To: Commissioners, First 5 Ventura County

From: Lauren Arzu, on behalf of the Administration Finance Committee

Date: February 20, 2025

Re: **Recommendation to approve updated Employee Handbook**

Background

All personnel policies of the Commission are incorporated into the Employee Handbook. The Commission regularly incorporates necessary changes and refinements related to new employment laws.

The proposed update largely represents required changes based on recently passed laws. Highlights of the proposed revisions to the handbook include:

- Updating the Equal Employment Opportunity and Harassment policies to include religious creed and medical conditions as protected characteristics. Language was also added to state that any combination of the listed characteristics, or perception that the person has any of those characteristics, is protected.
- Clarifying that F5VC will comply with all state and federal laws related to disability discrimination.
- Requiring Director of HR and Operations and Executive Director approval for outside employment
- Clarifying Whistleblower protections apply to former employees and sub-contractors
- Restoring sick hours and crediting years of service for employees re-hired within six months
- Crediting years of service for employees who worked for a F5VC contractor within five years
- Authorizing the Director of HR & Operations to approve certain leave without pay and bereavement leaves, instead of the Executive Director.

Legal Counsel and the Administration Finance Committee have reviewed and approved the handbook and proposed updates.

Recommendation

The staff recommendation is to approve the updated Employee Handbook, as attached.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Proposed Feb 2025

Revised Oct 2005/Sept 2006/Feb 2008/Dec 2009/Feb 2014/June 2015/Jan 2017/June 2021/Oct 2021/Feb 2022/Apr 2022/Oct2022/Oct2023/Mar2024/Nov2024

Welcome to First 5 Ventura County administered by Children and Families First Commission of Ventura County (the Commission)!

First 5 Ventura County is a family-friendly, employee centric workplace. You will see our policies are designed to support working families. We have prepared this handbook in order to address and clarify First 5 Ventura County's personnel procedures and policies. All previously issued handbooks and any inconsistent policy statements or memos are superseded. It is designed as a guide to ensure consistent, fair, and uniform treatment of all employees. The Commission commits to the principle of providing a living wage to its employees. Constructive suggestions for improvement are always welcome. It is the Commission's policy to encourage recommendations that will benefit employee-employer relations.

Please understand that this handbook only highlights the Commission's policies, practices and benefits. Circumstances will obviously require that policies, practices and benefits described in this handbook change from time to time. Consequently, the Commission reserves the right to amend, supplement or rescind any provisions of this handbook as it feels appropriate, with the exception of the at-will employment policy.

Any changes will be made in writing and distributed to all employees. As the Executive Director of the Commission, I have the final and binding authority to interpret the policies set forth in this handbook. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask me. Our best wishes to you, and thank you for taking this first step in getting to know First 5 Ventura County.

Sincerely,

Petra Puls
Executive Director

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INTRODUCTION

Vision and Mission Statements

First 5 Ventura County envisions a future where all Ventura County children are born healthy, thrive in nurturing environments, and enter school prepared and eager to learn. This future embraces the value of active partnerships between families, service providers, civic leaders, local business and the community at-large, honors and respects the diversity of our community and prioritizes the need to ensure optimal health and development for young children and their families.

Our mission is to strengthen families, communities and systems of care for children prenatal to 5 years through investments, expertise, and leadership so all children reach their full potential.

First 5 Ventura County, administered by the Children and Families First Commission of Ventura County

First 5 Ventura County (also referred to herein as "Commission") is governed by a nine-member Commission appointed by the County Board of Supervisors. The Commission meets monthly. When possible, staff is invited to attend this meeting.

Purpose of this Document

The Commission has established these personnel policies and practices related to employment, benefits and other personnel-oriented activities at First 5 Ventura County because it values its employees. The purpose of the written policy is to ensure that all employees have a clear understanding of some of the expectations regarding their employment.

Since these policies are subject to change at the Commission's discretion, they are not to be construed as a contract between the organization and its employees with the exception of the At-Will employment statements; nor should employees interpret any of the policies to be a promise of continued employment. The employee may terminate their employment at any time and the Commission reserves the right to do the same.

It also should be noted that our policies do not cover every situation that can and will arise in the workplace. Above all, we ask that you exercise common courtesy and common sense while on the job. If you have questions regarding your employment or anything contained in these policies, please speak with your supervisor, the Director of Human Resources and Operations, or the Executive Director.

Authority and Administration

The policies described in this handbook have been approved by the Commission. The Executive Director is responsible for administering the personnel policies and may use discretion to delegate day-to-day oversight of employees.

Every employee with supervisory responsibility or day-to-day oversight of employees is expected to be familiar with these written policies as a function of their job. Questions involving the written policies should be directed to one's supervisor. Questions of interpretation should be directed to the Director of Human Resources and Operations and final interpretation, if there is a dispute, rests with the Executive Director.

Unless otherwise stated, supervisors have the responsibility for approving actions detailed in this manual. Exceptions to policies may be made only with the prior, written approval of the Executive Director. Exceptions to the at-will nature of employment may be made only with the prior written approval of the Commission.

Employment At Will

Employment with First 5 Ventura County is voluntarily entered into, and employees are free to resign at-will at any time, with or without cause. Similarly, First 5 Ventura County may terminate the employment relationship at-will at any time, with or without cause, as long as there is no violation of applicable federal or state laws.

No representative of First 5 Ventura County is authorized to modify this policy for any employee, or to enter into any agreement, oral or written, contrary to this policy. Only the Commission may alter this policy or make exceptions to it and any such action by the Commission must be in writing. Supervisors are not to make any representation to employees or applicants concerning the terms or conditions of employment which are not consistent with organization policies. If any such statement is made, employees are not to rely on it. No statements made in pre-hire interviews or discussions, or in recruiting materials of any kind, are to alter the at-will nature of employment or imply that discharge may occur only for cause nor may any change to the at-will nature of employment be implied from any words or actions of the Commission or any employee or representative of First 5 Ventura County.

Policies set forth in this manual do not create and are not intended to create nor be construed as a contract of employment between the Commission and any of its employees. The provisions of the manual have been developed by the Commission and except for its policy of employment at-will, may be amended or canceled at any time, at the Commission's sole discretion.

Written Policies and Employees

An employee of First 5 Ventura County is any person on the First 5 Ventura County's personnel payroll at any site described as doing business for First 5 Ventura County. Persons working under contract as consultants or as participants in internship or training programs and volunteers are not included as employees for the purposes of this document. All Regular and Temporary employees shall receive a copy of the written personnel policies and a briefing when hired. This handbook is provided electronically upon hire and when updates are made. Copies are available on the First 5 Ventura County website for reference by all staff. While every attempt is made to keep copies up to date, the authoritative copy is located in the Director's Office.

Benefit Plans

All benefit plans referred to in this handbook are defined in legal documents such as insurance contracts, official plan text, and trust agreements. Should any question ever arise about the nature and extent of the plan benefits, the formal language of the plan documents – and not the informal wording of this handbook – must necessarily govern. All of these documents are readily available for review in the Director's Office or the online healthcare portal.

The Commission may change or discontinue any of the benefits it provides to eligible employees at any time.

Amendment and Revision Procedures

Revisions to a specific policy may be made at any given time. Employees may propose changes to this document at any time by submitting suggestions to the Executive Director or their designee. No revision or addition can become part of the First 5 Ventura County Personnel Policies until the Commission approves it.

The Commission shall conduct a complete review of these policies at least every three years. Employees will be notified of the review and the dates to submit suggestions. Reasonable revisions will be forwarded in writing to a committee of the Commission for their approval.

