
* A “meets” rating for a goal receives one point
* A “does not meet” rating on a goal loses two points.

The percentage values are:

* 6 points = 3%
* 5 points = 3%
* 4 points = 3%
* 3 points = 2.5%

In the event that funds are de-appropriated, reduced, not allocated, or receipt of funds is delayed, or if any funds or revenues needed by the department are insufficient or unavailable for any other reason, the department may alter or adjust these percentages.

Employees who are at the top of the pay range for their job classification cannot receive merit based increases.

See the State of Iowa Employee Manual for information on cost-of-living adjustments.

## Work Schedule & Leave Request Procedures

### Work Schedules

The standard work week for all State of Iowa employees begins on Friday and ends on Thursday. The standard schedule requires a shift of eight hours of work, excluding a thirty-minute unpaid meal period for each of the five days in the work week. The standard schedule begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 4:30 p.m., which coincides with normal business hours of the Department.

Unless leave has been approved, employees are expected to be at their workstations at the designated starting time and not leave until the designated ending time. Break and lunch times will be cooperatively determined by employee and supervisor based on the needs of the particular position in order to provide the best possible service to blind Iowans. While quality of service is the primary consideration, IDB supervisors and employees will make every effort to allow for a schedule that fits with the employee’s work preferences and promotes a healthy work/life balance.

During work weeks containing a holiday or quarterly staff meeting, employees who work a non-standard schedule (e.g., four ten-hour workdays) will be required to revert to a standard eight-hour workday for the work week.

Attending trainings or conferences may alter an employee’s typical work schedule. Employees participating in continuing education in the Orientation Center will need to make arrangements with the center director to allow for travel time.

### Unscheduled Absences

For unplanned absences, employees must follow the call-in procedure for the day of leave, and leave requests for unplanned absences shall be submitted on the day the employee returns to work. Employees are expected to know their available leave balance to avoid requesting leave they have not accrued.

A merit covered employee who has an unscheduled absence on a day or days for which management has previously denied a request for a scheduled absence may be subject to an investigation and disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### Scheduled Leave

When an employee needs or wants time away from work for the purpose of vacation, medical appointments or illness, or other reasons, the employee is responsible for requesting leave from a supervisor in advance.

Supervisors will approve or deny leave based on the coverage needs of their particular work unit. Certain agency business functions may require that one or more people be available during business hours. Supervisors have the right to limit the number of employees who can take leave at any given time for this reason. Leave will be approved on a first come/first serve basis.

Leave requests may be denied, for reasons including:

* Lack of available accrued leave.
* Operational needs of the department or work area.
* Failing to follow call-in procedure.

No leave slip should be considered approved until the employee receives an email directly from the supervisor stating that the leave has been approved.

Leave slips will not be accepted more than one year in advance.

Leave approvals given more than two weeks in advance are to be considered contingent upon the employee’s vacation balance sufficient to cover the period absent. If the balance is insufficient, the approval may be revoked or required to be taken as leave without pay as determined by the supervisor.

### Call In Procedures

When an employee needs to take unscheduled leave, the employee shall notify the supervisor, or the supervisor’s designee if the supervisor is unavailable, by text message, telephone, or electronic mail as directed by their supervisor no later than 30 minutes before the start of the work shift for each day that an unscheduled absence will exist. If the employee makes notice less than 30 minutes before the start of the shift, the absence may be unapproved.

### Jury Duty

When an employee is summoned, subpoenaed, or directed by proper authority to a legal proceeding to which the employee is not a party, the employee will receive necessary leave during regular work hours. If the time off is during regular work time, the employee must remit jury duty pay or witness fees other than travel and personal expenses, to the Department unless the employee elects to use vacation time for the absence. If at least two hours plus required travel time are available in the employee’s regular workday contiguous to the jury duty or court appearance, the employee will be expected to report to work. The employee shall provide a copy of the court summons to their supervisor as soon as possible.

### Leave Without Pay

If leave without pay is requested by the employee and approved by the supervisor, it must also receive approval from the director. Unauthorized use of leave without pay by a merit covered employee may result in discipline, up to and including termination.

### Overtime and Compensatory Time

Compensatory time must be paid out or used by the last day of the last full pay period chargeable to the fiscal year and must be requested and taken in a manner similar to vacation leave.

