



RESOLUTION R-022-25

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF WALKER COUNTY TO ADOPT AN EMPLOYEE POLICY FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND GREVIANCE REPORTING

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Walker County (“Board”) is the governing authority of Walker County, Georgia; and

WHEREAS, the Board has determined it is desirable and necessary to adopt a policy for employees to provide a means for reporting concerns incurred in the process of performing their regular and normal duties; and

WHEREAS, the Board desires to establish and maintain a work climate within which an employee who seeks assistance in resolving a conflict or grievance will be afforded the opportunity to have the matter presented and will receive fair and timely consideration according to approved procedures; and

WHEREAS, the Board has determined it is necessary to establish an informal and formal process for any employee who claims to have a conflict;

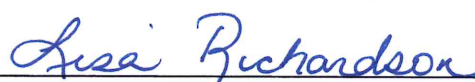
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of Walker County, Georgia that the Conflict Resolution & Greivance Reporting Policy, attached hereto marked “Exhibit A,” and incorporated by reference, is hereby adopted and shall be implemented immediately.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED any other Resolution or county policy addressing conflict resolution or grievance reporting prior to this date, that is now in conflict with any of the provisions of this Resolution, is hereby repealed.

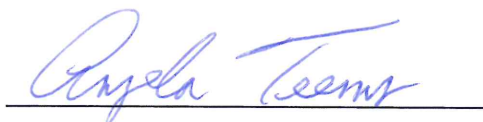
SO RESOLVED AND ADOPTED this 3rd day of April, 2025.

ATTEST:

WALKER COUNTY, GEORGIA



LISA RICHARDSON, County Clerk



ANGELA TEEMS, Chairwoman



The foregoing Resolution received a motion for Approval from Commissioner Teems, second by Commissioner Askew, and upon the question the vote is 4 ayes, 0 nays to approve the Resolution.



CONFLICT RESOLUTION and GRIEVANCE REPORTING

SUMMARY

It is the policy of Walker County Government (WCG) to provide all County employees with a means for reporting concerns incurred in the process of performing their regular and normal duties. WCG will establish and maintain a work climate within which an employee who seeks assistance in resolving a conflict or a grievance, as defined below, will be afforded the opportunity to have the matter presented and will receive fair and timely consideration according to the following procedures. This policy establishes an informal and formal process for any employee who claims to have a conflict.

DEFINITIONS

- Conflict resolution is an informal process whereby employees resolve workplace disputes.
- A grievance is a formal process whereby an employee alleges a violation, inequitable application, or misinterpretation of a specific rule, regulation, policy or procedure pertaining to the employment relationship between the grievant and the Department Head or Supervisor that cannot be resolved through informal conflict resolution avenues.

PROCEDURES

- **Conflict Resolution or Informal Resolution of Conflict**
 - Informal Conflict Resolution Within the Department – Employees should bring to the attention of their Supervisor or Department Head any work-related problems as soon as possible after they arise. If attempts to resolve the issue with the immediate supervisor are unsuccessful, the employee should proceed within the administrative chain until the conflict is resolved or goes to the Human Resources Director.
 - Informal Mediation – Employees may contact the Human Resources Director to discuss the mediation program at any time. Both parties must agree to mediation before the process can begin. If informal mediation does not resolve the conflict, the employee still retains the option of filing a formal grievance if applicable.
 - Additional Information from the Office of Human Resources – The informal resolution process usually does not include the Human Resources Director in the resolution of the complaint, since this should be accomplished within the department. However, the Human Resources Director will review the solutions to



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assure there are no compliance or policy violations. Employees and Supervisors/Department Heads may also contact the Human Resources Director for counsel to determine if the workplace conflict rises to the level of a formal grievance, determine if any employee rights are being violated, to obtain information about applicable policies, and/or to obtain information about additional available resources such as Employee Assistance Program.

- **Formal Grievance**

- This grievance procedure applies to any employee working for Walker County Government in any paid capacity and receives those wages through the Walker County Government Payroll Department.
- It does not permit a grievance that relates to dismissal, layoff, non-renewal of contract, the designated discipline process referenced in the WCG Progressive Discipline Policy or other matters of employment status except those resulting from violation of WCG policies and/or procedures, or allegations of discriminatory treatment or harassment.
- When a report of harassment is received, the Human Resources Director will determine how the investigation shall proceed.

- **Grievance Submission Procedure**

- The employee must present the grievance memorandum to the Human Resources Director. The grievance memorandum will be reviewed by the Human Resources Director within five working days to determine if it meets the definition of a grievance per this policy. Notification will be provided to the employee in writing as to the status of the grievance (either accepted or denied). Such notification will describe the next procedural steps for the grievance, if accepted.
- The employee shall state the grievance in memorandum form providing the following:
 - A statement concerning the basis of the grievance that specifies the specific rule, regulation, policy, or procedure that has allegedly been violated, inequitably applied, or misinterpreted.
 - The attempts made to solve the grievance through the Departmental chain and/or informal mediation.
 - The results of those attempts.
 - The remedy or corrective action sought.
 - The signature of the aggrieved employee on the dated memorandum.