A reasonable effort will be made to inform employees of any changes made to the policies set forth in the employee handbook. This notification may be in the form of a new handbook, the actual revised policy page or a list of the revised pages and a recommendation to review the appropriate section of the handbook.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

Equal Employment Opportunity

First 5 Ventura County is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to an active Nondiscrimination Program. It is the stated policy of First 5 Ventura County that all employees and applicants shall receive equal consideration and treatment. First 5 Ventura County encourages and includes for consideration for employment members of all groups. All recruitment, hiring, placements, transfers, and promotions will be on the basis of qualifications of the individual for the positions being filled regardless of race, color, religious creed~~n~~, ancestry, national origin, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, reproductive decision making, membership or service in the military, veteran status, citizenship, physical or mental disability, medical condition, ~~or~~ any other basis protected by law, or any combination of those characteristics, a perception that the person has any of those characteristics or any combination of those characteristics, a perception that the person is associated with a person who has, or is perceived to have, any of those characteristics or any combination of those characteristics~~.~~ All other personnel actions such as compensation, benefits, layoffs, returns from layoffs, terminations, training, and social and recreational programs are also administered regardless of race, color, religious creed~~n~~, ancestry, national origin, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, reproductive decision making, membership or service in the military, veteran status, citizenship, physical or mental disability, medical condition, ~~or~~ any other basis protected by law, or any combination of those characteristics, a perception that the person has any of those characteristics or any combination of those characteristics, a perception that the person is associated with a person who has, or is perceived to have, any of those characteristics or any combination of those characteristics~~.~~

Compliance With Anti-Disability Discrimination Laws

It is the policy of First 5 Ventura County to comply with California Fair Employment and Housing Act, the ~~and~~ federal Americans with Disabilities Act, and all other state and federal laws~~.~~ ~~First 5 Ventura County shall observe the laws and their amendments by~~ prohibiting unlawful discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived mental or physical disability, medical condition, including, but not limited to pregnancy, childbirth and related medical conditions. This includes ~~and~~ protecting qualified applicants and employees with actual or perceived disabilities from discrimination in recruitment, application procedures, hiring, promotion, compensation, job assignment, leave of absence, fringe benefits, training opportunities, employer-sponsored social and recreational programs, layoffs and termination. First 5 Ventura County honors its obligation and commitment to make reasonable accommodation to allow individuals with disabilities to enjoy equally the terms, conditions and benefits of employment. First 5 Ventura County reserves the right to select the most qualified individual based on bona fide occupational qualifications and not on "generalizations, misperceptions or irrational fears."

Harassment

It is the policy of First 5 Ventura County to ensure fair and equitable treatment of all employees by providing pleasant and safe working conditions. Toward this end, First 5 Ventura County shall take steps to educate employees regarding unlawful harassment and bullying and to express organizational disapproval of such activities as harassment, bullying or intimidation of an employee by co-workers, management personnel, and non-employees.

Harassment includes both verbal and physical dimensions: verbal, visual, physical or mental abuse pertaining to national origin, disability, race, color, religious creed~~n~~, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, reproductive decision making ~~or~~ any other legally protected characteristic, ~~.~~ or any combination of those characteristics, a perception that the person has any of those characteristics or any combination of those characteristics, a perception that the person is associated with a person who has, or is perceived to have, any of those characteristics or any combination of those characteristics.

First 5 Ventura County assures that employees will not be retaliated against for reporting harassment and will not tolerate any act of coercion to deter reporting.

All employees receive sexual harassment prevention and anti-bullying training in compliance with CA law within 30 days of starting work at First 5 Ventura County. Non-supervisory employees participate in a one-hour training, and supervisory employees participate in a two-hour training. This training includes practical examples of unlawful harassment based on gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation. Employees must be trained once every two years, and certificates of training are transferable between employers.

Definition of Sexual Harassment:

Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- unwelcome sexual advances
- requests for sexual acts or favors
- insulting or degrading remarks or conduct directed against another employee
- threats, demands or suggestions that an employee's work is contingent upon toleration of or acquiescence to sexual advances
- retaliation against employees for complaining about such behaviors

Definition of Sexual Harassment (continued):

- any other unwelcome statements or actions based on sex that are sufficiently severe or pervasive so as to unreasonably interfere with the individual's work performance, or create an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment

Individuals Who Could Be Targets of Harassment:

- An employee, volunteer or client subjected to harassment by another employee of First 5 Ventura County.
- An employee, volunteer or client subjected to harassment by a client, volunteer, vendor or any other person at any of the program sites operated by First 5 Ventura County.

Reporting:

For the Commission to respond quickly and properly to incidents of harassment, it is important that an employee who is a victim, observer or has knowledge of an incident of harassment report the incident. Harassment is to be reported regardless of whether the harassment was committed by an employee, volunteer, client, vendor or other person associated with First 5 Ventura County.

In order for the Commission to deal with claims of harassment, such offensive conduct or situations must be reported to the employee's supervisor or the next level of management. Or, if the employee prefers, the incident may be reported directly to the Executive Director or the Chairperson of the Commission. Supervisors are required to report all such incidents immediately and written documentation of all incidents must be forwarded to the Executive Director. Such documentation will not be placed in the reporting employee's personnel file unless the employee requests it.

Management will investigate all reports of harassment of any kind. It is understood that any person reporting an incident of harassment will be treated courteously, the problem handled swiftly and as confidently as possible in light of the need to thoroughly investigate and take appropriate corrective action. The reporting of a complaint will be in no way used against the employee, nor will it have an adverse impact on the individual's employment status.

Disciplinary Action:

Harassment or intimidation by an employee will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Supervisors or management personnel, who knowingly fail to report such incidents immediately, however minor, are also subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Response to an allegation of harassment committed by a non-employee will be determined by the Executive Director.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND RECORDS

Employment Status

All members of the staff are employed in one of the following categories:

REGULAR FULL-TIME employees are those individuals regularly scheduled to work 80 hours per pay period and are eligible for all First 5 Ventura County benefits. For the purposes of health insurance benefits only, full time is defined as 60 hours or more per pay period.

REGULAR PART-TIME employees are those individuals regularly scheduled to work less than 80 hours per pay period. Those individuals regularly scheduled to work from 40 to 79 hours per pay period are eligible for benefits on a pro-rated basis as detailed in each policy based on the number of hours for which they are regularly scheduled. Those individuals who are regularly scheduled to work less than 40 hours per pay period receive no benefits other than those required by law. For the purposes of health insurance benefits only, part time is defined as 40 to 59 hours per pay period.

Part time employees without benefits whose jobs evolve to average 40 or more hours per pay period over six pay periods will have their job duties evaluated by the Executive Director. This evaluation may result in a modification of job duties to include less than 40 hours of work per pay period or a reclassification to a benefit-eligible position.

TEMPORARY employees are employed on a temporary basis to perform specific functions for a defined period of time. These positions are not intended to be part of continuing operations. The employment status of temporary employees will not be changed due to an extension of employment in excess of that originally planned. Temporary employees receive no benefits other than those required by law (eg., paid sick leave required by California law).

NOTE: Employment status is determined by the Executive Director or designee and is based upon program need and budget.

Contract Personnel

Contract personnel working for First 5 Ventura County are not considered employees for purposes of these Personnel Policies. Contract personnel may be retained by the Commission for specific assignments. The classification of independent contractor status is subject to review and approval of the Executive Director or designee and is based on conditions of services to be rendered and evidentiary matter furnished by contract personnel. Contract personnel are responsible for any self-employment tax, as well as required estimated income tax payments.

Volunteers

People who volunteer their time and services to First 5 Ventura County are not considered employees of the Commission for purposes of these Personnel Policies. Volunteers are not eligible for benefits, including worker's compensation insurance. However, First 5 Ventura County values the contributions made by volunteers. Reimbursement for mileage and training costs related to volunteer activities may be available, subject to the prior written approval of the Executive Director.

Employment of Commission Members

In order to preserve the objectivity and integrity of the Commission, any member who wishes to apply for employment with the agency must first resign from the Commission.

Employment of Relatives

Commission staff may not be employed in any position where they are directly or indirectly supervised by an immediate relative.

Exemption Status

First 5 Ventura County is governed by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) concerning payment of overtime. FLSA requires employers to pay overtime wages to employees who work more than a specified number of hours in a work week. Some jobs, however, by reason of their responsibilities and duties, have been declared exempt from these provisions.