### Leave Request

Employees shall send a properly completed leave request to the supervisor indicating the starting and ending dates of the leave, the starting and ending times, the type of leave requested, whether the leave is requested with or without pay, and whether the requested leave pertains to an occurrence of FMLA-covered conditions.

All absences relating to an approved FMLA certification must follow the reporting procedures in the State Employees Handbook.

### Time Reporting

Pay periods end on alternate Thursdays. Employees are expected to report their time and attendance by 9:00 a.m. on the last Wednesday of the pay period unless otherwise instructed, e.g., when pay cycles involve a holiday. Untimely completion or approval may result in a delay in paying the employee.

## Employee Committees & Teams Procedures

In order to create a positive and productive work environment, IDB has allowed for the creation of employee committees. These committees include: the Together We Give and Employee Recognition Committee (ERC),

These committees will hold elections in July of each year to elect the committee chair or co-chairs of that committee. Each committee member as of June 30th will be allowed to vote in this election.

IDB staff are allowed up to 12 hours of work time per fiscal year to participate in any of these committees. Any time beyond this will not be paid work time. Staff may choose to volunteer their own time to these committees as they wish.

One representative from each work unit will be selected to participate in the agency wide Communications Team. The communications Team evaluates needs and undertakes projects to improve internal and external communications for our agency. This is considered a work duty and not subject to the provisions concerning committee membership. Communications Team members will serve for two years. The team will elect a chair and vice chair. The chair will serve for one year and the vice chair will become chair in the next year. In order to have continuity across fiscal years, terms will be offset as follows: A new representative will be selected by the Accounting, IL, VR, and BEP/Maintenance supervisor at the beginning of each odd fiscal year. A new representative will be selected by the Center, Education, Training and Technology, and Library supervisors at the beginning of each even state fiscal year.

## Client Records Requests Procedures

When requested in writing by the client, all information must be made available for review by the client or their parent, guardian, or other representative.

If the client wishes to review the information, it will be reviewed in the presence of an IDB case manager or supervisor. Medical, psychological, or other information IDB has determined might be harmful to the individual may not be reviewed directly by the individual but must be provided through the individual's chosen representative.

When copies of case file information are requested, only those materials specified by the client in writing, along with permission from the vendor, may be released. Information may only be released after a release which is valid under Iowa law has been received. Information may be re-released to another state vocational rehabilitation agency upon receipt of a signed consent form from the client.

Unless the release specifically authorizes the release of legally restricted types of material (mental health, drug and alcohol, and HIV/AIDS) this information cannot be released, and this type of material should not be mentioned.

Information may be released only to those agencies and programs which have adopted regulations which assure that the information will be held confidential and used only for the purpose for which it has been provided.

All requests for information from closed case files will be initiated through the receipt of a signed release of information. If information related to mental health, substance abuse, or HIV treatment may apply, the client must be asked to check the applicable boxes, sign in the specified area or lower left corner of the form and specify the information from the case that is the subject of the request. The client must be informed that IDB will only release requested information.

Client information will be released in response to a court order or valid subpoena issued by a court or other judicial body.

All requests for client information from organizations, agencies, or individuals engaged in evaluation or research are to be forwarded to the director. Each request will be evaluated as to its potential contribution to the field of rehabilitation and to IDB, the staff time that would be required to respond, the complexity of the request, and the relative ease of retrieving the requested information. The director will determine final disposition. Personally, identifying information will only be released with the prior written consent of the individual except as otherwise provided by this policy.

IDB may release client information in response to law enforcement agencies when the request is received in writing, signed by an appropriate official, stating that the information is required for an official investigation and citing the specific information required from the client’s record. Information on drug and alcohol abuse, mental health, and HIV/AIDS information may only be released by an order of the court.

IDB may release personally identifiable information in emergency situations to protect the individual or others when the individual poses a threat to the safety of self or others. A written request is not required, but all facts and circumstances must be recorded in the client’s case.

The routine use of necessary client information among IDB staff will be considered as made for a vocational rehabilitation or independent living services purpose and does not require express or written client consent. Only information generated by IDB can be exchanged. For purposes of this policy, “routine use” is defined by sub rule 111–13.10 of IDB administrative rules.

