

The purpose of this Handbook is to acquaint employees with Union County ("County") employment. The policies and practices contained in this Handbook are only guidelines and may be canceled or changed by the County at any time with or without notice. This Handbook is not intended to nor does it create an employment contract between the County and any of its employees.

THIS HANDBOOK IS NOT A CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT.

Nothing contained in this Handbook constitutes a contractual right, express or implied. No provision contained in this Handbook or any other policy or procedure may be changed by any oral statement but must be in writing signed by an authorized representative of the County.

The County retains all rights to discharge or discipline employees. As a County employee, you agree to conform to all applicable policies, procedures, rules, regulations, statutes and collective negotiations agreements.

This Handbook is not meant to affect, or to be a comprehensive description of County, State or Federal statutes, rules or regulations, Civil Service, disciplinary procedures, employment benefits, workers' compensation, leaves from employment, employee compensation, the policies, practices and procedures of the County, or collective negotiations. Employees' rights and responsibilities are always governed by existing law and any applicable collective negotiations agreement or established past practice. Nothing in this Handbook provides legal rights in addition to those, if any, provided to employees under County, State or Federal statutes, rules, regulations, collective negotiations agreements or established past practice. If any part of this Handbook conflicts with County, State or Federal statutes, rules, regulations, a collective negotiations agreement or established past practice, the part of the Handbook which conflicts with a County, State or Federal statute, rule, regulation, collective negotiations agreement or established past practice will be null and void as it applies to the affected group of employees. Likewise, if at any time, any County, State or Federal statutes, rules, regulations or collective negotiations agreement should be amended, this Handbook will be deemed to have been likewise amended, even though actual changes to the Handbook have not been made.

The County recognizes that many of its employees' terms and conditions of employment are governed by collective negotiations agreements and established past practices. This Handbook does not supersede or affect any term or condition of employment that may exist in any collective negotiations agreement or that may have been established through past practice. If any part of this Handbook conflicts with any term or condition of employment expressly set forth in a collective negotiations agreement or established through past practice, that part of the Handbook will be null and void as it applies to the affected group of employees.

UNCLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES

N.J.S.A. 11A:3-5 provides that incumbents in an unclassified title serve for a fixed term or at the pleasure of the appointing authority. The laws and regulations which apply to Career Service employees (also known as Civil Service employees) do not apply to unclassified employees. The portions of this Handbook which refer to the rules promulgated by the New Jersey State Department of Personnel (N.J.A.C. 4A:1-1 *et seq.*) do not apply to unclassified employees. However, all other County, State or Federal statutes, rules and regulations referred to in this Handbook do apply to unclassified employees.

EMPLOYEES IN COLLECTIVE BARGAINING UNITS

Many County employees have job titles where the terms and conditions of employment are governed by a collective negotiations agreement between the County and the recognized union(s). If an employee's job title is part of a recognized bargaining unit, the employee should always consult his or her collective negotiations agreement and the Civil Service laws and regulations, if applicable.

NON-CONTRACTUAL EMPLOYEES

An employee whose job title is not the subject of a collective negotiations agreement should consult the Union County Administrative Code and any applicable Federal, State or local statutes, rules and regulations.

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FREEHOLDER MESSAGE

COUNTY MANAGER MESSAGE

FOREWORD

As stewards of the public trust, County employees must perform their duties ethically and treat co-workers, supervisors and the public with courtesy and respect at all times. County employees are part of a government that values and respects diversity and builds on the strengths of its individual employees, the organization and the community. We are motivated, progressive and visionary. We challenge ourselves to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our services by being innovative, collaborative and creative. We are well-trained and valued. We provide government services to the public with responsiveness and accountability. We work with a positive attitude, and are proud of our record of outstanding public service to the citizens of Union County.

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

This Handbook provides a general description of employment in the County. Individual departments may adopt more specific descriptions and applications of these policies as they affect an employee's particular duties. There are established documents that contain more detailed information regarding their respective subject matter. An employee may contact the Personnel Division to obtain a copy of the following:

State of New Jersey Public Employees' Retirement System Plan Handbook

Union County Employee Health Benefits Manual

Union County Employee Pension Benefit Manual

Union County Salary Administration Handbook

Sexual Harassment Policy

Family Leave and Medical Leave Act Policy

Drug Abuse Policy

Violence in the Workplace Policy

Voluntary Leave

Donated Leave

Military Leave

FORM OF GOVERNMENT

The County of Union functions under the County Manager Plan form of government as defined by statute. (*See* N.J.S.A. 40:41A *et seq.* and the Administrative Code of the County of Union ("U.C.A.C.") §1-6 *et seq.*) The Board of Chosen Freeholders is vested with the legislative power of the County. The County Manager is responsible for the supervision, direction, and administration of all County departments. The Board of Chosen Freeholders may interact with County employees through the County Manager. All contact with County employees and all actions and communications concerning the administration of the County's government will be through the County Manager, except as otherwise provided by law.

A County employee may appear before his or her duly-elected officials and engage in open communication, speech, inquiry, and discussion on matters of general or public concern. This communication may take place between the County employee and any member, group of members, or the entire Board of Chosen Freeholders. It is an employee's constitutional right to speak freely on public issues.

The right to speak freely on matters of public concern, however, does not include the right to engage in public discussion on matters of private concern. That is, the right of open and free communication and discussion with elected officials does not extend to matters that are of concern to an individual employee or to a small group of employees. If an employee is concerned about a particular administrative matter, the employee must proceed through appropriate supervisory channels and ultimately to the attention of the County Manager, if necessary. In this way, the necessary and proper balance between the interests of the employee, as a citizen, in commenting on matters of public concern and the interests of the County, as an employer, in promoting the efficiency of the public service it performs through its employees, will be properly maintained.

ORGANIZATION CHART

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATION CHART

Union Council No. 8 N.J.C.S.A.	Represents all regularly-employed non-supervisory blue collar and white-collar employees. Excludes police, confidential employees, managerial executives, craft employees, professionals, and supervisors within the meaning of the Public Employment Relations Act (the "Act").
P.B.A. Local 73 County Police	Represents all patrolmen and detective patrolmen employed by the County. Excludes the chief, captains, lieutenants, sergeants, other non-uniformed personnel, and professional employees and supervisors within the meaning of the Act.
Superior Officers Association P.B.A. Local 73	Represents all captains, lieutenants, sergeants, and detective sergeants employed by the County. Excludes the chief, patrolmen, detective patrolmen, non-uniformed personnel, and professional employees and supervisors within the meaning of the Act.
P.B.A. Local 108 Sheriff's Officers	Represents all Sheriff's officers and investigators at the Union County Court House and other locations under the jurisdiction of the County.
F.O.P. Local 103 Sheriff's Superior Officers	Represents all Sheriff's superior officers, sergeants, lieutenants and captains.
P.B.A. Local 199 Corrections Officers	Represents all corrections officers below the rank of sergeant employed in the Union County jail facilities.
P.B.A. Local 199A Superior Corrections Officers	Represents all superior corrections officers, sergeants, lieutenants and captains, employed in the Union County jail facilities.
P.B.A. Local 250 Prosecutors Detectives/ Investigators	Represents all detectives, investigators, and investigator accountants employed by Union County, not holding a superior rank, who work for the Union County Prosecutor's Office.
Prosecutors Detectives/ Investigators Superior Officers Assn.	Represents all sergeants of county investigators, lieutenants of County detectives/investigators, captains of County detectives/investigators, and deputy chiefs employed by the County, but excluding the chief of County investigators.

<p>Union County Social Services C.W.A.- A.F.L. & C.I.O.</p>	<p>Represents the following employees in Social Services: clerk, account clerk, senior account clerk, principal account clerk, supervising account clerk, clerk bookkeeper, child support specialist, child support worker, clerk stenographer, clerk transcriber, clerk typist, data control clerk, data entry machine operator, income maintenance specialist, income maintenance technician, income maintenance worker, income maintenance investigator CWA, messenger, receptionist, stenographer, telephone operator, social worker, social worker specialist, supervisor of data entry machine operations, training technician, senior building maintenance worker, accountant, paralegal specialist, principal data control clerk, supervising clerk transcriber, legal secretary, Human Services Specialist I, II & III, accounting assistant, interpreter and all bilingual titles covered by the recognition clause.</p>
<p>Local 68-68A&B Operating Engineers</p>	<p>Represents all stationary engineers, plumber/steamfitters and assistant supervising plumbers, HVAC mechanics (Low Pressure), assistant supervising HVAC mechanics, HVAC mechanic/stationary engineers, maintenance repairmen (LP) and assistant chief stationary engineers employed in the Court House complex. Excludes plumbers and maintenance repair plumbers in the Department of Operational Services.</p>
<p>Local 494 United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers</p>	<p>Represents non-supervisory employees in the County's recreational facilities, including, but not limited to, the golf courses and skating rinks. Excludes supervisory employees and foreman.</p>
<p>Union County Supervisors' Assn.</p>	<p>Represents all foreman employed in the Department of Operational Services. Excludes foremen in the parks department, general trade, general mosquito, recreation park maintenance general foremen, managerial executives, police, white-collar confidentials and other supervisors.</p>
<p>P.B.A. Local 203 Div. of Weight & Measures</p>	<p>Represents all weights and measures personnel excluding managerial, confidential, professional, supervisory and craft employees.</p>
<p>Union County Social Services Teamsters 102 Primary Supervisors</p>	<p>Represents income maintenance supervisor, social work supervisor, child support supervisor, fraud unit supervisor, assistant training supervisor and senior investigator in the Division of Social Services.</p>

Union County Social Services Teamsters 102 Secondary Supervisors	Represents administrative supervisors in income maintenance, assistant administrative supervisor of income maintenance, field office supervisor, child support coordinator, data processing coordinator, training supervisor, administrative supervisor of social work and the assistant administrative supervisor of social work.
Health & Allied Employees (HPAE)	Represents registered nurses (RN's) affiliated with Runnells Specialized Hospital.
Union County Assistant Prosecutors Assn.	Represents the County's Assistant Prosecutors.
Teamsters Local 102 Jail Professionals	Represents the Public Safety Professional Staff of Counselors, Social Workers, Recreation Program Coordinator and Teachers in the Jail and Juvenile Facility.
Union County Park Foremen's Assn.	Represents all Union County Park System employees of the level of foreman and supervisory mechanics, but excluding all non-supervisory employees, clericals, police, managerial executives and all other employees.

TELEPHONE DIRECTORY FOR THE PERSONNEL DIVISION

Central Unit..... 527-4030
 Affirmative Action..... 527-4230
 Health Benefits..... 527-4067
 NJDOP (information)..... 527-4024
 Risk Management 527-4064
 Salary Administration 527-4021

Runnells Unit 771-5727
 Health Benefits..... 771-5729

Auxiliary Unit (Social Services)..... 965-3611
 Health Benefits 791-7175

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

CONTRACTUAL & NON-CONTRACTUAL STATUS

The terms and conditions of employment for the vast majority of job titles within the County are covered by a union contract and established past practice. The union contract is also known as the collective negotiations agreement. Employees whose job titles are covered by a collective negotiations agreement will be referred to herein as "contractual" employees. Employees whose positions are not so represented will be referred to as "non-contractual" or "exclusionary" employees.

CAREER SERVICE EMPLOYEES

Additionally, some employee positions are governed by the Career Services laws and regulations of the New Jersey Department of Personnel. These employees will be referred to herein as "Career Service," "Civil Service" or "Classified" employees. The Civil Service laws and regulations which govern Career Service employees are published in Title 11A of the New Jersey Statutes Annotated (N.J.S.A. 11A:1-1 *et seq.*) and Title 4A of the New Jersey Administrative Code (N.J.A.C. 4A:1-1 *et seq.*). Employees not governed by the Career Service laws and regulations will be referred to herein as "Unclassified" employees.