"Exempt" employees include those who are not subject to the overtime provisions defined by the FLSA. "Nonexempt" employees must comply with the overtime provisions of the FLSA, regardless of individual titles or duties. Any employee who does not meet the qualifications for exemption as defined by the FLSA is designated "nonexempt".

Generally, an exempt employee is an employee who serves in an administrative, executive or professional capacity, and whose primary duty consists of exempt work that is intellectual, managerial, or creative and requires the exercise of discretion and independent judgment. Exempt employees are paid on a salary basis and do not receive overtime compensation.

Non-exempt employees are paid on an hourly basis and receive overtime compensation at rates as established by law.

Introductory Period

All employees are hired initially on an introductory status. Any employee who is promoted or transferred may also be placed on introductory status. Introductory status is intended to be an orientation, training, and mutual assessment period as well as providing the employee with the opportunity to demonstrate the necessary ability and aptitude required for the position. The introductory period is three months (90 days) and may be extended. Lifting of introductory status in less than three months is prohibited unless approved by the Executive Director.
Satisfactory completion of the Introductory Period does not alter the at-will character of the employment relationship. Either the employee or the Commission may end the employment relationship at-will at any time during or after the introductory period, with or without cause or advance notice.

EMPLOYEE RECORDS AND INFORMATION

Personnel Records

First 5 Ventura County maintains a master personnel file for each employee. All employee personnel files are maintained in a locked file. The file contains information such as, but not limited to, policy sign-off sheets, records of disciplinary actions, evaluations, certifications for increment advances, statement(s) regarding the initial introductory period, personal information such as address, insurance, emergency notification, payroll tax status, any changes in title, position, compensation, the employment agreement, vacation and time-off records. Medical information such as detailed doctor's releases and detailed insurance applications is kept in a separate file.

Each First 5 Ventura County employee is responsible for reporting any change in home address, telephone number, legal name, tax status, person to be notified in case of illness, accident or death, or any conviction of a felony or misdemeanor. In addition, employees who use their personal vehicle for Commission business must report in writing any change of status in vehicle insurance, driver's license or DMV citations to the Executive Director or their designee within five (5) working days.

Access to Personnel Files

It is First 5 Ventura County's policy to maintain employee specific information in personnel files and to safeguard that information from unauthorized release. Direct access to personnel files is limited to the employee's immediate supervisor and the Executive Director or their designee. Access to personnel files will be on a need-to-know basis only.

Every employee has the right to review their own file. Employees may request to see their file at any time during regular business hours (giving reasonable notice) in the designated area within First 5 Ventura County's office with a member of the Executive Director's staff present. The employee may add a "statement of disagreement" to any written memo or evaluation.

Personnel files may not be removed from the designated area within First 5 Ventura County's office. However, copies of relevant material may be furnished upon request.

Background Check, Criminal History, and Fingerprint Checks

First 5 Ventura County is committed to the safety, welfare, and confidentiality of our clients and staff. To ensure this commitment, the Commission may conduct background checks on prospective employees. When statutorily

authorized, the Commission may require employees to submit their fingerprints for a criminal history check. Some positions may also require a Child Abuse Central Index check.

The Executive Director is responsible for reviewing the results of criminal history checks and deciding on an appropriate action. Some of the factors that may be considered in deciding the course of action are the nature of the offense, how long ago the offense occurred, the nature of the First 5 Ventura County program or programs concerned and what steps the offender has taken since the occurrence (i.e. rehabilitation, successful completion of probation, etc.). The Commission is bound by numerous legal and contractual requirements with respect to criminal history checks for employees.

Information collected in the background check is confidential information and for the Commission's exclusive use. It may be disclosed only to authorized personnel for the purpose of making appropriate decisions concerning the contents of the history.

Freedom from Tuberculosis

If employees are working on school campuses, or working directly with families in person, verification of freedom from tuberculosis (TB) is required upon employment and every four years thereafter. If an employee had a TB test taken for employment with another employer which has not expired, it will be accepted to meet this requirement. First 5 Ventura County must receive TB verification within thirty days of date of hire or reassignment to school campus/direct service position.

Verification of Employment and Letters of Reference

Only the Executive Director or their designee is authorized to respond for First 5 Ventura County when verbal requests for references are made from former employees or from potential employers of former or current employees. Information provided will be limited to job title and dates of employment. First 5 Ventura County will not provide information about pay rates to potential employers.

Written reference requests should be directed to the Executive Director or their designee. Information provided will be limited to job title and dates of employment. If a release signed by the employee accompanies the request for a reference it will be forwarded to the employee's most recent supervisor. Copies of all references provided will be kept in the employee's personnel file.

Under appropriate circumstances, supervisors may write letters of reference for current and past employees. Such letters will be forwarded to the Executive Director for review and disbursement and a copy will be kept in the employee's personnel file.

All requests for financial information relating to a First 5 Ventura County employee must be authorized, in writing, by the employee prior to the information being released. These requests require a minimum of 24 hours for processing.

PAYROLL PRACTICES

Allowable Hours

A normal full time work schedule in the central office is Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Neighborhood for Learning work schedules are generally 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Although the majority of staff members work those hours, some may work alternative schedules based on prior arrangements with the Executive Director. Flextime schedules may include: flexible schedules, job sharing, part time schedules, compressed work weeks, and telework. Flextime may be allowed in the Executive Director's sole discretion. Factors that may be considered include, but are not limited to, whether: there is adequate staff coverage for the operating requirements of the work unit; the employee maintains performance standards in terms of quantity, quality and timeliness of work; and the work group's productivity is maintained or enhanced. At a minimum, each December the Executive Director will review all current flextime arrangements to determine continued suitability and need. New requests may be submitted at any time of the year through the procedures developed for requesting flextime.

Employees may credit as work hours any actually assigned "on-duty" hours, attendance at any required Commission related meetings or training meetings, travel time (except normal commuting and overnight travel outside of regular work hours), and in general, time at any location that is directly related to program business. The general policy is to allow all staff to schedule as much of their work hours as possible according to the needs of the program, the best interests of our clients and organization as well as, when feasible, their own personal needs and preferences. All work schedules must be approved by supervisors before being implemented.

Nonexempt staff members may not start work before their scheduled start time or work beyond their accustomed ending time without prior approval. Nonexempt staff report their time worked in quarter hour increments.

Overtime Compensation

Overtime will be paid only to non-exempt employees for time worked that exceeds 40 hours in a work week. Time worked includes only hours actually worked and does not include vacation, sick time, or any other paid time off. If actual worked hours, not including any paid time off, are under 40 hours per week, the overtime rate will not apply. With the exception of special situations, a non-exempt employee should not alter or stray from their approved work schedule or work more than 40 hours in a work week without prior approval from their supervisor. If requested by their supervisors, employees are expected to work overtime. Non-exempt employees who work overtime without authorization may be subject to disciplinary action.

First 5 Ventura County will comply with all applicable laws concerning overtime. Overtime compensation is paid at the statutory rate based on the employee's regular hourly rate of pay. Overtime compensation will be paid on the regular payday following the period in which the overtime is earned.

Exempt employees are paid to perform the responsibilities and duties of their jobs rather than by the hour. As a result, they are expected to work as many hours as are necessary to accomplish their responsibilities and are not eligible for overtime pay.

Exempt Employee Pay

First 5 Ventura County may require exempt employees to record and track hours and to work a specified schedule. Exempt employees must use all available and eligible paid leave (vacation, sick leave, floating holidays) when an absence is one or more full days, before allowable deductions will be made from their salary. In accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) regulations, exempt employees who are required to be paid on a salary basis may not have their pay reduced for variations in the quantity or quality of work performed.
Exempt employees will receive their full salary for any week in which they perform any work and/or use available paid leave for one or more full days, without regard to the number of days or hours worked, except for the following circumstances in which salary deductions will be made in accordance with the FLSA:

1. Absences of one or more full days for personal reasons or for sickness/disability will only be deducted if the employee has exhausted all eligible and available paid leave benefits or has not yet sufficiently accrued eligible paid leave, or, for vacation, has not passed the introductory period.
2. Deductions for the first and last week of employment when only part of the week is worked by the employee. Thus, the salary will be prorated for the number of days worked in the pay period.
3. Deductions for unpaid leave taken in accordance with a legitimate absence under the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Deductions from pay will not be made as a result of absences due to jury duty, attendance as a witness, temporary military leave, absences caused by First 5 Ventura County, absences caused by the operating requirements of First 5 Ventura County, and partial day amounts. Improper pay deductions are prohibited by First 5 Ventura County, regardless of the circumstances. Supervisors and management violating this policy will be subject to investigation and appropriate corrective action.