In instances where the case manager or supervisor believes that release of requested information to the client or a third party will seriously impede the willingness of the provider of that information to work with IDB in the future, the case manager or supervisor should refuse to supply the information and direct the request to the original source. It is also acceptable for the case manager or supervisor to approach the original source for permission to further release the requested information.

A release extending beyond 12 months can be issued for non-medical or non-psychological vendors for purposes of planning. Educational and community rehabilitation program vendors may exchange vocational and educational progress information under a release that extends beyond 12 months.

An applicant or eligible individual who believes that information in the individual’s record of services is inaccurate or misleading may request that the designated state unit amend the information. If the information is not amended, the request for an amendment must be documented in the record of services.

### Substance Abuse, Mental Health, & HIV Information

NOTE: For this section only, the "client’s written consent” refers only to the client, regardless of age. A parent or guardian is not an acceptable substitute, even for persons under 18 years of age.)

Information about a client’s alcohol or drug abuse, mental health, or HIV/AIDS problems may not be released (verbally or in writing) without the written consent of the client and permission of the vendor that generated the report. The properly completed and signed release must be placed in the case file before information concerning drug or alcohol abuse, mental health, or HIV/AIDS diagnosis or treatment is given to a prospective employer or placement agent.

These requirements apply even if the person seeking the information already has or knows the information, has official status, or has obtained a subpoena. The person making the request is to be told that federal or state law prohibits release of case file information relating to drug and alcohol abuse, mental health, or HIV/AIDS without the specific written consent of the client or an order of the court. If this statement is not accepted, the director is to be notified immediately for referral to the attorney general’s office.

Failure to observe these requirements is a violation of public law 93–282 and sections 141A.9 and 228.1 of the Code of Iowa.

4.18.01. For purposes of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, the director of IDB is the designated privacy officer. All IDB Staff must document in the file any covered information that is released.

### Social Security Information

Social Security Information cannot be released without permission from the Social Security Administration and a signed release by the individual.

If it appears that the information may be harmful to the individual, the requested information may be copied and forwarded to the manager of the SSA district office. The individual is to be directed to contact the district office. The manager has the prerogative of releasing, withholding, or further action.

No social security information dealing with alcohol or drug abuse may be released by IDB.

When there is no signed consent and there is an actual or expected subpoena, a call should be made immediately to the SSA regional office in Kansas City. IDB staff will apprise management at each stage.

### Releases of Information

The IDB release form, when properly completed and signed, fulfills the requirements for release of alcohol and drug abuse, mental health, and HIV/AIDS information. Information about a person’s diagnosis and disabling condition tends to permeate the case file. Care must be taken not to release information that inadvertently reveals restricted information, unless the special release authorization is signed.

To be valid under Iowa law, a release directed to IDB for client records must: \* Be in writing and directed to IDB. A person can be presumed to have given informed consent if the release is directed “To Whom It May Concern”,” To Any and All”, or other similar designations;

* Give the name or title of the organization or individual to whom disclosure is to be made;
* Include name and signature of the client;
* Specify the extent or nature of the information to be disclosed. Drug and alcohol abuse, mental health, and HIV/AIDS information must be specifically cited to be included;
* Include a statement that consent is subject to revocation at any time and specify the event or condition upon which it will expire without revocation;
* Indicate the date on which the consent was signed.

When properly completed, a general client waiver is an acceptable release of information form for all but the specially restricted types of information.

### Subpoenas -Types and Conditions

* Subpoena Ad Testificandum (usually simply called a subpoena): This is a process to cause a witness to appear and give testimony at a designated time and place.
* Subpoena Duces Tecum: A subpoena which requires a person to appear at a designated time and place and produce a designated document which is in their possession and pertinent to the issue at hand.

Court subpoenas can be served by a law enforcement officer or by a person who then files an affidavit of service with the clerk of court. A mailed subpoena is not valid. When a court subpoena is delivered in this manner the requester of the information should be notified that IDB cannot comply in the absence of either a proper release of information or proper service of the subpoena. A court subpoena served by a person other than a law enforcement officer is not valid until filed with the clerk of court. The case manager should make sure this has been done before testifying or providing documents. This is checked by calling the clerk of court’s office.

A subpoena across state lines is not valid unless it is a federal subpoena.

Some administrative boards and agencies have the legal authority to issue subpoenas, but they do not necessarily have the same mechanism for the filing of affidavits. These subpoenas will be considered valid by IDB, regardless of how delivered.