Definitions of Career Service Employee Status

Emergency Appointed	An employee appointed for a period not to exceed thirty (30) days for emergency reasons.
Full-time	An employee who is hired to work the full, regular, work-week hours of the department.
Interim	An employee who is appointed to a specific vacant position, replacing a permanent employee who is on an approved leave of absence.
Part-Time	An employee who is hired to work for less than the full, regular work-week hours of the department. Regular hours vary by department.
Permanent	(Competitive Division) An employee who has received successful test results from a New Jersey Department of Personnel examination, is selected from a certified list of eligibles, and completes the required working test period.

(Noncompetitive Division) An employee who receives permanent status after successful completion of the required working test period, which starts on the date of hire.

Probationary	An employee whose permanent status, after appointment from a certification list or hiring into a noncompetitive position, is pending the satisfactory completion of the required working test period.
Provisional	An employee serving in a competitive title awaiting the examination announcement and ultimately successful scoring and ranking, leading up to a permanent appointment. See above definition of permanent employee (competitive division).
Seasonal	A temporary employee who has been hired for a specified seasonal position.
Temporary (Grant Funded)	An employee who is appointed to a position for the duration of an employment program that is grant funded by a source other than the County of Union for a maximum of 12 months.
Temporary	An employee who is hired for up to 6 months in a 12-month period. However, if the position is established as a result of a short-term grant, the appointment may be extended for a maximum of 12 months.

Definitions of Changes in Career Service Employment Status

Layoffs	A layoff may occur for economy, efficiency, or other reasons having a negative impact on the County.
Reassignment	A reassignment is the in-title movement of an employee to a new job function, shift, location, or supervisor.
Reinstatement	A permanent employee who has resigned in good standing, has retired, or has been voluntarily demoted, may, within three years of one of the aforementioned actions, request consideration for reemployment as a permanent employee with the previous permanent title.
Resignation	Any employee may resign in good standing by giving written notice at least 14 days in advance, unless the Department Head

allows a shorter period of notice. If an employee resigns without a 14-day notice or without authorization to provide a shorter period of notice, he or she will be considered as having resigned not in good standing.

Terminations Termination includes voluntary or employee-initiated, and involuntary or employer-initiated. Voluntary terminations include resignations and retirements. Involuntary terminations are employer-initiated and involve the involuntary discharge or separation from employment.

Transfers A transfer results when an employee is moved permanently to another department. The employee must transfer with the same title and salary and with the consent of both Department Heads.

Career Service Examinations/Testing

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 4A:1-1 *et seq.*, a career service examination may be written, oral or an evaluation based on education, training and experience. The examination may be open, competitive or promotional. In either case, a certified list will result. If an employee served in the military, he or she may be eligible for veteran's preference consideration when taking a Civil Service examination. Check with the Personnel Division for details.

JOB TRAINING PARTNERSHIP ACT EMPLOYEES

Another category of employees is JTPA employees. A JTPA employee is a temporary employee whose salary is funded 51% or more by the Federal Job Training Partnership Act program.

JTPA employees are not subject to the Career Service regulations. Additionally, JTPA employees may not participate in the New Jersey Public Employees Retirement System ("PERS"). However, a retirement plan maintained by Mutual of America is available for JTPA employees. A JTPA employee will be included as a participant in the plan on the first day of the month after completing one year of service on July 1st and after attaining 21 years of age. A JTPA employee must complete at least 1,000 hours of service to be credited with a year of service for eligibility. For more information, please refer to the *Union County Employee Pension Benefit Manual* or contact the Division of Employment & Training at (908) 527-4880.

Additionally, a JTPA employee is eligible for a life insurance plan. A JTPA employee is eligible after working at least 20 hours per week and completing 12 months of service on July 1st. For more information, please contact the Division of Employment & Training at (908) 527-4880.

CONDUCT OF EMPLOYEES

ETHICAL CONDUCT

Pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government Ethics Law:

1. No employee or member of his or her immediate family will have an interest in a business organization or engage in any business, transaction or professional activity, which is in substantial conflict with the proper discharge of his or her duties in the public interest.
2. No employee should use or attempt to use his or her official position to secure unwarranted privileges or advantages for him or herself or others.
3. No employee should act in his or her official capacity in any matter wherein he or she, a member of his or her immediate family, or business organization in which he or she has an interest, has a direct or indirect personal or financial interest that might reasonably be expected to impair his or her objectivity or independence of judgment.
4. No employee should undertake any employment or service, whether compensated or not, which might reasonably be expected to prejudice his or her independence of judgment in the exercise of his or her official duties.
5. No employee, member of his or her immediate family, or business organization in which he or she has an interest, should solicit or accept any gift, favor, loan, political contribution, service, promise of future employment, or other thing of value based upon an understanding that the gift, favor, loan contribution, service, promise or other thing of value was given or offered for the purpose of influencing him or her directly or indirectly in the discharge of his or her official duties.
6. No employee will use, or allow to be used, his or her public employment, or any information, not generally available to members of the public, which he or she receives or acquires in the course of and by reason of his or her employment, for the purpose of securing financial gain for himself or herself, any member of his or her immediate family, or any business organization with which he or she is associated.
7. No employee or business organization in which he or she has an interest will represent any person or party other than the County in connection with any cause, proceeding, application or other matter pending before any agency in the local

government in which he or she serves. An employee or members of his or her immediate family may represent himself or herself in proceedings concerning the employee's own interests.

(See N.J.S.A. 40A:9-22.5 and U.C.A.C. §1-163 *et seq.*)

CONDUCT RELATED TO ELECTIONS

Pursuant to New Jersey law governing elections, no holder of a public office or position will demand payment or contribution from another holder of a public office or position for the campaign purpose of any candidate or for the use of any political party.

(See N.J.S.A. 19:34-42).

CONDUCT RELATED TO POLITICAL ACTIVITY

No person holding a position in the Career Service will directly or indirectly use or seek to use his or her position to control or affect the political action of another person or engage in political activity during working hours.

(See N.J.A.C. 4A:10-1.2).

No employee in the Career Service or Unclassified Services whose principal employment is in connection with a program financed in whole or in part by Federal funds or loans, will engage in any of the following prohibited activities under the "Hatch Act:"

1. Using official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of an election or a nomination for office;
2. Directly or indirectly coercing, attempting to coerce, commanding or advising an officer or employee to pay, lend, or contribute anything of value to a party, committee, organization, agency, or person for political purposes; or
3. Being a candidate for public office in a partisan election.

(See 5 U.S.C. §1502).

The Hatch Act is enforced by the Special Counsel of the United States Merit System Protection Board. Department Heads or Supervisors can advise an employee if his or her position is federally funded.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS - CAREER SERVICE EMPLOYEES

An employee may be subject to a *major* or *minor* disciplinary action for:

1. Incompetence, inefficiency or failure to perform duties;
2. Insubordination;
3. Inability to perform duties;
4. Chronic or excessive absenteeism or lateness;
5. Conviction of a crime;
6. Conduct unbecoming a public employee;
7. Neglect of duty;
8. Misuse of public property, including motor vehicles;
9. Discrimination that affects equal employment opportunity (as defined in N.J.A.C. 4A:7-1.1), including sexual harassment;
10. Violation of Federal regulations concerning drug and alcohol use by, and testing of, an employee who perform functions related to the operation of commercial motor vehicles, and State and local policies issued there under;
11. Other sufficient cause.

This can include, but is not limited to, items such as unhygienic personal habits; falsification of records; unauthorized use of County equipment, vehicles or facilities; failure to comply with safety requirements; fighting; loafing; idleness; theft or misappropriation; failure to report loss, theft, damage or injury; failure to abide by procedural rules which have been duly promulgated by the County; and other serious breaches of discipline which arise during the course of the employer/employee relationship.

Major Discipline

Major discipline includes: removal; disciplinary demotion; suspension or fine for more than five (5) working days at any one time; suspension or fine for five (5) working days or less where the aggregate number of days suspended or fined in any one (1) calendar year is fifteen (15) working

days or more; or suspension or fine when an employee receives more than three (3) suspensions or fines of five (5) working days or less in a calendar year.

Hearing procedure in major disciplinary actions.

Generally, an employee will be served with a "Preliminary Notice of Disciplinary Action" ("PNDA") setting forth the charges against the employee and affording a hearing opportunity at a specified date, time and location. The employee must respond with a request for a hearing within five (5) days of the receipt of PNDA; otherwise, the hearing is waived. After the hearing (or a waiver of a hearing), a decision is made and within 30 days, written notification to the employee is made by issuing a "Final Notice of Disciplinary Action" form.

An ***immediate suspension*** may be imposed prior to a hearing when:

1. The employee is unfit for duty or presents a hazard to any person if permitted to remain on the job or the suspension is necessary to maintain safety, health, order or effective direction of public services. However, a PNDA with opportunity for a hearing must be served in person or by certified mail within five (5) days following the immediate suspension; ***or***
2. The employee has been formally charged with a crime of the First, Second or Third Degree or a crime of the Fourth Degree directly related to the employee's job.

Where a suspension is immediate, and is without pay, the employee must first be apprised either orally or in writing regarding the charges, the reason why an immediate suspension is sought, and a general description of the evidence in support of the charges. The employee will be provided an opportunity to respond to the charges before a representative of the County. The response may be oral or in writing.

Minor Discipline

Minor discipline may include a formal written reprimand, or a suspension or fine of five (5) working days or less. Notification of the charges and discipline is given to the employee on the "Notice of Minor Disciplinary Action" form. No hearing is afforded unless expressly provided in a collective negotiations agreement.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

An employee, who wishes to initiate a grievance or complaint concerning wages, hours of work or other terms and conditions of employment, may do so pursuant to the terms of his or her

collective negotiations agreement. A Non-contractual employee should discuss any complaints with his or her immediate supervisor for the purpose of resolving the matter informally.

In general, the grievance process consists of four (4) steps. Step 1 involves an informal discussion with the immediate supervisor. In Step 2, a written grievance is filed with the Department Head. In Step 3, a written grievance is filed with the County Manager. Step 4 involves a written demand for arbitration to the New Jersey State Board of Mediation. Grievances may be settled at any step.

However, employees concerned about County administrative matters must proceed through appropriate supervisory channels and ultimately to the attention of the County Manager, if necessary. This procedure promotes operations efficiency while protecting the privacy interests of County employees.

POLICIES, PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

ABSENTEEISM & LATENESS

Every employee is expected to report for work on time and to adhere to his or her assigned work hours for the normal working day as set by the department. The County will not tolerate unnecessary absenteeism or lateness. If extenuating circumstances arise and an employee will be late or absent for any reason, the employee **must** telephone his or her Supervisor as far in advance of the starting time as possible. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that proper notification is provided.

Unauthorized or excessive absenteeism, lateness, extending lunch breaks, or leaving work early may be subject to disciplinary action up to or including termination of employment.

BACKGROUND CHECK

The County reserves the right to conduct a criminal history background check for potential new hires. A criminal history record background check may be requested of any person for an official governmental purpose by an authorized County official. Law enforcement areas of the County conduct criminal background checks including psychological testing, fingerprinting, and checking references provided prior to hiring new employees.

CHANGE OF NAME OR ADDRESS

Any change in an employee's name, address or telephone number must be reported to his or her immediate Supervisor, Department Head or Division Head. Changes in marital status or number of dependents must also be reported. Maintaining proper records is important for processing of payroll, insurance, and other personnel matters.

CONFIDENTIAL EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Personnel records. The Personnel Division maintains official records of all employees in the County except for personnel of Runnells Hospital and the Division of Social Services, which maintain their own records. Subject to the New Jersey Right to Know Law, Executive Order No. 11 and other applicable law, the County will not release employee personnel information to anyone other than to the employee and his or her authorized representative without a valid Court Order.

The County encourages every employee to review his or her personnel file. Contact the Personnel Division, or the personnel unit of Runnells Hospital, or the Division of Social Services, for an appointment. Comments concerning the contents of an employee's personnel file may be made on a form contained in the Personnel Division, to be provided at the time the personnel file is reviewed. No insertions or withdrawals of any correspondence, except this form, are permitted.