Complaint Procedures:
Employees who believe their pay has been improperly reduced should contact the Director of Human Resources and Operations or Executive Director immediately to request an investigation. The employee will be asked to specify in writing, using the guidance above, the circumstances of the pay deduction and whether it has occurred on other occasions.

Meal and Break Time

Employees are permitted one paid rest break during each four-hour working period. Each break is 15 minutes long. Breaks are not accrued to cover time off. For example, an employee may not skip an afternoon break to leave early at the end of the day.

Meal breaks are unpaid. Full-time employees receive meal breaks for a minimum of 30 minutes. Employees may, with supervisory approval, arrange to have a longer meal break by adjusting their work hours to accommodate the longer mealtime. "On-duty" (paid) mealtimes may be permitted only when the nature of the work prevents the employee from being relieved of all duties and the arrangement is agreed upon in writing by the employee and their supervisor. Employees may not work during break times. First 5 Ventura County recommends that breaks be taken away from the employee's desk or immediate work sites.

Both meal and break times are by arrangement with the employee's supervisor. On occasion, a change or elimination of a meal and/or break may be necessary based on workload and/or organizational needs.

Pay Periods and Pay Days

Staff members are paid biweekly on Friday.

Payroll Deductions

Deductions from each employee's paycheck include the mandatory and voluntary deductions described below:

Mandatory deductions are Social Security, Medicare tax, State Disability Insurance, and state and federal income taxes. An employee's paycheck may be garnished for alimony, child support, delinquent loans, or for some other reason, by court order. Employees are informed of all mandatory deductions; however, these deductions do not require written authorization of the employee.

Voluntary deductions are made only with the written authorization of the employee. Voluntary deductions include sums designated for direct deposit, retirement plan, charitable contributions, flexible spending account and health insurance. An itemized statement of all deductions from the employee's wages accompanies each paycheck.

Supplemental Payments

Staff who primarily telecommute (average of 50% of time telecommuting) are eligible for both a cell phone and utility/internet supplemental payment in the amount of $30 each, for a total of $60 per month. Staff who are issued an agency cell phone, but primarily telecommute shall receive the utility/internet supplement payment in the amount of $30 per month. Staff who primarily work at a Commission location for which there is available phone and internet service or are provided with an agency cell phone and internet hot spot are not eligible for the supplemental payment.

The Executive Director will authorize all supplemental payments including determining when agency cell phones and/or hot spots will be issued in lieu of supplemental payments.

PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Absence Notification

It is the responsibility of all employees to make arrangements with their supervisor in advance of any absence whenever possible. When this is not possible, employees are required to report the absence and the reason for it to their supervisor and the Office Coordinator/Administrative Assistant (and co-teacher if applicable) for their primary work location via phone or email at least thirty (30) minutes prior to the beginning of the work shift on the day the absence begins and each day thereafter. If the absence is of such a nature that the employee cannot personally report, the employee must have someone report for them.

In the event that an employee is absent for three (3) consecutive work days and has not notified First 5 Ventura County concerning the reason for the absence, the employee will be considered to have voluntarily resigned their position. This notification will be placed in the employee's personnel record.

Child Abuse / Elder Abuse Reporting Requirements

First 5 Ventura County employs both direct service and non-direct service employees. While it is unlikely that non-direct service employees will come into work-related situations that involve child abuse, domestic violence or elder abuse, First 5 Ventura County's policy is that all employees have knowledge of Section 11166 of the Penal Code and Section 15630 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, (Child Abuse and Elder Abuse Reporting) and comply with their provisions should such an event occur. Additionally, employees will be trained in the prevention of abuse and molestation and follow the guidelines defined in the Abuse and Molestation Prevention policy.

SECTION 11166 (Child Abuse Reporting Requirements - a detailed summary of which is available in the Directors' office) of the Penal Code requires any child care custodian, medical practitioner, nonmedical practitioner, or employee of a child protective agency who has knowledge of or observes a child in their professional capacity or within the scope of their employment whom they know or reasonably suspect has been the victim of child abuse to report the known or suspected instance of child abuse to a child protective agency immediately or as soon as practically possible by telephone and to prepare and send a written report thereof within 24 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident.

SECTION 15630 (Elder Abuse Reporting Requirements) of the Welfare and Institutions Code requires any care custodian, health practitioner, or employee of an adult protective services agency or a local law enforcement agency who has knowledge of or observes a dependent adult in their professional capacity or within the scope of their employment who they know has been the victim of physical abuse, or who has injuries under circumstances which are consistent with abuse where the dependent adult's statements indicate, or in the case of a person with developmental disabilities, where their statements or other corroborating evidence indicates that abuse has occurred, to report the known or suspected instance of physical abuse to an adult protective services or a local law enforcement agency immediately or as soon as practically possible by telephone and to prepare and send a written report thereof within 24 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident.

Code of Ethical Conduct

A. Ethical Responsibilities:

Each employee has an obligation to clients, fellow employees, and the administration to cooperate in accomplishing the Commission's goals, to expose corruption wherever discovered, to refrain from disclosing any confidential information, to preserve and safeguard the Commission's assets, and to uphold these principles, ever conscious that the Commission is a trust between its clients and itself.

B. Conflict of Interest:

No employee, volunteer, director, agent, or other individual involved in First 5 Ventura County activities may use their position for a purpose that is, or gives the appearance of being, motivated by a desire for private gain for themselves or others, particularly for those with whom they have family, business, or other ties. Neither shall any of the above named solicit, nor accept personal gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from any contractors or potential contractors.

1. No employee shall accept (other than on behalf of the Commission) any fee, compensation, gratuity, gift, payment of expense, or any other thing of monetary value in circumstances in which acceptance may result in, or create the appearance of, private gain; preferential treatment, any loss of complete independence or impartiality; the making of a First 5 Ventura County decision outside of official channels; or any adverse effect on the confidence of the public in the integrity of the Commission.

2. If a First 5 Ventura County employee receives a gift or honorarium as the result of a Commission activity (i.e. speaking engagement or client contact), such gift or honorarium is considered a donation to First 5 Ventura County. Specific, unique instances where an employee receives a gift or honorarium as the result of activity not directly related to First 5 Ventura County will be considered on a case by case basis by the Executive Director.

3. From time to time, employees may be offered gifts, entertainment or other favors from a supplier, contractor or organization with which First 5 Ventura County has business dealings. Beyond nominal gifts and

common courtesies, an employee can accept no item of value. Furthermore, all employees should understand that entering into a personal relationship with a subordinate employee or with an employee of a supplier, contractor or other organization having financial dealings with the Commission creates a possible conflict of interest that requires full disclosure to the Commission.

C. Outside Employment:

Employees may not use their relationship with First 5 Ventura County to solicit or accept private outside work, particularly of a consulting nature, that is related to their duties with First 5 Ventura County. This shall not necessarily preclude employees from securing secondary employment that does not conflict with their employment with First 5 Ventura County.

Prohibiting Conditions:

First 5 Ventura County employees are prohibited from holding employment outside of First 5 Ventura County service when the following conditions exist:

1. The employment is incompatible with the proper discharge of the duties and responsibilities of employment with First 5 Ventura County, or would impair independence of judgment or actions; or,

2. The employment involves such hours or work or physical effort that it would or could be reasonably expected to reduce the staff member's quality or quantity of service to First 5 Ventura County; or,

3. A conflict of interest exists which is detrimental to the service of First 5 Ventura County.

Request for Approval of Outside Employment:

In order to avoid employment with competing organizations ~~and~~ or employment that may conflict with the ability to properly perform required job functions, employees must notify and seek approval from the Director of HR and Operations, the Executive Director, ~~ir supervisor~~ and their supervisor before engaging in secondary employment, including as a contractor or through self-employment. A written request must be given to the Director of HR and Operations and Executive Director ~~supervisor~~ for all outside employment. The employee must disclose ~~to the supervisor~~ the name of the employer, the hours to be worked and the nature and duration of the employment. Exempt employees must meet or exceed performance standards to be considered for approval of outside employment.