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- **Grievance Review Procedure**

- Within ten working days after receipt of a grievance memorandum the Human Resources Director shall make the necessary appointments to a Grievance Review Panel.
- The Grievance Review Panel will consist of three members as well as the Human Resources Director, who shall serve as Panel Facilitator. The Legal and Policy Director (or designee), and the Internal Affairs Investigator (as appropriate) will account for two panel members. The remaining member will be selected from another neutral department and a member from the involved employee's peer group, if possible. In any event, the member shall not be in a management capacity. No member of the Panel shall have any personal interest or be directly involved in the grievance under consideration. The Panel shall appoint substitutes when necessary.
- The Panel Review meeting date shall be set no later than ten working days from the receipt of the grievance memorandum. Any request for postponement must be submitted in writing to the Panel Facilitator at least three working days prior to the scheduled meeting. The Panel Facilitator reserves the right to extend the notice of the Panel Review date if additional time is needed.
- ADA Accommodations will be made for the disabled upon prior request.

- **The Panel Review Meeting**

- The initial Panel Review meeting shall be closed to the public.
- The Panel Facilitator will convene the meeting, ensure that the meeting is conducted in an orderly and impartial manner, and collect and distribute pertinent materials to the Panel Members.
- The Panel will hold separate meetings with each party involved in the grievance. After meeting with each party, the Panel may meet with all parties together if the Panel feels such a meeting is necessary before preparing its written decision. At all meetings the Panel may hear testimony, examine documents, and ask questions as deemed relevant to the grievance. After holding meetings, hearing both parties, and reviewing documents pertinent to the grievance, the Panel may decide whether testimony from other persons will be useful.
- In its closed session, the Panel will consider all information presented. The three panel members, by majority vote, will respond to the grievance and prepare a written report, with all recommended actions, to the County Commissioner and any other elected Official, as appropriate. The Panel Facilitator shall ensure that



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the written decision is submitted to all parties of the grievance, as well as the County Commissioner and Elected Official (as appropriate), within five working days after the Panel's decision. These copies will be treated as confidential documents.

- o Upon receipt of the Panel's report, the County Commissioner, or the Elected Official if appropriate, shall decide if any action will be taken to remedy the grievance. This decision shall be final.
- o If no written response from the County Commissioner and/or other Elected Official is issued to the Human Resources Director within five working days, the Panel's decision will be considered final.

REPORTING UNETHICAL OR IMPROPER CONDUCT

Employees are strongly encouraged to report any suspected unethical or improper conduct and may do so directly through their immediate supervisor, in writing, or through the Employee Hotline.

- Supervisor: Employees may choose to report a complaint to their Supervisor or Department Head. The Supervisor should then immediately inform the Human Resources Director.
- An employee may remain anonymous when reporting any complaint. Any written document should be hand delivered to the Human Resources Director.
- The employee hotline number is (706-637-1437).

The report, made in any form, should include:

- Accurate details of the concern, including date, time, place, and those involved;
- A thorough description of how the incident being reported has negatively impacted the work place;
- Suggestions on how WCG can deal effectively with the complaint;
- Any additional comments the employee believes to be important during further investigations

FALSE CLAIMS AND MISREPRESENTATIONS

There will be no retaliation against an employee who files a complaint that accurately and honestly represents the facts of an incident. This is regardless of the outcome of the investigation.

However, any employee who files a false claim, in order to avoid penalties for their own wrongdoing, or to jeopardize the status of another employee, will face appropriate consequences.



Walker County Government
Office of the Commissioner
Human Resources Department

CONFLICT RESOLUTION and GRIEVANCE REPORTING

EXIT INTERVIEWS

Departing employees may be asked to participate in an exit interview with the Human Resources Director and/or a designee.

The purpose of the interview is to:

- Ensure the reason for termination is not based on a misunderstanding or a condition that could be remedied.
- Inform the employee of their separation benefits.
- Gather information that may be helpful in improving work conditions and the quality of the organization.

APPROVED

Angie Teems
Chairwoman/CEO
Walker County Government
101 S. Duke Street
LaFayette, GA 30728



Walker County Government
Office of the Commissioner
Human Resources Department

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EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND RECEIPT

I, _____, acknowledge that I have had the CONFLICT RESOLUTION and GRIEVANCE REPORTING reviewed with me completely and in full detail. I have had an opportunity to ask questions about any section I did not understand.

I understand that my failure to comply with any part of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. I also understand that violation of those sections that are defined as zero tolerance will result in immediate termination of employment.

By signing this document, I am stating that I understand the standards as explained in this policy and agree to abide by them and that I have received a copy of this policy for my personal records.

X

Employee

Date: _____

X

Witness

Date: _____