Lending Institutions. The Personnel Division will respond to a request for personnel information by a recognized lending institution for credit information purposes. Only the fact of employment will be verified by telephone. Requests for additional information must be in writing and sent to the Personnel Division. All requests must be accompanied by a release signed by the employee authorizing and holding the County harmless for release of personnel information.

DISCRIMINATION PROHIBITED

The County complies with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ("Title VII"), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504"), the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (the "ADA"), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (the "Age Discrimination Act"), the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination ("NJLAD") and all other applicable laws and regulations.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Union County is an equal employment opportunity employer and does not discriminate against employees or job applicants on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, sex, ancestry, national origin, social or economic status, age, affectional or sexual orientation, marital status, familial status, domestic partnership status, or liability for service in the Armed Forces of the United States or any other status or condition protected by applicable Federal or State statutes, except where a bona fide occupational qualification applies.

The County will ensure that personnel decisions are made in accordance with principles of Equal Employment Opportunity by imposing only nondiscriminatory job requirements. The County will not discriminate with regard to any term, condition or privilege of employment. County-sponsored training, education, tuition assistance, and social and recreation programs will be administered without discrimination.

The County has an Affirmative Action Officer, who is assigned overall responsibility of the Affirmative Action Program. Any employee or applicant with a question or grievance should write to the Affirmative Action Officer at:

Affirmative Action Officer
Administration Building, 3rd Floor
Elizabeth, NJ 07207
(908) 527-4230

Individuals with Disabilities

The County acknowledges its responsibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("§504") to avoid discrimination against individuals with disabilities. §504 prohibits discrimination against otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in a program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. The ADA prohibits discrimination against otherwise qualified individuals on the basis of disability with respect to employment or the benefits, services, or activities of a public entity.

Under both acts, the definition of an "individual with a disability" is a person who:

1. has a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities such as seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, or working; or
2. has a record of such impairment; or
3. is regarded as having such an impairment.

The County will furnish auxiliary aids and services to employees and members of the public who have disabilities to the extent necessary for communication with other persons, unless it will result in an undue burden on, or a fundamental alteration to, the program or service.

No otherwise qualified employee or candidate for employment will be discriminated against in recruitment, employment, promotion, training, or transfer solely because of a disabling condition. No candidate for employment will be required to answer a question as to whether he or she has a disabling condition or the extent of such a disabling condition. The County may inquire into the applicant's ability to perform job-related tasks. No candidate will be discriminated against on the basis of a disabling condition that is not directly related to the essential function of the position for which the applicant has applied.

Reasonable modifications, which do not pose an undue hardship and which do not fundamentally alter a County program or activity, will be made to accommodate employment conditions to meet the needs of an otherwise qualified disabled person.

Grievance Procedure

The County has adopted an internal grievance procedure providing for prompt and equitable resolution of discrimination complaints alleging any action prohibited by the US Department of Justice regulations implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Information concerning the ADA and §504 is available from:

ADA Coordinator
Administration Building, 4th Floor
Elizabeth, NJ 07207
(908) 527-4840

Harassment, Sexual and Otherwise

It is the County's policy to promote a productive work environment and not to tolerate verbal or physical conduct by any employee that harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another's work performance or that creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment. All employees are expected to maintain a productive work environment that is free from harassing or disruptive activity. No form of harassment will be tolerated.

For more information, consult the County's policy regarding Sexual Harassment. All employees are responsible for understanding and complying with the County's Sexual Harassment policy. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any employee who does not comply with this policy.

DRESS CODE

Some departments/divisions have adopted certain dress standards or require uniforms. In general, an employee must present himself or herself professionally. Inappropriate casual attire, such as well-worn or torn jeans, or well-worn or torn sneakers, is not acceptable attire for County workers. An employee is expected to dress in good taste reflective of his or her particular work environment, to come to work looking neat and clean, and to wear clothing that does not create a safety hazard.

DRUG/ALCOHOL ABUSE

The County has a vital interest in maintaining a safe, healthy and efficient working environment for its employees, free from the use of illegal and nonprescription drugs, alcohol and the unauthorized use of prescription drugs. Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, on the job, poses serious safety and health risks, not only to the user, but also to all who come in contact with the user. The use, sale, transfer, or possession of alcohol, drugs, controlled substances, drug paraphernalia, or any combination thereof, on any County premises or worksite (including in County vehicles or any private vehicles parked on County premises or worksites) is grounds for discharge for the first offense.

For more information, please refer to the County's policy regarding drug and alcohol abuse. All employees are responsible for understanding and complying with the County's Drug and Alcohol Abuse policy. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any employee who does not comply with this policy.

DRUG/ALCOHOL TESTING RELATED TO COMMERCIAL DRIVING LICENSES

Federal regulations mandate random drug and alcohol testing of employees who are required to have a commercial driver's license ("CDL") for their job. The tests will be unannounced and administered in accordance with Federal regulations and established procedures. A positive alcohol or drug test may result in the termination of employment.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The St. Barnabas Behavioral Health Network provides confidential assessment, referral, and short-term counseling for Union County employees and their families in need of assistance in dealing with life's stresses and problems. These include emotional and mental health concerns, family and marital difficulties, alcohol and substance abuse, financial and legal pressures, and vocational and educational issues. *All information is kept confidential.*

This service is available to a County employee and to his or her family, at no cost, by calling St. Barnabas at (800)300-0628. Calls will be answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Tell the clinician that you are calling for EAP services.

EXIT INTERVIEWS

Prior to leaving County employment an employee should notify the Personnel Division at least two (2) weeks in advance (if possible). The County reserves the right to conduct an exit interview. The purpose of this interview is to (1) obtain the return of County property (*i.e.*, ID badge, parking sticker, etc.) (2) review pension information (3) receive health insurance information (COBRA) and (4) obtain open and honest information about why the employee is leaving County government. All information is *confidential*.

FITNESS FOR DUTY

The County has the right to request a fitness for duty examination for reasonable cause. This may be a physical and/or psychological examination based on the County's concern regarding an employee's physical and/or mental ability to perform the duties of their job. Examinations can be required either prior to an employee's return from an authorized sick leave of absence, or during the course of employment.

HOURS OF WORK

Subject to specific collective negotiations agreements, the following rules apply to employee hours of work:

Scheduling. Due to the numerous functions and responsibilities of Union County's institutions, agencies, and departments, employees' hours of work vary. The Department Head will inform an employee of his or her schedule. Regular attendance during all scheduled hours of work and remaining at work to the end of the work period is expected of every employee. If, for any reason, an employee cannot report for work on time, the employee must telephone his or her supervisor as far in advance as possible.

Breaks. The employee's immediate supervisor will schedule and inform the employee of the work schedule, lunch break, and any other breaks to which the employee is entitled by collective negotiations agreement. The schedule and duration of breaks varies by department and union contract.

Compressed work week policy. A compressed work week is any work schedule that enables a full-time employee to work the equivalent of a full week in less than five days in order to increase public access to Union County Government in appropriate departments or offices. The Department or Division Head will determine the appropriateness of a compressed work week based upon direct service needs. Twenty-four hour offices are not eligible. Employees with past abusive patterns of absenteeism will be excluded from consideration. To see if your department/office is eligible to participate, contact your Department Head or Agency Chief.

Flex-time (staggered start time) policy. A flex-time work week allows an employee flexibility in setting his or her work hours to fit his or her personal needs while fulfilling the needs of the County in providing quality services. The Department or Division Head determines the appropriateness of this program based on direct service needs. Twenty-four hour offices are not eligible. To see if your department or office is eligible to participate, contact your Department Head or Agency Chief.

HOUSEKEEPING

Since most employees spend approximately one third of their lives on the job, the County encourages and expects each employee to observe the same general rules of good housekeeping at work as at home.

IDENTIFICATION BADGE

All employees are required to wear a Union County Identification Badge at all times while on duty. The badges must be worn in a conspicuous location on the employee's clothing. Pictures for ID badges are taken on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Appointments can be made by calling 908-527-4950 or visit the Sheriff's Office on the first floor of the Administration Building.

Runnells Specialized Hospital employees are to notify Runnells security at (908)771-5896 for issuance of badges and for lost or stolen badges. ***Lost or stolen badges are to be reported immediately to security. A replacement charge will apply.***

LEGAL REPRESENTATION

An employee requiring the services of outside counsel in matters pertaining to litigation arising out of the scope of his or her employment, but not initiated by the employee, should notify the Office of the County Counsel immediately and request a conference. This notification and request must be made ***prior*** to retaining such services, so that the County may determine whether the employee is entitled to legal representation as a County employee.

MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

All job applicants are required to submit to a pre-employment medical examination, including a drug/alcohol test, once an offer of employment has been extended by the County. This requirement provides protection for the employee, fellow workers, and the County.

All job applicants applying for law enforcement positions such as County Correction Officer, County Police, Juvenile Detention Officer, and Sheriff Officer, will be required to submit to a psychological evaluation in addition to the pre-employment medical examination. The applicable Department or Division will so advise the job candidate whether this evaluation is necessary as well as the rules and regulations pertaining to this requirement.

OPEN PUBLIC RECORDS ACT (OPRA)

The Open Public Records Act (N.J.S.A .47:1A-1 et seq) attempts to strike a balance between the public's full right of access to government records and the privacy rights and security concerns that public agencies are responsible to maintain. At the County of Union, all requests for information from the public must be processed through the Clerk of the Board of Chosen Freeholders. The Clerk and/or County Counsel will determine whether the requested information is accessible or exempt from public disclosure.

ORIENTATION - NEW EMPLOYEES

A newly-appointed employee is required to attend an administrative session conducted by a member of the Personnel Division within the first few weeks of employment. New Jersey Department of Personnel and County rules and regulations will be explained to new employees. Conditions that affect the employee's work in a government setting will be explained and relevant handbooks and brochures will be distributed to those in attendance. Employees will be contacted as to time and place.

Departmental Personnel Liaisons must e-mail the Personnel Division at the appropriate office providing the name, title and department of the participating employee. Supervisors should also remind the employee of the meeting one-day in advance.

Orientation for a new employee at Runnells Hospital is handled by the In-Service Office.

Orientation for a new employee in the Social Services Department is handled by the Auxiliary Unit of the Division of Personnel and Labor Relations.

PARKING

Upon employment, each employee will be asked to fill out a form for a parking authorization sticker. At that time, depending upon availability, the location of parking areas and parking regulations will be explained.

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

(See U.C.A.C. §1-62; Ordinance #225)

All persons who are employed by the County of Union in a full-time capacity in the classified or unclassified service after November 10, 1983, prior to employment, must be and thereafter remain bona fide residents of the County of Union.

An employee who is hired after November 10, 1983 and moves outside the County must present a request for a waiver of residency to the respective Department Head for approval with the understanding that it will be forwarded to the Board of Chosen Freeholders for final consideration and approval. ***Unless a waiver is granted, failure of an employee to maintain residence in the County during employment will be cause for removal or discharge from service.***

Waiver of residency

Whenever a County appointing authority, with the consent and approval of the County Manager, determines that there cannot be recruited a sufficient number of qualified Union County residents for an available specific position, the County will advertise for qualified applicants who will be classified and appointed according to the following preferences:

1. Residents of counties contiguous to the County of Union.
2. Residents of other counties in the State of New Jersey.
3. All other qualified applicants.

Whenever an appointing authority, through the County Manager, advises the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Union that there are specific positions requiring special talents or skills, which are necessary for the operations of the County, such positions or employment may be filled without reference to residency as follows:

1. The County Manager will apply to the Board of Chosen Freeholders for a blanket waiver setting forth, with appropriate documentation, the nature of the special talent or expertise required, and the efforts made to recruit persons with special talent or expertise from within the County.

2. Thereafter, the Board of Chosen Freeholders may, in its discretion, adopt a Resolution waiving the residency requirement and will so advise the Clerk of the Board and the New Jersey Department of Personnel.