Requirement to Cease Working:

The Commission may require an employee to cease working outside of the Commission if the employment is in violation of any of the provisions of this article.

D. Outside Non-Profit:

First 5 Ventura County discourages participation on other non-profit Boards which currently or may in the future compete for funding with First 5 Ventura County. However, should the occasion arise where this participation would benefit First 5 Ventura County, it may be done only with the expressed prior permission of the Executive Director.

E. Political Activity:

First 5 Ventura County staff may not engage in any partisan or elective political activity whatsoever on First 5 Ventura County work time, or while identifying oneself as acting in the capacity of employee, volunteer, representative, or agent of the Commission. First 5 Ventura County may advocate for young children and their families in alignment with the approved Advocacy Policy and Policy Platform.

While representing the Commission, employees may be involved in non-partisan advocacy efforts including providing testimony or written comments, meeting with legislators or elected officials, and signing letters of support. The authorization of the Executive Director is required in advance in all such cases.

This policy in no way restricts participation in partisan or elective political activity by employees on their own time as a private individual.

F. Volunteer Representation on Commissions/ Committees:

First 5 Ventura County staff are encouraged to participate in community activities that relate to First 5 Ventura County services but which are not actually or potentially in conflict with First 5 Ventura County.

G. Conflict Management:

First 5 Ventura County supports a model of communication and conflict resolution concerning disagreements and differences of opinion between employees. Employees are expected to work with their supervisor(s) to find solutions in a positive and mutually respectful manner.

H. Employee Protection (Whistleblower):

The support of all employees (current and former employees) is necessary to achieving compliance by First 5 Ventura County and its contractors and subcontractors with all applicable laws and regulations. If any employee reasonably believes that some policy, practice, or activity of First 5 Ventura County, ~~or~~ its contractors or subcontractors is in violation of law, a written complaint must be filed by that employee with the employee's supervisor or the next level of management. Or, if the employee prefers, the incident may be reported in writing directly to the Executive Director or the Chairperson of the Commission. Supervisors are required to report all such incidents immediately to the Executive Director with written documentation of the incident. Confidentiality will be maintained during investigations to protect the identity of whistleblowers and the integrity of the investigation process.

First 5 Ventura County will not retaliate against an employee who in good faith, has made a protest or raised a complaint against some practice of First 5 Ventura County, its contractors, subcontractors, or of another individual or entity with whom First 5 Ventura County has a business relationship, on the basis of a reasonable belief that the practice is in violation of law, or a clear mandate of public policy, including policies concerning the health, safety, welfare, or protection of the environment.

In the event that any employee, volunteer, agent, or other involved individual violates anything contained within the Code of Ethical Conduct, they are subject to immediate termination, dismissal, or other disciplinary action as appropriate.

Confidentiality Policy

First 5 Ventura County employees must keep sensitive information regarding the children and families served in the strictest of confidence. Names and identifying characteristics of children and families should only be shared on a "need to know" basis. Personnel, hiring, and certain financial information is also confidential. Employees who disclose or discuss confidential information with individuals not directly related to the situation may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Employees should not discuss children's developmental needs and family information in public places, including an employee lounge or hallway. This also pertains to conversations off site. Protection of the interests of each child and family, First 5 Ventura County employees, and the organization is vital in maintaining a standard of professionalism and privacy.

Drug Free Workplace Policy

It is the policy of the Commission to provide a safe and productive work environment that is free from the effects of drug and alcohol abuse. Staff are expected to report to work in a condition ready to perform work duties and not

under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, illegal drugs or intoxicants. Employees are prohibited from manufacturing, using, selling, dispensing, or possessing a controlled substance, including but not limited to, alcohol, illegal drugs or intoxicants, and illegal or unauthorized prescription drugs on its premises or when off-site conducting First 5 Ventura County business.

An employee reporting to work under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, illegal drugs or intoxicants, or illegal or unauthorized prescription drugs will not be permitted to enter any First 5 Ventura County premises. Any employee discovered or reasonably suspected to be under the influence while at work is required to leave the premises and arrangements for safe transportation home will be made.

Any employee bringing alcohol, illegal drugs or intoxicants, or illegal or unauthorized prescription drugs on to First 5 Ventura County premises, using them on First 5 Ventura County premises or dispensing, selling or buying them on First 5 Ventura County premises may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Any employee convicted of violating a criminal drug statute must inform the Executive Director of such conviction (including pleas of guilty and nolo contendere) within five days of the conviction occurring. Failure to do so subjects the employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination for the first offense.

Supervisors should consult with the Executive Director's office for proper procedures to be followed in regard to this policy.

Health and Safety

It is the policy of the Commission to provide a safe and healthful environment to all employees. It is the intent and resolve of First 5 Ventura County to institute and administer a comprehensive and continuous occupational Injury and Illness Prevention Plan (IIPP) in accordance with all current CAL/OSHA regulations.

The Executive Director or their designee is the Safety Officer and is responsible for maintaining the IIPP at First 5 Ventura County. The Executive Director or their designee provides leadership for the IIPP, for its effectiveness and improvement, and for providing safeguards as necessary.

Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that all activities are performed with the utmost regard for the safety and health of all personnel involved. As appropriate, supervisors will ensure proper training in activities that could be unsafe if performed improperly.

Employees are responsible for cooperation with all aspects of the IIPP -– including compliance with all rules and regulations -- and for continuously practicing safety while performing their duties. Employees are encouraged to notify the Executive Director or their designee of any safety concerns so that those concerns may be addressed in a timely fashion.

Information on general office safety, client and staff safety and protocol for difficult clients can be found in the Executive Director's office.

In the event of an emergency condition (disaster or extreme peril to the safety of persons or property at the workplace or worksite caused by natural forces or a criminal act; or an order to evacuate a workplace, a worksite, a worker's home, or the school of a worker's child due to natural disaster or criminal act) staff are permitted to refuse to report to or leave the workplace that is in the affected area. First 5 Ventura County will not take or threaten adverse action for employees who refuse to report to, or leave, the worksite during such emergency condition. The employee must notify First 5 Ventura County of the emergency condition prior to leaving or refusing to report. Employees are required to use accrued vacation and/or personal leave before taking leave without pay.

Worker's Compensation Insurance

First 5 Ventura County maintains worker's compensation insurance as required by law. When a job-related illness or injury occurs and after appropriate first aid or emergency treatment is administered the Director of Human Resources and Operations shall be contacted immediately. The Director of Human Resources and Operations will provide the injured employee with a referral to an approved medical care provider. In addition, the Director of Human Resources and Operations will provide the required Workers Compensation Claim Form (DWC 1) form to the employee within 24 hours of the first report of the accident or illness. The supervisor and the employee shall complete an accident reporting form. If the injury results in lost time beyond the day of injury or requires medical

treatment other than first aid, and the employee elects to file for Worker's Compensation, then the following steps should be taken:

1. The employee contacts the Director of Human Resources and Operations immediately after the occurrence of the injury. The Director of Human Resources and Operations will then supply accident report forms both to the employee and their supervisor.

2. The Director of Human Resources and Operations is then required to report the injury or illness to the insurance carrier as soon as possible. The Director of Human Resources and Operations will collect all information necessary to file a worker's compensation claim.

3. Both the employee and supervisor shall cooperate with the Director of Human Resources and Operations to process the correct paperwork. Copies of medical bills, police reports, and the accident/illness report form should be sent to Director of Human Resources and Operations.