Some subpoenas will arrive with a letter indicating that if the case file information is provided prior to a certain date the personal appearance is waived. IDB staff should provide the information rather than appear only when in possession of a valid signed release of information.

Mental health information is protected under chapter 228 of the Code of Iowa. Without a signed release it can only be disclosed by court order, not in response to a subpoena. Drug abuse and alcoholism information is protected under federal law (42 CFR 2). Without a signed release drug abuse and alcoholism information can only be disclosed by court order, not in response to a subpoena.

HIV/AIDS testing and treatment information is protected under chapter 141A, Code of Iowa. Without a signed release HIV/AIDS testing and treatment information can only be disclosed by court order, not in response to a subpoena.

A subpoena must provide reasonable notice to the person required to appear. Reasonable notice is generally regarded to have been provided if the subpoena is served at least 24 hours prior to the required appearance. An earlier time can be agreed to by all the parties involved. Contact with the issuer may result in the negotiation of a more mutually acceptable time.

IDB will respond to a subpoena. If IDB staff believes the subpoena was not validly served or calls for the production or material restricted by law, the issuer should immediately be contacted, citing the objection and desire to be released from the subpoena. Unless released from the subpoena, appearance at the time and place indicated is required. If the subpoena calls for the production of a case file, producing drug, alcohol, HIV/AIDS, or mental health information is to be resisted unless a court order directs its release. Cite the laws mentioned, above as the reason for being asked to be released from the subpoena.

## Dress Code

As employees of the Iowa Department for the Blind, the citizens of Iowa hold us to a high standard, and our personal appearance creates a favorable or unfavorable impression on our co-workers, clients, patrons, and the public. It is therefore important for all employees to present a positive, professional image. Employees of the department shall maintain a clean, neat and well-groomed appearance and dress in a professional, businesslike manner. Employees of the department are expected to dress in business casual attire following the guidelines below unless work assignments involve job locations or duties that cannot be performed in business casual attire. Field staff may be allowed to deviate from this policy as circumstances dictate and as authorized by their supervisor. Appropriate attire is required when you are attending a training or meeting with outside groups.

### Business Casual Attire

Appropriate business casual attire may include:

* Dresses, dress suits, dress or casual slacks (including capris), skirts, khakis.
* Blazers, sport coats, sweaters, vests, cardigans.
* Blouses or shirts (crew or v-neck), golf or polo shirts, turtlenecks.
* Dress shoes, pumps, loafers, flat shoes, dress sandals, and boots.

Inappropriate business casual attire may include, but is not limited to:

* Halter, tank, and tube tops.
* Shorts of any kind. Exceptions include shorts worn by instructors teaching cane travel during warm weather.
* T-shirts, sweatshirts, denim jeans (any color).
* Athletic shoes, beach sandals, or pool/deck shoes.
* Bib overalls, sweatpants, athletic work out suits, spandex pants, leggings (unless worn under a dress or skirt), yoga pants.
* Clothing with offensive language or images.

### Casual Dress Attire

Casual dress attire needs to be appropriate for the professional work environment and must also be neat, clean, in good repair and appropriate for the situation. For office-based staff, casual dress attire days include Fridays, the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and the week between Christmas and New Year’s Day. Field-based staff shall be dressed appropriately for their work. Appropriate casual dress attire includes any items appropriate as business casual, and may also include:

* Denim jeans that do not have holes, stains, tears, ragged hems or excessive fading.
* Athletic shoes.

Inappropriate casual attire includes, but is not limited to:

* Halter, tank, or tube tops.
* Shorts of any kind. Exceptions include instructors teaching cane travel during warm weather.
* beach sandals or pool/deck shoes.
* Bib overalls, sweatpants, athletic workout suits, spandex pants, leggings (unless worn under a dress or skirt), yoga pants.
* Clothing with offensive language or images.

The success of this policy rests with the good judgment of every IDB employee. If an employee’s clothing is not appropriate and does not project a professional image, it is expected the employee’s supervisor will respectfully discuss the concern with the employee. Repeated occurrences of wearing inappropriate attire may result in disciplinary action.

If you would like to request an exemption or variation from the dress code for medical or religious reasons, please contact your supervisor.

## Travel Reimbursement Procedures

Refer to the State of Iowa Travel Policies.