Whenever an appointing authority, through the County Manager, advises the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Union that there are special reasons why a particular position or title should not require the person holding the same to comply with the County's residency requirements, the Board of Chosen Freeholders will consider the reasons and may, in its discretion, waive the residency requirements for that position or employee. The waiver, if granted, must be obtained and filed with the Clerk of the Board prior to appointment.

A non-resident appointed to a position of employment must become a bona-fide resident of the County of Union within one (1) year of appointment, unless the residency requirement has been previously waived by the Board of Chosen Freeholders.

A full-time employee who was permanently employed prior to November 10, 1983 is exempt from the County's residency ordinance for Civil Service Promotional Examinations and internal transfer only. Such an employee is nevertheless subject to the provisions for all Civil Service Open Competitive Examinations as announced by the New Jersey Department of Personnel which require residency in Union County.

SAFETY

The County's policy is to provide safe and healthy working conditions and to implement safe operating practices, which protect everyone. Therefore, each employee must assume responsibility for safety consciousness by maintaining safe operating conditions and by performing duties in accordance with safe work practices. Safety is a 24 hour per day responsibility and requires total commitment from every employee.

SECURITY - VISITOR CONTROL

Check with Sheriff's Security for rules and regulations concerning visitors 908-527-4950.

SHINING STAR PROGRAM (formerly, Employee of the Month)

The Shining Star Program was created to recognize and reward employees for exceptional job performance. It publicly acknowledges employees deserving special recognition and awards them with a paid day off.

Nominations may be made for implementation of a creative idea or program to improve the efficiency of an operation or system, or for ideas and recommendations that result in saved dollars to the County. Employees may also be recognized by the committee for outstanding accomplishments or achievements. For example, the Selection Committee may give a special recognition award for heroism or some other outstanding accomplishments as appropriate.

For a nomination form, please contact your Department Head or Agency/Bureau Chief. All nominations should be sent directly to the County Manager's office.

SMOKE-FREE WORKPLACE

All County buildings and vehicles are smoke free. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any employee who does not comply with this policy.

(See Resolution No. 157-93 adopted 2/11/93)

UNIFORM ALLOWANCE

An employee represented by a union or association should consult his or her union representative or the collective negotiations agreement applicable to his or her bargaining unit regarding uniform allowance.

USE OF COUNTY PROPERTY

Equipment. County equipment including, but not limited to, facsimile machines, copiers, etc., will only be used for County business purposes.

Vehicles. County-owned vehicles will be used for official business only and only by the employee to whom the vehicle has been assigned. The assigned driver is personally responsible for the safe and proper operation of the vehicle as well as for the payment of any fines for traffic violations. Careless or negligent operation and misuse or abuse of a vehicle by the assigned operator may result in discipline.

Telephones. Much of the County's business is conducted over the telephone and the lines cannot be tied up with personal telephone calls. Personal calls, both incoming and outgoing, are discouraged. Abuse will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action.

Internet and E-Mail. Pursuant to Resolution No. 893-00, adopted July 27, 2000, electronic networks, including the internet and e-mail are to be used to conduct the business of County government, to effectively communicate with others in the course of government business, and

to gather information relevant to the performance of governmental duties. All information gathered via on-line resources or stored on County computers belongs to the County. The County retains the right to monitor all on-line communication to ensure that all employees pursue only appropriate business purposes.

VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

The County strives to maintain an atmosphere, which to the greatest degree possible will discourage workplace violence. Violence or threats of violence towards County employees by any person will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action. Please refer to the County's policy regarding Violence in the Workplace.

(See Resolution No. 77-99, adopted 1/21/99)

WEATHER POLICY

The County allows for emergency days during extreme weather conditions. During inclement weather or other emergency conditions in this area, please listen to **1010(AM) WINS** for special announcements of closings or delays.

This does not apply to 24-hour operations. The Correctional Facility, County Police, Juvenile Detention and Runnells Specialized Hospital will continue to operate in a twenty four (24) hour capacity in emergent weather conditions.

COMPENSATION

SALARY

Compensation for contractual employees. For most contractual classifications or job titles, a salary range has been established in conjunction with the collective negotiations process. The established range may provide for annual increments until the employee reaches his or her respective maximum salary. No employee will be paid less than the minimum or more than the maximum for his or her classification. A contractual employee should refer to the collective negotiations agreement for more specific information concerning compensation, including holiday pay, shift differential, and longevity.

Compensation for non-contractual employees. A classification and compensation system has been established for non-contractual employees. All non-contractual positions recognized by this program have an assigned grade level designated with an established minimum and maximum salary range. The non-contractual employee compensation plan provides a formula for calculating salary increases, whether promotion or merit based, as set forth in the *Union County Salary Administration Handbook* for non-contractual employees. The County reserves the right to adjust the salary grades.

(See Resolution No. 968-92)

COMPENSATORY TIME (NON-CONTRACTUAL EMPLOYEES)

A non-contractual employee below the position of Department or Division Head who is exempt from the overtime pay requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act and/or the New Jersey Wage and Hour Law, may be entitled to compensatory time off at the rate of one and one-half (1½) hours for every hour of eligible time worked in excess of forty (40) hours in a week. Said compensatory time must be taken within three (3) months of the occurrence of the overtime period. The Department Head will have discretion in scheduling such time with due consideration to the needs of the Department.

(See Resolution No. 503-87)

Furthermore, these same employees may be able to accrue compensatory time off for "volunteer" work at County activities outside his or her normal work week. Opportunities for volunteering will be posted by the department needing assistance. In order to participate in any program where compensatory time will be earned, written approval by the employee's Department/Division Head must be obtained *prior* to the event in question. No employee will be utilized by another department without having this approval. It will be the responsibility of each "volunteering" employee to obtain documentation of the hours they have worked and present same to the employee's Department or Division Head. Each department will be responsible for maintaining compensatory records for its own employees and monitoring its use.

DEDUCTIONS

Payroll deductions include mandatory deductions in addition to electives. The chart below identifies each deduction and its respective abbreviation. Each employee's payroll check stub will indicate the amounts deducted and for what purpose. It is the responsibility of the employee to notify the Department of Finance of any changes that occur in voluntary deductions and in the employee's family situations, which are claimed for income tax purposes, including any change in marital status.

MANDATORY DEDUCTIONS

FIT	Federal Income Tax
SS-O	Social Security – Old Age Survivors Disability
SS-M	Social Security - Medicare
SIT	State Income Tax
SUI	State Unemployment Insurance (Does not include State Disability Insurance)

OTHER DEDUCTIONS/ VOLUNTARY DEDUCTIONS

AFLAC	Voluntary Insurance
BACK PEN	Back Pension Amount
BC/BS-PAC	Traditional Insurance Costs
BOSTON IN	Life Insurance
CI ADJ	Contributory (Pension Insurance Adjustment)
COMM CAS	Commercial Casualty Insurance
COPE	CWA 1080 (donation to COPE Organization)
CR UN	Credit Union
DENTAL-CO	Dental Premium Costs
DIR DEP	Direct Deposit- 2 nd Account
DIS INS	Temporary Disability Insurance
DVUF	United Way
EIC	Earned Income Credit
GARN/LEVY	Garnishee/Levy/Child Support
GRP LIFE	Group Life Insurance (Pension)
DENTA	Dental Premium Costs
HARTFORD D/C	Deferred Compensation (Hartford Life)
HEALTH IN	Health Insurance Premium Cost
I-BONDS	United States Savings Bonds - I Series

JER-MAINT	JE Runnell's Maintenance
JTPA LOAN	JTPA Pension Loans
MFG LIFE	Manufacturer's Life Insurance
MUTUAL OF	Omaha Life Insurance
ORTHO	Orthodontist Premium Cost
PEN ADJ	Pension Adjustments (PERS)
PERS ARRS	P.E.R.S. Arrears
PERS BKCI	Pension Back Contributory Insurance (PERS)
PERS CI	P.E.R.S. Contributory Insurance
P/T CI	P.E.R.S. Contributory Insurance Part time
PERS LOAN	P.E.R.S. Loan
PERS PENS	Public Employee Retirement System, Pension
P/T PENS	Part timer Public Employee Retirement System
PERS SA	P.E.R.S. Pension Supplemental Annuity
PSP/CNA	Personal Security Insurance
P&F ARREA	Police & Fire Pension Arrears
P&F LOAN	Police & Fire Pension Loan
P&F PENSI	Police & Fire Pension
P&F SA	Police & Fire Supplemental Annuity
ROTH	Roth IRA Mainstay Account
SELECTIVE	Personal Disability Insurance
UN DUES	Union Dues
US BONDS	United States Savings Bonds- EE Series
US I BONDS	United States Savings Bonds – I Series
VEH FRING	Vehicle Fringe Benefit

DIRECT DEPOSIT

All employees have the option to participate in the direct deposit of his or her payroll check to a financial institution. For further information, please contact the Payroll Unit of the Department of Finance (908) 527-4082.

PAY DAY

All employees are paid every other Thursday, unless a holiday falls on Thursday. Employees are paid on a bi-weekly basis.

PROMOTIONS

The County offers a wide range of positions, which extend to each employee the opportunity for advancement. Employees should review any applicable collective negotiations agreement, the rules and regulations of the New Jersey Department of Personnel, where applicable and/or the *Union County Salary Administration Handbook*.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

The County is committed to encourage and reward employees who demonstrate outstanding performance. Conversely, poor performance may have an adverse impact on an employee's salary and compensation. An employee evaluation system has been established for employees in certain bargaining units. Contractual employees should review the applicable collective negotiations agreement. The format for non-contractual employee evaluations is set forth in the *Union County Salary Administration Handbook*.

RETURN TO PAY STATUS FROM LEAVE

Upon return from leave without pay, an employee should notify the Personnel Division in order to reactivate pay and other benefits which may have been affected by the leave. Failure to do so may result in a delay to full pay status and may cause unnecessary hardship for the employee.

ABSENCES FROM WORK

AUTHORIZATION

The County, in its discretion, may grant an unpaid leave of absence to an employee for a period up to one year.

ABSENCE WITHOUT PERMISSION

(See N.J.A.C. 4A:2-6.2)

Any employee who is absent from duty for five (5) or more consecutive business days without the approval of his or her Supervisor will be considered to have abandoned his or her position and will be recorded as having resigned not in good standing.

Similarly, an employee who has not returned to duty for five (5) or more consecutive business days following the expiration of an approved leave of absence will be considered to have abandoned his or her position and will be recorded as having resigned not in good standing.

SICK LEAVE WITH PAY

(See N.J.A.C. 4A:6-1.3)

Amount of Leave

A full-time employee will be entitled to annual paid sick leave as follows:

1. A new employee will receive one (1) working day for the initial month of employment if he or she begins work on the first (1st) through the eighth (8th) day of the calendar month and one-half working day if he or she begins on the ninth (9th) through the twenty-third (23rd) day of the month. After the initial month of employment and up to the end of the first calendar year, an employee will be credited with one (1) working day for each month of service.
2. At the beginning of each calendar year thereafter, in anticipation of continued employment, an employee will be credited with fifteen (15) working days as unearned sick time.

A part-time employee will be entitled to a proportionate amount of paid sick leave.

Use of Leave

Sick leave may be used by an employee who is unable to work because of:

1. Personal illness or injury;
2. Exposure to contagious disease;
3. Care, for a reasonable period of time, of a seriously ill member of the employee's immediate family (spouse, domestic partner, child, legal ward, grandchild, foster child, father, mother, legal guardian, grandfather, grandmother, brother, sister, father-in-law, mother-in-law, and relatives residing in the employee's household);
4. Death in the employee's immediate family, for a reasonable period of time;
5. Sick leave may also be used by a disabled employee for absences related to the acquisition or use of an aide for the disabled when the aide is necessary to function on the job. In such cases, reasonable proof may be required by the County.

Notice

When an employee anticipates an absence from work for any of the reasons stated above, the employee must notify his or her supervisor of the impending absence within a reasonable time prior to the absence and of the reason for the absence. This procedure is required to assist the employee's department in planning for coverage during the employee's leave of absence. Failure to so notify the supervisor will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action.