Personal Appearance

Dress, grooming and personal cleanliness standards contribute to the morale of all employees and affect the image First 5 Ventura County presents to visitors, clients and the community. Employees are expected to dress and groom in keeping with the requirements of the job and in a manner that will reflect favorably upon the employee and First 5 Ventura County. Employees should present a clean and neat appearance at all times. Employees should not wear fragrances that are perceptible to others. Employees should consult their supervisor, the Executive Director's or the Director of HR ~~&~~ and Operations concerning questions as to what constitutes appropriate attire.

Personal Property

Employees who bring personal belongings to the office to decorate their workspaces or common areas or to facilitate their work must ensure that such items are prominently marked to indicate ownership. The Commission is not responsible for loss or damage to staff member's personal property. Any personal belongings and/or decorations brought to First 5 Ventura County premises must comply with all First 5 Ventura County policies, including the policies prohibiting harassment and discrimination.

Smoking

In consideration of the health and safety of all our staff members, First 5 Ventura County maintains a smoke-free environment.

Telephones

First 5 Ventura County office phones may not be used for personal long-distance calls.

Employees who do not receive supplemental Telework payments shall be reimbursed for their personal telephone expenses when they are required to make business-related calls on behalf of First 5 Ventura County. The reimbursement for use of personal phones shall be limited to the actual cost of the business-related call as indicated on the phone bill. Use of personal cellular phones is discouraged unless specifically approved by the Executive Director or the employee's supervisor as necessary and appropriate in which case reimbursement will be individually negotiated.

Claims for personal/cellular telephone expense reimbursement must be submitted within 3 months of actual occurrence with a copy of the phone bill. Allowable calls must be underlined or circled with a notation of the name of the business/client/person called. (Client numbers or other identifiers approved by Executive Director may be substituted for client names.) Claims for personal/cellular telephone expense reimbursement must be approved by the Executive Director.

Workplace

Employee Work Space

First 5 Ventura County views all data collection and storage mediums (bookshelves, file cabinets, desk drawers, computers, etc.) as Commission property and, while it does not prohibit storing personal property, records or information within the employee's work area, the Commission does not consider the employee to have any right to

privacy in such circumstances. No storage device may be locked in such a manner as to prevent management from gaining access during the employee's absence. Therefore a copy of passwords, combinations and keys must be provided to the Executive Director or the Executive Director's office if an employee uses such a device.

First 5 Ventura County reserves the right, periodically and without notice, to review, survey, search and otherwise monitor the actions of its employees while on First 5 Ventura County premises or during paid work time.

Personal Mail

Employees must not use the First 5 Ventura County address as their personal mailing address. All mail, including personal mail, delivered to First 5 Ventura County will be opened and routed to the addressee (with the exception of certain confidential materials).

Telephone and Voice Mail

In order to keep phone lines free for business purposes, employees should keep personal phone calls to a minimum. The Commission reserves the right, periodically and without notice, to monitor phone and voice mail activity. Any such monitoring will be restricted to the ordinary course of business and will be done in accordance with relevant state and federal laws. Employees may be required to reimburse First 5 Ventura County for charges resulting from personal use of the telephone. Abuse of the telephone and/or voice mail system may result in disciplinary action.

Computers, Email and Internet

Computers, computer files, email, Internet access and software are the Commission's property and are intended for business use only. Accordingly, employee emails, computers and computer files may be monitored and accessed by management at any time. Employees should have no expectation of privacy on Commission electronic systems. Employees should not use a password, access a file, or retrieve any stored communication without authorization. In addition, employees are prohibited from using email or the Internet for receiving or transmitting pictures, sounds or text that contain sexually explicit material, ethnic or racial slurs or that might otherwise reasonably be construed as harassment or disparaging of others based on their race, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, religious beliefs or actual or perceived disability. Employees should not install software programs without the prior authorization from the Executive Director. To ensure compliance with this policy, computer and email usage may be monitored. First 5 Ventura County reserves the right to override any individual password and access all electronic messages in order to ensure compliance with this policy.

EMPLOYMENT AND HIRING PRACTICES

Job Posting

Job postings detailing open positions and their requirements shall be posted on the First 5 Ventura County website and distributed to current employees. Postings will remain open for a minimum of five regular workdays from the day they were posted. All postings are open to internal and external candidates except postings designated as internal.

Internal postings are only available to current employees, volunteers and employees who have been laid off within the six (6) months previous to the posting date. Employees wishing to apply should send a letter of intent or a resume to the Executive Director's office.

Position Descriptions

Prior to recruiting for any open position, a current job description shall be on file in the Executive Director's office. The job description and corresponding salary range must be approved by the Executive Director.

Wages

First 5 Ventura County strives for fairness and equity in all our policies and practices, including those that affect compensation. The First 5 Ventura County compensation package (annual salary plus benefits) reflects

competitiveness in the marketplace and concern for staff members' ability to balance work and personal lives. Compensation rates are set at least annually by the Executive Director. The salary ranges are reviewed periodically by the Commission.

Exempt employees' wages are based on a biweekly rate. Non-exempt employees are paid at an hourly rate. Compensation is paid by position according to a salary schedule. The Executive Director will determine the pay rate for new employees, within the established salary range for the position.

An employee may start at a pay rate greater than the salary range for that position if they are transferred into the position as an alternative to layoff and would otherwise receive a decrease in pay.

The compensation of the Executive Director is not a part of the pay rate schedule and will be determined annually by the Commission, upon review of the Executive Director's work performance and the compensation paid for private and public sector positions of a similar nature.

Performance Reviews

Initial Performance Review

Performance evaluations are conducted in order to review the job performance of each staff member. The employee will be evaluated by their supervisor three months after the date of hire for the currently held position. This review will constitute an initial evaluation of competence and suitability for the position.

This process does not alter the at-will nature of employment or imply that discharge will occur only for cause.

Annual Review

Additionally, each staff member will be evaluated on their performance, usually in June or July. Annual reviews will be conducted in accordance with individual performance goals set for each employee at the beginning of each fiscal year. Exceptions to the annual review process may be made by the Executive Director. All evaluations will be conducted using forms approved by the Executive Director, and those forms will become a permanent part of the employee's personnel record.

A full written performance appraisal may not always be required to implement changes in compensation/employment status outside of the probation/annual performance process. A change in compensation or employment status cannot be implemented, unless approved by the Executive Director. This process does not alter the at-will nature of employment or imply that discharge may occur only for cause.

Internal Promotions and Transfers

At the discretion of the Executive Director, positions at First 5 Ventura County may be filled internally, if contract and grant requirements permit. The following methods are available:

1. Promotion - an employee may be moved to a position of higher responsibility in the organization, for which they meet the minimum job qualifications as specified in the particular position's job description.
2. Transfer - an employee may be moved to a position for which they meet the minimum job qualifications, as specified in the particular position's job description.
3. Internal Hiring - When First 5 Ventura County management ascertains that current staff or volunteers may have the appropriate qualifications to fill an open position, a job announcement will be posted at all First 5 Ventura County offices for a period of five regular work days. All hiring decisions for internal recruitment will be based on experience and qualifications, as specified in the position description. At the end of the internal hiring period, if the position remains unfilled, it will be re-advertised as an external hire.

Any employee who is promoted, transferred, or internally recruited may be placed on introductory status for up to six 6 months to provide an orientation, training and mutual assessment period. During this introductory period, the employee continues to earn all related First 5 Ventura County benefits. Employees who apply for and receive new positions do not necessarily maintain the same rate of pay.

The position of Executive Director is filled by the Commission who formulates policies of recruitment and hiring, specific to the position of the Executive Director.

Re-hired Employees

Employees re-hired within six (6) months of leaving First 5 Ventura County employment may have their accrued but unused sick hours restored, up to 80 hours. Previous years of service will be credited towards vacation accruals and floating holiday accrual levels.

Employees who were employed by a First 5 Ventura County contractor or sub-contractor and assigned primarily to First 5 Ventura County funded duties, may have their years of service credited towards vacation accruals and floating holiday accrual levels. Employees must be hired within five (5) years of working with the First 5 Ventura County funded contractor/subcontractor. It is the employee's responsibility to provide proof of their years of service and First 5 Ventura County related duties.