When an employee is in an unpaid status for 15 working days of a month, he or she will not be eligible to earn benefit time such as sick days and vacation days for that month.

Medical Certification

Any employee who is absent on sick leave for five (5) or more consecutive working days is required to produce a physician's certificate of illness as evidence substantiating the illness. A Department Head may also require proof of illness of an employee on sick leave whenever such a requirement appears reasonable or warranted. This certificate will also indicate that upon the employee's return to work he or she is able to resume regularly assigned work duties.

Sick leave will extend from the date at which the employee's physician certifies that the employee is unable to work due to the disabling effects of the injury or illness until that date which the employee's physician certifies that the employee is able to resume work. Requests for sick leave must contain both anticipated commencement and return to work dates. These dates

may be adjusted or extended upon application from the employee combined with medical certification of necessity.

The County reserves all rights to challenge any application for sick leave and to require an employee to be examined by a County-designated physician prior to the granting of sick leave or prior to permitting the employee to return to work.

Any employee who accrues fifteen (15) or more absences in any one (1) calendar year consisting of periods of less than five (5) day absences in any one block of time may be required to submit acceptable medical certifications of illness for any additional request for sick leave in that calendar year. If the cause for the absences is an illness of a chronic or recurring nature requiring an employee's absence from duty of one (1) day or less on repeated occasions, then only one medical certification will be required for every six (6) month period. This medical certification must specify that the chronic or recurring nature of the illness is likely to cause recurring and subsequent absences from employment.

Temporary Reassignment

The County may, as a reasonable accommodation, grant an employee's request for temporary reassignment to another position within the employee's department. This provision applies only to an employee who provides medical certification that temporary reassignment is necessary due to medical reasons (including pregnancy) and only if such reassignment does not present an undue burden on the employee's department. In general, however, the County has the discretion to preclude an employee from working if the employee cannot perform the essential functions of his or her job.

Separation of Employee

An employee who has resigned or was dismissed, or who has otherwise separated from employment, will be paid for any earned, unused vacation days for the current year pro-rated upon the number of months actually worked in the calendar year in which the separation becomes effective, in addition to any unused vacation days due for the previous year. Employees will not be paid for any unused sick or personal time.

Sick Leave Payback

If an employee leaves the County's employment for any reason before the end of the calendar year he or she will be required to pay back any sick leave that was taken but not yet earned. The amount owed will be deducted from the employee's final paycheck.

Unpaid Sick Leave

An employee may request a leave of absence due to disabling injury or illness. To the extent possible, an employee requesting disability leave must apply to his or her Department Head in writing prior to commencing such leave. An employee requesting an unpaid leave of absence should consult the County's *Family Leave and Medical Leave Act Policy*.

Nonaccrual During Leave or Suspension

Paid sick days will not accrue during a leave of absence without pay or during a suspension.

Abuse of Sick Leave

Abuse of sick leave, in the form of excessive or chronic use of sick leave or the use of sick leave to extend weekends or holidays, will be cause for disciplinary action.

DONATED LEAVE PROGRAM

Purpose. The intent of this program is to permit County employees to donate earned sick time and vacation time on a voluntary basis to another County employee who is suffering from a catastrophic health condition or injury, or to care for a member of the employee's immediate family suffering from a catastrophic health condition or injury which compels his or her prolonged absence from work. Approvals regarding eligibility will be made on a case-by-case basis subject to the discretion of the County Administration.

Recipient eligibility. A Union County employee will be eligible to receive donated sick or vacation leave from other County employees if the employee meets all the following criteria:

1. Employee or immediate family member must be suffering from a catastrophic health condition or injury which necessitates the employee's prolonged absence from work and for which the employee has no available paid leave.
2. Must produce acceptable medical verification from a physician or other licensed health care provider. The medical verification must indicate the nature, severity, and anticipated duration of the disability resulting from the serious health condition or injury involved.
3. Must have completed at least one year of continuous service with the County of Union.
4. Must have exhausted all accrued paid leave time including compensatory time off, sick leave and vacation leave.

Donor eligibility. To be eligible to donate leave to another employee, an employee must meet the following criteria:

1. Must have at least fifteen (15) days of accrued sick leave remaining to his or her credit after making any donations.
2. Must not have solicited nor accepted anything of value from anyone for the donation.
3. Only whole days may be donated.

Program Procedures

1. Any employee may request to participate as a recipient in this program by contacting the Director of the employee's Department. The Director will provide the proper forms to the eligible employee and will require acceptable medical documentation concerning the nature, severity and anticipated duration of the employee's condition. The request must be made prior to the employee's exhaustion of all accumulated sick and vacation time. The Director of the employee's Department must first approve the request and, if approved, it will then be forwarded for review and approval by the Personnel Division. If the request is approved, all Union County employees will then be eligible to donate sick and vacation time on a voluntary basis. If the request is not approved, the employee can appeal the decision to the Donated Leave Committee established by the County Manager, whose decision is final. Decisions and approvals regarding eligibility will be made on a case-by-case basis.
2. Once a recipient is approved for the program, the Personnel Division will post on employee bulletin boards, or communicate by other appropriate means, the name(s) of eligible employee(s) who will have exhausted all earned paid leave time by a designated date. The posting will be done only with the recipient's consent. If the employee is unable to consent, the employee's family may consent on behalf of the employee. Notice will be provided to all appropriate bargaining representatives.
3. A County employee may donate only whole days of either sick leave or vacation leave, or a combination thereof, within the prescribed limitation.
4. The donor and the recipient (or family representative) will fill out the required forms. No one will directly or indirectly intimidate, threaten or coerce, or attempt to intimidate or coerce, any other employee for the purpose of interfering with any right which such employee may have with respect to contributing, receiving or

using paid leave under this program. This includes promises to confer any benefit (such as appointment, promotion or compensation) or effecting or threatening to effect any reprisal (such as deprivation of appointment, promotion or compensation). An affidavit to this effect will be signed by the donor. Any employee who engages in the above-described prohibited conduct will be subject to disciplinary action.

5. The donor's leave time will be reduced by the number of sick or vacation days, which are donated.
6. The eligible recipient may receive up to 180 donated days during the employee's employment with the County.
7. Should an employee return to work, or otherwise terminate the use of leave with donated time remaining, that time will be returned to the donor(s) on a prorated basis in whole days.
8. The recipient employee, while using donated leave, will continue to earn sick and vacation leave. If the earned sick leave is unused when the employee returns to work, all such earned time will be retained by the recipient employee and credited to the employee's accrued sick leave time.
9. If the recipient employee retires, he or she will not be granted supplemental compensation for any unused sick days, which he or she received through the donated sick leave program.
10. The recipient employee who utilizes donated time will be treated as a County employee on a leave of absence with pay.
11. Once the sick and/or vacation leave has been donated, it may not be revoked by the donor.
12. Donations may not be used on a retroactive basis.

If the employee's prolonged absence extends beyond the expiration of the donated leave time, the employee may make application for a leave of absence without pay. The employee should consult the County's *Family Leave and Medical Leave Act Policy*.

This information is presented to familiarize the employee with the contents of this program in summary form. Further information and questions concerning this program should be directed to the Personnel Division.

VACATION (ANNUAL LEAVE)

An employee in a bargaining unit subject to a collective negotiations agreement should consult that agreement as to vacation entitlement, payment for unused vacation leave, and other matters regarding leave. The following is a general description of annual leave benefits:

Amount of Leave

Generally, except for personnel hired by the Department of Human Services, Division of Social Services prior to July 1, 1990, paid vacation time is granted as follows:

During the first calendar year of employment, an employee will earn one (1) vacation day for each month of service during the calendar year following the date of employment.

An employee with one (1) to eight (8) years of service will be entitled to thirteen (13) working days vacation each year.

An employee with eight (8) completed years to ten (10) years of service will be entitled to fourteen (14) working days vacation each year.

An employee with ten (10) completed years to fifteen (15) years of service will be entitled to seventeen (17) working days vacation each year.

An employee with fifteen (15) completed years to twenty (20) years of service will be entitled to nineteen (19) working days vacation each year.

An employee with twenty (20) completed years to twenty-five (25) years of service will be entitled to twenty-two (22) working days vacation each year.

An employee with twenty-five (25) completed years or more of service will be entitled to twenty-seven (27) working days vacation each year.

A part-time employee will receive vacation credit allowances on a pro-rated basis in accordance with the above.

Social Services Division Employees 1

A full-time employee of the Division of Social Services prior to July 1, 1990 is granted vacation leave as follows:

¹ Full-time employees in Social Services hired on or after July 1, 1990 will be entitled to the vacation allowance shown under annual leave for other County employees.

One (1) working day for each month or major fraction thereof of employment during the first calendar year of employment.

Twelve (12) working days after the first calendar year up to and including five (5) years of employment.

Fifteen (15) working days after the first five (5) years of employment and up to and including ten (10) years of employment.

Twenty (20) working days after ten (10) years of employment and up to and including fifteen (15) years of employment.

Twenty-two (22) working days after fifteen (15) years of employment up to and including twenty (20) years of employment.

Twenty-six (26) working days after twenty (20) years of employment up to and including twenty-five (25) years of employment.

Twenty-eight (28) working days after twenty-five (25) years of employment.

Scheduling

The Department Head has the exclusive right to determine when an employee's vacation will be scheduled, giving reasonable consideration to an employee's wishes in this regard. Where conflicts in choice of dates occur, preference will be governed by seniority insofar as effective staffing requirements permit. Vacations must be taken during the current calendar year unless the Department Head determines that it cannot be taken due to excessive workload, in which case unused vacations may be carried forward into the next succeeding year only.

Unused Leave

An employee, who has resigned, has been dismissed, or who has otherwise separated from employment, will be paid for any earned, unused vacation days in accordance with any applicable collective negotiations agreement.

An employee who is retiring on pension based on length of service will be entitled to the full vacation for the calendar year in which he or she retires in accordance with any applicable collective negotiations agreement.

Upon the death of an employee, any annual vacation leave credits will be calculated based on the deceased's present salary rate, and will be paid to his or her estate in accordance with any applicable collective negotiations agreement.

No Vacation Accrual During Leave Without Pay

An employee on a leave of absence without pay, except for military leave, furlough extension leave, or voluntary furlough, does not accrue vacation benefits.

Vacation Payback

If an employee leaves the County's employ for any reason before the end of the calendar year, after having taken a vacation allowance for the year, he or she will be charged with the unearned part of his or her vacation. The amount owed will be deducted from his or her final paycheck.

HOLIDAYS

The following days are paid holidays, as listed by the day of the week and calendar date of the appropriate year on which they fall. An employee in a bargaining unit subject to a collective negotiations agreement should consult that agreement.

New Years Day
Martin Luther King's Birthday*
Lincoln's Birthday
Washington's Birthday*
Good Friday
Memorial Day*
Independence Day
Labor Day
Columbus Day*
Election Day
Veterans' Day
Thanksgiving Day
Day after Thanksgiving
Christmas Day

* As provided by Federal and State Law.

Holidays falling on a Sunday will be celebrated on the following Monday. Holidays falling on a Saturday are subject to the holiday provisions of the respective collective negotiations agreements. If a holiday falls during a period of unpaid leave of absence, the employee will not be paid for the holiday. Holidays occurring during vacation or sick leave are not counted as a day of vacation or sick leave.

PERSONAL, BUSINESS OR RELIGIOUS LEAVE

An employee who is employed less than one year is granted up to a total of three days off for personal, business or religious reasons in accordance with the following:

- a. One day after four months of employment.
- b. One additional day after eight months of employment.
- c. The third day may be granted between the tenth and twelfth months of employment.

An employee who has been employed for more than one year is granted up to three days per year. (Social Services employees shall be granted four personal leave days per year after five years of continuous employment.)

An employee must apply for such personal, business or religious leave by stating the reason for the requested leave as far in advance as possible. The request by the employee will be directed to his or her Department Head. The leave may only be taken if the Department Head or his or her designee approves and grants said leave. If the requested leave is for business reasons, the employee must demonstrate that the business purpose could not be scheduled after working hours. No personal leave will be applied for, approved, or granted immediately before or after any vacation period, holiday period, or weekend, except under extraordinary circumstances. Personal, business or religious leave days are not cumulative from year to year.

A part-time employee will receive personal, business or religious leave days on a pro-rated basis.

MATERNITY LEAVE

An employee requesting maternity leave will be granted the same leave and provided the same rights and benefits as other employees with disabilities, on sick leave, and/or leave without pay. Please consult the Sick Leave section of this Handbook and the County's *Family Leave and Medical Leave Policy* for more information.

The County may, as a reasonable accommodation, grant a pregnant employee's request for temporary reassignment to another position within her department. This provision applies only to an employee who provides medical certification that temporary reassignment is necessary due to pregnancy and only if such reassignment does not present an undue burden on the employee's department. In general, however, the County has the discretion to preclude an employee from working if the employee cannot perform the essential functions of her job.

JURY SERVICE

An employee who is required to be present for jury service in any court of New Jersey, any court in another state, the United States District Court of New Jersey, or any other Federal District Court during his or her scheduled working hours or during his or her scheduled work shift will be excused and granted leave with pay. In order to receive paid leave, the employee must submit to his Department Head written verification of attendance signed by a representative of the Court as well as any payment received for jury service. Any employee excused from jury service must notify his or her Department or Division.

DEATH IN THE FAMILY

An employee will be granted up to five consecutive days paid leave of absence in order to make arrangements for and to attend the funeral of a spouse or child. An employee will be granted up to three consecutive days paid leave of absence in order to make arrangements for and to attend the funeral of the employee's mother, father, sister, brother, grandparents, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandchildren, or a relative residing at the employee's household. An employee in a bargaining unit subject to a collective negotiations agreement should consult that agreement.

CONVENTION LEAVE

Convention Leave will be granted in accordance with New Jersey statute, the Administrative Code at N.J.A.C. 4A:6-1.13, and/or the employee's collective negotiations agreement.

MILITARY LEAVE

The County of Union recognizes that a strong, ready Reserve and National Guard are essential to the defense of this nation in time of national emergency, disaster, domestic violence, or foreign aggression. The County also encourages its employees to serve in the Reserve or National Guard and recognizes the great personal and economic sacrifices of the patriotic men and women who may be called to duty in time of crisis.

Military leave with pay will be granted to an employee in accordance with N.J.A.C. 4A:6-1.11, N.J.S.A. 38:23-1, and N.J.S.A. 38a:4-4. An employee must provide a copy of any military orders to his or her Department Head. After the military leave with pay expires (either 30 or 90 work days depending on the branch of service), the employee will be placed on military leave with differential pay for the duration of their mandatory military activation. Health benefits for the employee and family, if applicable, continue as if the employee were actively on the job.

LEAVES OF ABSENCE WITHOUT PAY

Leaves of absence without pay ("LOA w/o Pay") may be granted to a permanent employee for good and substantial reasons such as education, maternity, etc. Requests for leave without pay must be submitted in writing by the employee to his or her Department Head. A LOA w/o Pay beyond one year must be approved by the New Jersey Department of Personnel, where applicable.

If an employee is granted and remains in a LOA w/o pay status for 15 working days during any month, the employee will not accrue any sick, vacation, or other leave time for that month. An employee on a LOA w/o pay should refer to the *Union County Employee Health Benefits Manual* for information regarding medical benefits during such leave. Additionally, an employee requesting an LOA w/o pay due to personal illness or to care for a family member should refer to the County's *Family and Medical Leave Act Policy*.

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE

It is the policy of the County to provide family and medical leaves in accordance with applicable law, including the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 and the New Jersey Family Leave Act. Please consult the County's *Family and Medical Leave Act Policy* for more information.

(See Resolution No. 81-99 adopted 1/21/99)

FURLOUGH (VOLUNTARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE WITHOUT PAY)

The purpose of a voluntary furlough program is to lessen the need for reductions in force by allowing an employee to take unpaid leave with accrual of leave time, anniversary dates, and seniority as if the employee were in pay status. Any employee wishing to take a voluntary leave of absence without pay may take such a leave for up to three consecutive weeks (fifteen working days) with the approval of his or her Department Head. Any exception to this policy requires the approval of the County Manager's Office. These leaves of absence will include the maintenance of certain benefits not generally available for unpaid leaves:

1. All health, dental and prescription insurance coverage;
2. Maintenance of all seniority rights;
3. Accrual of all sick, vacation and personnel time; and
4. Maintenance of all pension benefits through buy-back of time deductions made in the weeks succeeding the leave period.

RETURN TO PAY STATUS FROM LEAVE

Upon return from leave without pay, the employee should check with appropriate individuals in order to confirm activation of pay and all other related benefits, which may have been affected by the leave. Failure to do so may result in a delay to full pay status and it may cause unnecessary hardship for the employee.

HEALTH BENEFITS

HEALTH BENEFIT PLANS

Availability of health benefit plans is subject to any applicable specific collective negotiations agreement. Additionally, each employee should carefully review plan literature and payroll deduction schedule for specific information about each plan.

Eligibility. An employee becomes eligible to participate in the health benefits program on the first day of the first month following the completion of sixty days of employment. A part-time employee must be hired to work a minimum of twenty hours per week, fifty-two weeks of the year, to be considered eligible for benefits. A plan enrollment form and a payroll deduction sheet must be completed by each employee at the time of hire.

A County employee may select from several health benefit plans, featuring a PPO program and Point of Service plans. An employee should exercise careful consideration as to his or her family's specific medical needs and thoroughly review plan literature prior to the election of a health benefits plan. The health benefits program provides medical benefits for an eligible employee, his or her spouse, and dependent children to the end of the year in which they attain age 23, provided the dependent children are not married or insured through their own employee benefits plan. Deductions apply to all employees and can vary as to the type of coverage and plan chosen. Please contact the Health Benefits Unit of the Personnel Division for details.

All plans offered provide a comprehensive range of benefits, including hospital, surgical, diagnostic and out-patient services. Physician access and networks vary from plan to plan. General outlines of the plans and specific details are available from the Health Benefits Unit of the Personnel Division.

Once a health benefits plan is selected, the employee must remain in that plan until the next scheduled open enrollment. Open enrollments are scheduled yearly for each program offered. Information as to the exact dates of open enrollments can be obtained from Health Benefits Unit of the Personnel Division. **When an employee has a change in his or her family status due to marriage, death, divorce or the birth/adoption of a child, it is necessary to report the event within thirty days of the occurrence on the correct enrollment/change form to the Personnel Division.** Please refer to plan literature regarding specific reporting requirements.

Failure to do so could result in a loss of coverage until the next scheduled open enrollment period. Identification cards and plan information will be forwarded to an employee at the time of eligibility.

After termination from employment, coverage under the health plan ceases at the end of a thirty-day grace period. Retirees may elect to continue coverage under the health plan but in accordance with specific criteria as provided by Personnel. Please contact your respective Health Benefits Unit of the Division of Personnel for details.

MEDICARE

Medicare is a Federal program, which provides health insurance to people who are age 65 and over. There are two parts to Medicare: Part A (hospital insurance) and Part B (medical insurance).

Medicare and Active Employee's Health Coverage

The Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982 (TEFRA) requires that an active employee, age 65 and over be given the opportunity to select either the employer's group health coverage or the Medicare program as the primary coverage. The Deficit Reduction Act of 1984 (DEFRA), effective January 1, 1985, modifies TEFRA by expanding the scope of the working aged provision. Under DEFRA, the spouse of an employee, age 65 and over, also has a choice between the group's regular health coverage or the Medicare program as the primary coverage. Unless otherwise specified by the employee, it is the County's customary practice to designate the employee/spouse as TEFRA/DEFRA eligible, thereby maintaining the County's group plans as the primary health benefits provider.

Medicare and Retirement

When an employee who is age 65 or over retires, or retires under age 65 and becomes Medicare eligible due to a disabling condition, the Medicare program becomes the primary coverage. This also applies to dependents of retirees. Three months before retirement, the employee and /or the eligible spouse must go to his or her Social Security Office and sign up for Medicare, Parts A and B.

DENTAL PLAN

Availability of dental plans varies based on the employee's specific collective negotiation agreements. Plans also vary according to dental networks. To review dental networks, verify availability of plans under specific collective negotiation agreements or determine the amount of payroll deduction contact the Health Benefits Unit of the Personnel Division.

Eligibility - An employee becomes eligible to participate in the Dental program on the first day of the first month following the completion of sixty days of employment. For P.B.A. members, *i.e.*, officers of the corrections, sheriffs, and police departments, eligibility begins on the first day of the first month following the completion of ninety days of employment. A plan selection form and a payroll deduction sheet must be completed by an employee at the time of hire.

Changes in family status due to divorce, death, or marriage must be reported to the Personnel Division within thirty (30) days of the event to adjust the benefits accordingly. Failure to do so may result in loss of coverage until the next scheduled open enrollment period. Employees should also review their specific plan literature for notification requirements.

An open enrollment period is offered once annually. During this time, an employee is given a choice to remain with his or her current selection or switch to one of the other plans offered. Coverage under the dental plans ceases on the last day of the month following the day of termination from employment.

Certain plan selections require payroll deductions from the employee.

PRESCRIPTION PLAN

The County of Union, through MEDCO Health, formerly Merck MEDCO/PAID PRESCRIPTIONS, provides to an eligible employee, his or her spouse, and dependents to age 19 years, medical prescription drug benefits. An employee becomes eligible to participate in the plan following the completion of sixty (60) days of employment. The co-payments are: \$3.00 for mail order; \$5.00 for generic; \$10.00 for brand name when generic is not available; and \$15.00 for brand name when generic is available. Detailed co-payment schedule can be obtained in union contracts or from the Personnel Division.

Mail Order Program. For enhanced prescription drug benefits, the County offers its employees and dependents the advantage of mail order service. The mail order program is ideal for those individuals who take prescription medication on an on-going basis. The mail order advantage is that there is a lower co-payment for the prescription. Mail order forms and directions for use are mailed to each eligible County employee with his or her ID cards. For additional forms or more information contact Health Benefits Unit of the Personnel Division.

TEMPORARY DISABILITY PLAN

Subject to the terms of specific collective negotiations agreements, certain employees are covered under a short-term disability plan. If an employee is absent from work due to an illness or injury that is non-work-related, the employee may receive a weekly benefit. The amount of the weekly benefit and start date are determined by the terms of the applicable collective

negotiations agreement. **NOTE:** All sick days **must** be exhausted prior to eligibility. To initiate a temporary disability claim, contact your immediate Manager or Supervisor, who will notify the Personnel Division. For details and claim status information, contact the Personnel Division. The County does not participate in the temporary disability portion of the New Jersey State Unemployment Insurance Program.

LONG TERM DISABILITY PLAN

A voluntary long-term disability plan is available for non-contractual (exclusionary) employees at time of hire. This plan requires a payroll deduction.

EXPLANATION OF BENEFITS ON LEAVE

Employees on approved leave of absences **with pay** continue to enjoy their health benefits without interruption.

Employee granted a leave **without pay** for any reason are covered under the health benefits plan as follows:

Health Insurance – Thirty days
Dental Insurance – End of the month from the last date of pay
Prescription Coverage - The last day on the payroll

Certain types of leave without pay maintain health benefits intact for up to twelve weeks within a two-year period. Please contact the Personnel Division for details.

Additionally, employees are given the option of maintaining all health benefits plans at the premium rate paid by the employer and for a period of up to nine months.

When employees return to full employment, health benefits are reinstated as follows:

Health Insurance – The first month following the return to work
Dental Insurance - The first of the month following the return to work
Prescription Coverage – The day of returning to work

Please review any applicable collective negotiation agreement, and call the Health Benefits Unit of the Personnel Division for additional information concerning your health insurance while on leave without pay.