Disciplinary Action

Employees are expected to observe certain standards of conduct and job performance. When conduct or job performance does not meet First 5 Ventura County's standards, employees will be subject to discipline, including termination. In the discretion of the Executive Director, employees may be given reasonable opportunity to correct the deficiency, in which case discipline less than termination may be imposed. While termination for unsatisfactory performance and other conduct will often be preceded by lesser forms of discipline, First 5 Ventura County reserves the right to proceed directly to any form of discipline, including termination, when First 5 Ventura County in its sole discretion deems such action appropriate.

Set forth below are examples of conduct that may subject an employee to discipline, including termination. Employees should be aware that conduct not specifically listed below, but which adversely affects, or is otherwise detrimental to, the interests of First 5 Ventura County, including its employees, volunteers or directors, may also result in discipline, including termination.

> Examples include, but are not limited to: inappropriate, non-professional or unethical conduct; failure to perform assigned duties as per job description; unexcused absences from work; illegal activity that adversely affects either the organization and/or the employee's ability to perform their duties; failure to report the existence of an unhealthy or an unsafe work condition or engaging in an unsafe act; lack of compliance with any of the requirements delineated in any program operations manual or these personnel policies.
>
> Other examples include: breaching confidentiality; violating the drug- and alcohol-free workplace policy; theft—including, but not limited to, the removal of agency property or the property of another employee from agency premises without prior authorization; walking off the job without supervisory approval; fighting, roughhousing, abusive language or conduct that is hostile or disrespectful toward a co-worker, supervisor, board member, volunteer, or any person(s) associated with or served by this agency; disregarding established safety procedures; knowingly creating an unsafe work situation for self or co-worker; falsifying or altering records or time sheets; refusing to perform a work-related duty when directly instructed to do so by a supervisor or member of management; possessing weapons or firearms on this agency's property; unauthorized use or dissemination of proprietary information; violating this agency's equal opportunity or harassment policies; and unauthorized use of agency property, including vehicles.

Nothing in this policy statement alters the at-will nature of employment with First 5 Ventura County. Either the employee or First 5 Ventura County may terminate the employment relationship any time with or without cause and with or without prior notice.

Lay-Offs

Lay-offs for lack of work, lack of funds or reorganization shall be on the basis of program need, an evaluation of personnel qualifications, performance and seniority within the affected job position and program.

An employee whose position has been eliminated or changed due to a lack of work or lack of funds *may* be re-assigned by First 5 Ventura County to any available position for which the employee meets the minimum requirements. Such re-assignment consideration may include needs of the program, an evaluation of qualifications, job performance, recommendation of supervisor, and seniority in the former job position. When an employee is re-

assigned to another position, seniority continues unchanged. A reassignment may result in a change of pay and/or a change in benefits.

BENEFITS

Employee Benefits

All regular employees who are regularly scheduled to work an average 40 hours per pay period or more receive paid sick leave, personal leave, vacation, and holidays. Benefits are pro-rated for part-time staff members, as specified below. First 5 Ventura County reserves the right to add, delete or modify the benefits at any time in its sole discretion. Please see the following specific policies for a detailed description of each benefit.

Health Insurance

The Commission will pay for a health care package for employees regularly scheduled to work 60 hours or more per pay period that includes medical, dental and vision coverage for the employee and their immediate family, including domestic partners. Employees demonstrating that they have access to other coverage can choose to opt out of the Commission sponsored plan. Health insurance benefits for part time employees who are regularly scheduled to work 40 to 59 hours per pay period will be pro-rated, with the Commission paying the pro-rated share of 75% for regular schedules of 40-49 hours per pay period and 90% for 50-59 hours per pay period and the employee paying the balance.

Insurance Premium Benefits While on Leave

Other than leaves governed by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and/or California Family Rights Act (CFRA), First 5 Ventura County is not obligated to pay any benefits or compensation to someone on an unpaid leave of absence. First 5 Ventura County, however, values its employees and is concerned about an employee's possible loss of medical insurance. Therefore, when an employee exhausts paid leave and goes on unpaid leave for medical purposes, including maternity leave, First 5 Ventura County will continue to pay up to three (3) months of health care and Life and AD&D premiums for employees who have completed the introductory period and are on a non-FMLA/CFRA medical leave. Following this period, an employee may make personal payments to the Commission to continue coverage.

Life and Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance

The Commission will provide a group term life insurance benefit for each regular employee scheduled to work at least 40 hours per pay period in an amount equal to 150% of the employee's annual salary to a maximum of $500,000 and a minimum of $10,000. The Commission will provide Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D) insurance in the same amount. Life and AD&D insurance are subject to carrier restrictions, including benefit decreases at age 65 and age 70. Proof of good health, as specified by the insurance company, is required for life insurance coverage greater than $250,000 upon initial enrollment or Voluntary Term Life coverage greater than $20,000 during open enrollment. At the Executive Director's discretion, employees may have the option to purchase additional term life insurance for themselves and a spouse through a post-tax payroll deduction.

COBRA Insurance Continuation

If employees and covered dependents are in a position to lose health insurance coverage as a result of certain qualifying events (including termination or reduction in hours), they may have certain rights to remain on the insurance plan at their own expense through COBRA. More information regarding COBRA coverage, costs, and administrative procedures is available from Human Resources. Employees who experience a "qualifying event" (e.g. marriage, divorce, adoption) must provide written notice to Human Resources within 60 days of the qualifying event.

Employee Retirement Plan

The Commission will provide retirement plan(s) to which a regular employee scheduled to work at least 40 hours per pay period can elect to contribute a percent of their pre-tax salary. Under these plan(s) a separate account is established for each participant and each account is self-directed; the employee controls their investments. The Commission will provide a 5% contribution and match an additional contribution of up to 5%, for a total of up to 10% of the employee's salary.

Holidays

The Commission has established the following holidays during which offices will be closed:

New Year's Day	Martin Luther King Day	President's Day
Memorial Day	Juneteenth	Independence Day
Labor Day	Veteran's Day	Thanksgiving Day
Day after Thanksgiving	Christmas Eve and Day	Weekdays between 12/26 and 12/31

If an identified holiday falls on a weekend, the Executive Director will determine whether to observe the previous Friday or the following Monday as the holiday. The Executive Director will determine on an annual basis whether to observe Christmas Eve or the day after Christmas. An employee must work (or receive paid time off) their preceding scheduled workday or the scheduled workday after the holiday to be eligible for the paid holiday.

When a holiday falls on a regularly scheduled day off of an employee who works an alternative work schedule (for example, a 9/80 schedule), the employee will receive a floating holiday that may be used within one month.

In addition, effective each January 1, regular full-time employees shall be granted floating paid holidays per calendar year, according to the schedule set forth below. New employees hired after June 30 shall receive one (1) floating paid holiday for the calendar year in which they were hired. Floating holidays may be used on holidays that are not observed by the First 5 Ventura County such as Cesar Chavez Day, or any day during the year, but cannot be carried over from one year to the next. The number of floating holidays for which an employee is eligible is based on the number of completed years of service as of each January 1, and is set forth in the table below.

Length of Service	Number of Floating Holidays Per Calendar Year
0 – 6 years	2
7 – 9 years	3
10 – 14 years	4
15 – 19 years	6
20+ years	8

Leave granted pursuant to this provision shall have no cash value beyond that provided herein and shall be lost without benefit of compensation if not taken by December 31.

Regular part time employees who are regularly scheduled to work 40 to 79 hours per pay period are entitled to a pro-rated share of holiday and floating holiday pay based on their regularly scheduled hours.

Holidays, including floating holidays, are not a reimbursable benefit upon termination. In the event of a termination coinciding with a holiday, an employee must work a minimum of one day after the holiday to be eligible for that holiday pay.