MANDATORY EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

COBRA

(See 29 U.S.C. §1161 et seq.)

Under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA), the County must offer a temporary extension of its group health coverage when an employee experiences a “qualifying event” (termination of employment, divorce between employee and spouse, or ineligibility of dependent child, including reaching the age limitation of the plan or emancipation from the employee). A covered employee and his or her qualified beneficiaries have the option to pay for continued participation in the County's group health plan, which would otherwise have ended due to a specific qualifying event. Upon termination of eligibility, call the Health Benefits Unit of the Personnel Division for details.

HEALTH INSURANCE AND PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 1996

HIPAA has important consequences for individuals who move from one job to another or who have pre-existing medical conditions. Essentially, HIPAA limits the exclusion period under a new insurance policy for a pre-existing medical condition exclusion to 12 months (or 18 months for late enrollment). Additionally, if the individual can demonstrate that he or she had previous insurance coverage (without a break of 63 days or more), the individual can reduce the period of exclusion by the number of months of previous coverage. Proof of prior coverage is through a Certificate of Coverage, which is provided to an insured when participation in a health benefits plan terminates. HIPAA also prohibits discrimination in enrollment and premiums against employees and their dependents based on health status, and provides for the strict confidentiality of all medical information. For more information please contact the Personnel Division.

PENSION - PUBLIC EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM (PERS)

Mandated by the State Pension System, it is a **condition** of employment that the employee join the retirement system if:

1. The employee has permanent or unclassified status, or
2. The employee is on the payroll for one year (12 continuous months) with a temporary or provisional status. A temporary or provisional employee who is receiving a salary for one (1) year **must** enroll, (including prior time if transferred from another Union County Department).

The only exceptions to this enrollment policy are:

1. Elected officials who are non-veterans. Non-veterans elected officials have the option of enrolling provided they are not already a PERS member.
2. A seasonal employee.
3. An employee who earns less than \$1500 annually.
4. A JTPA employee.
5. A PFRS eligible employee.

If you are already a member of the System on the basis of another position in public employment, you are required to enroll again as a “dual” member and continue your pension contributions accordingly.

An employee should file an enrollment application as soon as the employee's status is listed as permanent or unclassified, since pension contributions will automatically become effective as of the enrollment date. The normal waiting period to receive the official notification from the State regarding your enrollment into the system is about two (2) months. As a result, it usually requires that the member usually is required to pay “back” (double) deductions for a few months. Therefore, an early filing will help to avoid having to pay several months of “back” or double deductions.

Enrollment rules and regulations are described in general terms in this handbook and may not cover all situations. If you have specific questions please refer to the *State of New Jersey Public Employees' Retirement System Plan Handbook*, the *Union County Employee Pension Benefit Manual* or contact the Department of Finance, Pension Administrator at (908) 527-4058.

LIFE INSURANCE - PUBLIC EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM

Upon enrollment into the Public Employees Retirement System ("PERS"), eligible employees are insured for what is called Non-Contributory Group Life Insurance. Non-Contributory Group Life Insurance is free, and valued at 1½ times the annual salary of the member in the event of death while actively employed.

In addition to the Non-Contributory insurance, most PERS members are **required** to have what is called Contributory Life Insurance; which is also valued at 1½ times the annual salary. It is compulsory to participate in the Contributory portion of the Group Life Insurance plan for a period of one year from date of pension enrollment. After the first 12 months, the employee may discontinue the Contributory Insurance coverage by completing the appropriate form. The benefits of Non-Contributory Life Insurance and Contributory Life Insurance currently offer a combined death benefit of three times a participant's annual salary.

The calculation for this Contributory Insurance deduction is based on a flat rate of .55% (.0055) of salary, paid for by the employee, through weekly or bi-weekly payroll deductions.

These life insurance policies are mailed directly to the member by the New Jersey Division of Pensions at approximately the same time pension deductions begin.

For more information please check the *Union County Employee Pension Benefit Manual* or contact the Department of Finance, Pension Administrator at (908) 527-4058.

PENSION - POLICE & FIREMEN'S RETIREMENT SYSTEM ("PFRS")

If an employee holds a title recognized under Police & Firemen's Retirement System ("PFRS") (*i.e.*, Sheriff's Officer/Investigator, Prosecutor's Office Investigators/Detectives, County Police, County Correction Officer) and is a permanent employee, he or she must enroll in the Police & Firemen's Retirement System.

PFRS offers life insurance, which is currently valued at 3½ times the employee's annual salary in the event of death while actively employed. This insurance is free.

For more information please check the *Union County Employee Pension Benefit Manual*.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Social Security deductions are listed on the paycheck stub as "OASDI" (Old Age Survivor Disability Insurance) and the Medicare portion of Social Security as "MEDIC." All deductions are paid directly to the Social Security Administration.

Every three years, an employee should obtain a historical printout of eligible Social Security earnings. This printout will date back to the first year of work. It will allow an employee to see if his or her account has been properly credited. Call the local office of the Social Security Administration for necessary forms.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

The County participates in the New Jersey State Unemployment Insurance Program. Each employee must contribute at the rate established by the New Jersey Unemployment Board. For 2004, the rate is .425 of the first \$23,500 of covered wages paid by the County in the calendar year. If an employee becomes totally or partially unemployed, he or she should file a claim for benefits at the nearest Unemployment Insurance Claim Office on the first working day following

unemployment. Eligibility requirements are determined by the State of New Jersey, not the County of Union. **Please note:** The County of Union **does not** participate in the temporary disability portion of the New Jersey State Unemployment Insurance Program.

OPTIONAL EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

ADULT DAY CARE

Union County offers its employees adult day care services at reduced rates at various centers throughout the County. For more information, please contact the Department of Human Services, Division on Aging at (908) 527-4866.

CHILD CARE

Union County offers its employees an assortment of childcare services at reduced rates at various centers throughout the County. Services vary from newborn day care to after school care according to agency. For more information, please contact your Department Head or the Department of Human Services at (908)527-4890.

ANNUITY PROGRAM

All contributing members to the public pension systems (PERS or PFRS) are eligible to participate in the Supplemental Annuity Program, and may do so at any time throughout employment by completing the appropriate form. Supplemental Annuity Collective Trust ("SACT") is a mutual fund, which is administered and controlled by the State Investment Council through the Division of Investment. Interested parties may contact the Department of Finance, 5th floor, Administration Building.

CREDIT UNION

The Union County Federal Credit Union is operated for the benefit of its members. Its objective is to meet the members' financial needs at the lowest possible cost, and to avoid unnecessary risk while serving the borrowing needs of its members. The Credit Union, located on the 3rd Floor in the Old Courthouse, is open for walk-in business Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., except the last working day of the month when the hours are 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The phone line, (908)527-4015, is available Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Credit Union is closed the last working day of the year.

The Runnells Hospital Employee Federal Credit Union also offers Credit Union Services for its employees. It is located on the Ground Floor of Runnells Hospital and is open for business Tuesday to Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Mondays are by appointment only. The phone line, (908)771-5872, is available via an answering machine 24 hours a day.

DEFERRED COMPENSATION

An eligible County employee may join, on a voluntary basis, the Union County Deferred Compensation Plan from The Hartford. This plan is supervised by the National Association of Counties (NACO).

This plan allows an employee to defer part of his or her income until retirement. The deferred portion of an employee's salary will be deducted from each paycheck. The current maximum deferral amount is 25% of the employee's salary or \$13,000 annually, whichever is less. The Federal Income Tax (FIT) will not apply to this portion of salary until retirement and/or withdrawal.

The withholding funds may, at the employee's option, be deferred into a guaranteed interest fund or into one of several equity funds, which will be explained fully to the employee upon application to participate in the plan. For more information, please call the Finance Department at (908)527-4055, or The Hartford Customer Service at (800)528-9009 ext. 2, or Bellmare Financial Group at (908)272-8819.

DIRECT DEPOSIT

The County offers employees the opportunity to have their bi-weekly paycheck directly deposited into private accounts. For more information, please contact the Payroll Unit of the Department of Finance at (908) 527-4082.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Kean University

Kean University, in cooperation with the County of Union, offers Undergraduate Certificate in Public Management, Graduate Certificate in Public Management, Graduate Certificate in Public Management Enhancement and Certificate in Emergency Management Programs. Selection of employees eligible to participate in these programs will be made by the County Manager. Reimbursement is 50% (exclusive of books and other miscellaneous expenses) for participation in the program. An employee interested in more information on any of the Certificate Programs should contact the Personnel Division.

Undergraduate Public Management Program. Candidates considered for this 15-credit program must have a High School diploma or GED as well as a strong desire to pursue a career path in public services in Union County government.

Graduate Certificate in Public Management. This program is designed for practitioners in public service and consists of 12 semester hours of graduate-level course work, two foundation courses, and two courses in a specialized field tailored to the individual's interest and needs. The program aims to give students a broad theoretical base for understanding public policy and administration as well as the practical skills required of a good manager. Candidates considered for this program must possess a bachelor's degree, have a strong desire to pursue a career path in public service in Union County government, and have demonstrated a strong commitment to reinventing government.

Graduate Certificate in Public Management Enhancement. Candidates must have completed the Graduate Certificate in Public Management program. An applicant must be a full-time employee of the County of Union and must have been a County employee for a minimum of one year. Additionally, applicants must have initiated the process to matriculate in the Masters of Public Administration program at Kean University.

Certificate in Emergency Management. This program is New Jersey's first and only program that helps public and private officials in all areas of government and business prepare for, and more importantly help prevent, threats to our state and our nation's security. The Certificate program will expand understanding in areas such as intelligence gathering, bioterrorism, and public health policy and crisis communications. Participants earn up to 15 credits toward a Master of Public Administration or a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice or Public Administration.

Graduate and Undergraduate Education Assistance

Assistance may be available in the form of education leave with or without stipend, tuition reimbursement or tuition aid. An employee should refer to his or her collective negotiations agreement (if applicable) to see if he or she is eligible.

LOANS

After being a contributing member in PERS or PFRS for a minimum of three years, an employee may be eligible to borrow from the pension system. Loan applications are available in the Department of Finance or in the respective department and, normally, processing takes the Division of Pension in Trenton three to four weeks. Two loans per year are permitted.

The current interest rate is 4% and repayment of loans is accomplished by payroll deductions. For more information refer to the *Union County Employee Pension Benefit Manual* or use the Automated Information System (AIS) at (609) 777-1777.

LIFE INSURANCE (NON-PENSION)

The County, through Boston Mutual Life Insurance, sponsors the Employee Life Option plan (ELO) for eligible employees. Payment for the plan is made through bi-weekly payroll deductions. ELO coverage is independent of, and a supplement to, an eligible employee's group life insurance through PERS or PFRS. For more information, please contact Ms. Karen Hall, Fleet Insurance Advisors (732)292-3232.

SAVINGS BONDS

In cooperation with the United States Government and as a service to County employees, the County offers a payroll deduction plan for the purchase of U.S. Savings Bonds EE Series and I Series. Contact the Department of Finance at (908) 527-4082 for appropriate forms.

REIMBURSEMENT FOR UNUSED SICK LEAVE AT RETIREMENT

An employee who retires with at least twenty-five (25) years of service solely with Union County, who is at least age 55 and who has at least one hundred accumulated sick days to his or her credit upon the effective date of retirement, may be eligible for this benefit. You may review the complete regulations relative to this benefit in the Personnel Division.

An employee represented by a union or association should consult his or her union representative or the collective negotiation agreement applicable to his or her bargaining unit.

REIMBURSEMENT FOR UNUSED VACATION LEAVE AT RETIREMENT

An employee who is retiring on a pension based on length of service will be entitled to the full vacation for the calendar year in which he or she retire in accordance with any applicable collective negotiations agreement.

OCCUPATIONAL INJURIES AND ILLNESSES

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

All employees are covered by workers' compensation insurance purchased by the County. It provides for medical care and disability benefits if an employee is disabled, either through injury or illness, as a result of or arising from employment.

ACCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURES

When an employee suffers an injury or illness arising out of and during the course of his or her employment, the following procedures must be followed: The employee and/or his or her immediate Supervisor will contact the nurse in the Annex Building, the Courthouse Complex, (908)527-4756, who will refer the injured employee to one of the County's approved workers' compensation care providers. An employee who is injured during the course of employment or who suffers an occupationally related disease must receive medical treatment from an approved workers' compensation care provider. Injuries that require first aid only are not to be reported.

If the nurse is not available, then Personnel should be contacted at (908) 527-4030. During off-hours, the employee's supervisor must make the referral to the appropriate medical facility for treatment.

Verbal authorizations for treatment are no longer accepted. An Authorization to Treat form should be given to the employee to take to the medical facility. If an employee is unable to obtain an Authorization to Treat form, then the Risk Management Unit in the Personnel Division and/or the supervisor referring the employee should complete a Medical Services Authorization form. In addition, the employee should advise the emergency center that he or she is a County of Union employee and that the employee is requesting treatment for a work-related injury.

In the event of an *emergency* or if an approved workers' compensation facility is not conveniently located, and in the best judgment of the Supervisor the employee needs immediate medical care, the employee should be sent to the nearest hospital. Again, the employee should advise the emergency center that he or she is a County of Union employee and that the employee is requesting treatment for a work-related injury. Should further medical care beyond the emergency hospital treatment be required, then the employee's Supervisor must contact the nurse at the Courthouse Annex so that the necessary arrangements can be made.

The injured employee's Supervisor must complete and sign the State of New Jersey Employer's *First Report of Accidental Injury Or Occupational Illness* and forward it to:

Department of Administrative Services
Division of Personnel Management and Labor Relations
Union County Administration Building, Third Floor
Elizabethtown Plaza
Elizabeth, NJ 07207

It is essential that this office receive the First Report of Injury Form within twenty-four (24) hours of the occurrence. Occupational injuries which occur on weekends must be received by the following Tuesday.

The names of witnesses should be included with the First Report of Injury Form, and a detailed explanation of all factors related to the incident should be attached. The County of Union Accident Investigation Report must also be completed and submitted at this time.

The treating physician will complete an Injury Visit Report Form. This form will indicate information regarding medical treatment provided, follow-up care (if necessary), and any limitations on the employee's work ability. The employee will receive the original copy of this form, which must be sent to the Risk Management Unit in the Personnel Division upon his or her return to work. The Department should keep a copy of this form for its records.

The care facility may confer directly with an employee's Supervisor on any return to Modified/Light duty activities. In addition, an employee's Supervisor may contact the care facility directly regarding any concerns with an employee's return to work status. Any questions regarding an on-the-job accident and/or medical treatment provided should be referred to the Risk Management Unit in the Personnel Division and/or the County Nurse.

When an employee is scheduled for treatment by the insurance company's authorized physician or medical center during the employee's regular hours of work, the employee's attendance at the doctor's office or medical center will not be charged to the employee's sick leave accumulation; provided that upon completion of the visit, the employee returns to work if there is still time remaining in the regular hours of work.

FOLLOW UP VISITS

After every visit to the doctor or hospital, the employee will receive a medical report. The original copies of all medical reports must be turned in to the employee's supervisor and promptly forwarded to the Personnel Division. It is imperative that an employee keep all scheduled appointments. All time lost from work due to occupational injury including consecutive or broken time must be reported to the Personnel Division. It is especially important

to immediately advise when the status of an injured employee changes (*e.g.*, light duty to full duty). Prompt notification will ensure that workers' compensation payments due the employee will commence without undue delay.

Additionally, when an employee is medically authorized by the treating physician to return to work following occupational injury, his or her supervisor must notify the Risk Management Unit in the Personnel Division within twenty-four (24) hours of the authorization.

Please note that an employee must have written medical authorization for change in work status and/or return to work. An employee on light duty cannot return to full duty without medical authorization. In addition, an employee cannot be released from treatment and his or her case cannot be "closed," until the employee submits medical discharge papers to his or her Department.

Telephone requests from an employee and/or his or her supervisors for return to full duty and/or discharge will not be honored by the treating facility. An employee must have written medical authorization for change in work status and/or return to work.

A State statute requires the employer to provide medical treatment to an occupationally injured employee. However, in order to fulfill its responsibilities and protect certain rights, the County has the right to choose the treating physician. This remains unchanged even when treatment has been completed and the employee has returned to work, but subsequently experiences – weeks or even months later – a recurrence of similar injury. Further treatment must be requested by contacting the Risk Management Unit in the Personnel Division, which, in turn, will make the request of the County's insurance carrier.

A regular County employee who is on temporary assignment at Runnells and who receives treatment at the hospital Employee's Clinic for injuries incurred while working at the hospital should advise his or her regular supervisor immediately of the circumstances. It is the responsibility of the employee's regular Supervisor to file the required first report of injury and follow procedures outlined in the preceding paragraphs.

Should any problem arise, or should there be any questions as to procedure, the supervisor should immediately call the Risk Management Unit in the Personnel Division at (908) 527-4064.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION PAYMENT

If the County's workers' compensation carrier does not dispute the causal relationship between employment and an injury or illness, an employee will receive his or her full pay when medically authorized for the first ninety (90) calendar days if the injury or illness arises out of the employee's employment when such injury is not one that has been inflicted by a third party, or for the first one hundred eighty calendar days if the injury has been deliberately inflicted on the

employee by any person or persons arising out of the employee's employment. In either case, no charge will be made to the employee's sick leave accumulation provided the employee turns over to the County any checks received for temporary compensation benefits from the County's workers' compensation carrier.

Failure to turn over workers' compensation checks will cause the employee's sick leave to be charged and will further result in the County taking such action as it deems appropriate to recover said monies.

After using the first ninety (90) calendar days or first one hundred eighty (180) calendar days as defined above, the employee, if the employee remains absent under authorized medical treatment, will have the option of retaining a workers' compensation check, not receiving any additional monies from the County, and not have any charge made to sick leave accumulation *or*, if the employee wishes to receive full pay and charge sick leave accumulation, he or she will be permitted to do the same, provided the employee turns over to the County any workers' compensation checks received from the County's workers' compensation carrier.

An employee is not entitled to receive workers' compensation benefits from the County's workers' compensation carrier if an employee is absent from work for seven days (7) or less arising out of any injury or illness causally related to employment. However, no charge will be made against the employee's sick leave accumulation.

RUNNELLS SPECIALIZED HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES

An employee at Runnells Hospital must report any work-related injury, accident, and/or illness to his or her supervisor. The supervisor will complete an Employee Clinic Card, which the employee will take to the hospital clinic. The employee will also complete and sign an Accident History in his or her own words. If the injury, accident, or illness is of an extreme or urgent nature, the affected person will be escorted to the clinic directly by responsible personnel on the scene.

Clinic personnel will fill out an Employee Accident Report Form and the *State of New Jersey Employee's "First Report of Accidental Injury or Occupational Illness."* This does not apply to injuries requiring first aid only.

Prior to or after the employee's arrival at the clinic, the hospital physician will be contacted by the clinic nurse or the administrative nurse. The Physician will make the determination regarding initial treatment and referral for further care, if necessary. If further care is required, the injured worker will be redirected to an approved workers' compensation medical facility.

In situations where the severity of the problem demands *immediate* attention, the employee will be referred to the nearest acute care hospital or emergency room.

All injuries which occur on the third shift, if urgent, should be referred to the nearest acute care hospital or emergency.

Following the initial treatment, an employee will be required to provide his or her own transportation for any further medical follow-up visits and/or other treatment.

All other County workers' compensation procedures will apply to Runnells Specialized Hospital employees.

MODIFIED OR LIGHT DUTY

The County of Union has established a Modified and Light Duty Program in all departments for an employee who receives on-the-job injuries and who, after a medical examination, is determined to be able to perform these specific types of duties as temporary assignments. In certain instances, these assignments could involve "out-of-title" work for a temporary period not to exceed 260 working days or the equivalent of one year.

Modified or light duty assignments are made at the discretion of the employee's Department Head or Designated Agent. In all cases, efforts will be made to place an employee in a modified or light duty assignment status within an employee's own Department or Division. Preference will be given to assignments within an employee's classification, followed by assignments in other classifications.

If the employee and/or the employee's Supervisor feel that a modified or light duty assignment cannot be performed due to a medical reason related to the workers' compensation illness or injury, a medical reexamination will be scheduled. The examining physician will have the final decision on the employee's medical ability to perform a modified or light duty assignment. If the employee and/or the employee's supervisor feels that a non-medical circumstance exists which prevents an employee from placement in modified or light duty assignment, the final decision on the employee's ability to perform the duty will rest with the employee's Department Head and the Risk Management Unit in the Personnel Division.

An employee assigned to a modified or light duty assignment will be considered to be working in a temporary assignment. The workdays and hours will conform to the position assigned in the respective area. Should an employee be assigned to work in another area, it will be the employee's responsibility to provide transportation to that work site. The employee will be compensated at the employee's regular rate while in the modified or light duty assignment and still accrue benefits and seniority accordingly.

Any time off taken while on modified or light duty will be charged accordingly (*i.e.*, vacation, sick, personal business, etc.).

If an employee requests a sick day due to the work-related injury while on modified or light duty, he or she must contact his or her supervisor and the treating care facility immediately. The medical facility will reexamine the employee at that time to determine if there is any additional medical problem.

Should the examining physician determine that the current illness is work related, time off will be charged to workers' compensation. If the illness is not work related, the employee will be charged accordingly.

If an employee does not visit the care facility when required and scheduled, the absence will be charged to the employee's sick time and may be the subject of disciplinary action. Follow-up visits and/or other treatment, relative to the work related injury, will be scheduled early morning or late afternoon in order not to interfere with an employee's work schedule. Any time lost due to these appointments will *not* be charged against an employee's time.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING ORGANIZATIONS

The County is bound by the laws of the United States and the State of New Jersey to recognize the rights of employees to organize and to negotiate with the County over terms and conditions of employment. Most employees of the County are covered by such bargaining unit representation. The Personnel Division can provide the name of the employee's organizational representative on request. Copies of current collective negotiations agreements are available only through bargaining representatives. This is not a responsibility of the County.

DEMAND AND RETURN SYSTEM

A contractual employee need not formally join a labor organization or pay dues to it. However, if an employee's job title is covered by a collective negotiations agreement, he or she will be represented by a bargaining representative in contract negotiations and certain other matters. An employee who is represented by recognized bargaining representatives, and who elects not to be a regular dues-paying member of an association, will be charged a representation fee in lieu of dues through payroll deductions. The representation fee will be in an amount equal to the regular membership dues, initiation fees and assessments charged by the majority representative to its own members minus the cost of benefits financed through the dues, fees and assessments available to or benefiting only its members and in aid of activities or causes of a partisan political or ideological nature only incidentally related to the terms and conditions of employment. Although it may be lower, in no event will the fee be higher than eighty-five percent (85%) of the regular membership dues, fees, and assessments charged to regular members by the association. N.J.S.A. 34:13A-5.5, as amended, requires the union to establish and maintain a "demand and return" system whereby an employee required to pay the representation fee in lieu

of dues may demand the return of his "pro-rata share" of expenses related to political activities and benefits limited only to union members. Where applicable, an employee should consult the current collective negotiations agreement.

STRIKES/NO LOCKOUT

Pursuant to the New Jersey State Constitution, public employees do not have the right to strike or to engage in work stoppages or slowdowns of any kind. The County will not condone such activities or threats thereof by public employees, or any other such action, which would interfere with service to the public or violate the Constitution and the laws of the State of New Jersey. A County employee who engages in such activity will be subject to discipline up to and including discharge.

EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I, _____, (print name of employee) acknowledge receipt of this Handbook. I understand that I am responsible for knowing its contents and keeping it updated. I also understand that this Handbook is the property of Union County and that it must be returned when my employment ends for any reason.

I have read and I understand that this Handbook is not a contract of employment with Union County.

Employee's signature

Date: _____