Vacation

Regular full time staff members earn paid vacation at their regular rate of pay, computed hourly, as follows:

Length of Service	Hours per Pay Period*	Hours per Year*
0 - 24 months	3.077	80
25 - 36 months	4.62	120
37 or more months	6.15	160

*When there are 26 pay periods in a year

Employees who work between 40 and 79 hours per pay period earn paid vacation at their regular rate of pay, computed hourly, prorated based on the number of hours regularly scheduled to work per pay period. (For example, an employee who has been employed 30 months and who is regularly scheduled to work 40 hours per pay period would earn 2.31 hours per pay period or 60 hours per year). Anniversary dates for vacation accruals correspond to the employee's original hire date as a Regular employee assuming no break in service has occurred. If there is a break in service, a specific anniversary date will be determined by the Executive Director.

The maximum amount of vacation that an employee may accrue is equal to one and one-half times their annual benefit based on their years of service with First 5 Ventura County. Employees who have accumulated the maximum amount of vacation will not be eligible to accrue further vacation hours until their accumulated vacation time falls below the maximum allowable. Exceptions to this policy, based on extraordinary circumstances, require the approval of the Executive Director. The maximum amount of vacation that a Regular Part Time employee may accrue is equal to one and one-half times their annual pro-rated benefit.

Employees who transfer to a position with a maximum accrual rate that is lower than their current amount (for example, from a full time to a part time position) will retain their existing vacation balances but will, from that point forward accrue vacation at the pro-rated rate based on their regularly scheduled hours up to the accrual maximum described above. An employee who transfers to a position with a lower maximum accrual rate and who has a leave balance that equals or exceeds the maximum accrual of the new position will not accrue any additional vacation until sufficient vacation time is used to reduce the accrued vacation below the maximum vacation accrual amount.

Vacation time is a benefit that is earned before it can be taken. It is based on actual hours worked. Employees on any type of leave without pay do not accrue vacation credits. New employees are not entitled to take accrued vacation until they have successfully completed the introductory period. The Executive Director has authority to grant exception to this 90-day requirement.
No more than 80 hours leave time may be taken at one time without the Executive Director's approval. Vacation requests for time off in July, August and December should be made at least 30 days in advance. Other requests should be made 14 days in advance and require prior approval of an employee's supervisor.

The Commission recognizes the value of time away from work responsibilities and encourages staff members to use all accrued vacation benefits on a timely basis. Because the Commission believes that time away from work is beneficial for rest and rejuvenation, staff are not permitted to take pay in lieu of vacation time. Accrued and unused vacation time is a reimbursable benefit upon termination.

Sick Leave

Regular full-time employees accrue 3.692 hours of sick leave per pay period worked to provide protection against loss of income in the event of illness or injury, or time off from work for necessary or routine health care. Regular part time employees who work between 40 and 79 hours per pay period accrue pro-rated sick leave based on their regularly scheduled work hours. There is no maximum accrual of sick leave. The accrual rate for sick leave is adjusted upon any change of employment status.

In accordance with the California Healthy Workplaces, Healthy Families Act of 2014, First 5 Ventura County employees classified as either temporary or regular part time (who work less than 40 hours per pay period) and who have worked in California for at least 30 days in the preceding year shall begin accruing sick leave at the rate of one (1) hour per every 30 hours worked. Such employees shall be eligible to use this sick leave beginning on the 90th day of employment with First 5 Ventura County. A maximum of 48 hours may be accrued at any one time. Upon reaching the maximum, no further sick time will be accrued until some of the accrued time has been used.

Sick leave may be used for personal illness, to care for an immediate family member who is ill or to attend doctor's appointments. The term "immediate family" includes the following: ~~husband, wife~~spouse, domestic partner, child~~son~~, step child~~son~~, ~~daughter, stepdaughter~~, parent~~mother~~, stepparent~~mother~~, ~~father, stepfather~~, sibling~~sister~~, stepsibling~~ister~~, ~~brother, stepbrother~~, grandparent~~father~~, ~~grandmother~~, grandchild and any individual who resides with the employee as a member of his or her family. Special consideration may also be given to any other person whose relationship with the employee is similar to any of the above. Employees may also designate one individual outside of the immediate family to care for under sick leave in a 12-month period. The request must be made in writing at the time of the request for the paid sick leave.

Sick leave may also be used for specified purposes if the employee is a victim or a family member of a victim of a crime, domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking.

An employee absent for more than five consecutive days, or after six separate occasions of any length of time in any 12 month period, may not be entitled to sick leave for any day after the five consecutive days unless and until the employee provides a certificate signed by a physician verifying that the employee was ill on each day of the absence. An employee who misses five consecutive scheduled workdays may be required to provide a doctor's statement releasing them to work before returning to work. If the employee requests an extension of the sick leave, the supervisor may require an additional statement by the doctor indicating the anticipated length of sick leave. All medical information, including the doctor's statement, medical releases and the supervisor's written approval shall be kept in a separate medical file.

Sick leave is not accrued during leaves of absence without pay and is not a reimbursable benefit upon termination.

Staff members who are ill or injured and anticipate being away from work for more than one week should speak with their health care provider or the Director of Operations for information about State Disability Income benefits.

Personal Leave

Personal leave is intended to be a benefit to employees and provide the opportunity for a working parent to participate in their child's education (as per the Family-School Partnership Act). Requests for personal leave must be pre-approved. Personal Leave may also be used for religious holidays that are not observed by First 5 Ventura County or if an employee's personal residence is in imminent danger of fire or flood or natural disaster or as designated by the bereavement policy.

All Regular employees are eligible for personal leave up to a maximum of 8 hours per calendar quarter. Eligible employees will receive at the beginning of each quarter, paid personal leave up to 8 hours per calendar quarter. Personal leave is pro-rated for regular part time employees based on their regularly scheduled work hours. At no time will a full time employee's available personal time exceed 8 hours per quarter. The maximum available personal time for eligible employees who work less than 40 hours per week will be pro-rated based on their regularly scheduled hours. Personal leave is not accrued during leaves of absence without pay. The maximum amount of personal leave accrued is 8 hours for regular full time employees and is pro-rated for regular part time employees based on their regularly scheduled hours. No additional personal leave may be accrued while an employee has 8 hours of unused personal leave to their credit. Unused personal leave up to a maximum of 8 hours is reimbursable upon termination.

Paid Family Leave

Paid Family Leave (PFL) is an aspect of State Disability Insurance (SDI) and may provide benefits to individuals who need to take time off work to:

- Care for a seriously ill child, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, spouse, or registered domestic partner.
- Bond with a new child entering the family by birth, adoption, or foster care placement.
- Participate in a qualifying event because of a family member's (spouse, registered domestic partner, parent, or child) military deployment to a foreign country.

If eligible, employees can receive about ~~60~~ 70 to ~~70~~ 90 percent (depending on income) of wages earned 5 to 18 months before the claim start date for up to eight weeks within any 12-month period. The length of time worked at First 5 Ventura County does not affect eligibility. PFL provides benefit payments but not job protection. The Family Medical Leave Act may provide job protection.

State Disability Insurance (SDI)

First 5 Ventura County employees who are unable to work due to illness, injury, or pregnancy disability may be eligible for disability benefits through SDI for the time they are unable to work. SDI is an employee paid benefit that provides to employees deemed eligible by the state partial replacement of wages lost because of a disability not caused by work. The determination of benefits is up to the state Employee Development Department (EDD). The first seven calendar days of an employee's absence are generally considered a "waiting period," and SDI benefits are not paid during that period. Information and claim forms are available from the local EDD office or the EDD website.

Family and Medical Leave

The purpose of this policy is to provide leaves of absence to eligible staff members in accordance with the Family Medical Leave Act ("FMLA") of 1993 and the California Family Rights Act ("CFRA"), and other applicable federal and state laws.

This policy applies to all staff members who have worked at the Commission for at least twelve months (either consecutively or non-consecutively) at the time the leave is requested and have completed at least 1,250 hours of service during the 12-month period preceding the leave request.

Eligible employees may be granted up to 12 weeks unpaid leave in the 12-month period beginning on their anniversary date.

- For the birth of an employee's child, or upon placement of a child with an employee for adoption or foster care. This leave will normally be taken in one block of time unless special arrangements for "intermittent" or "reduced work schedule" are approved by the Executive Director's office.
- When the employee is needed to care for a child, spouse, parent, or designated person who has a serious health condition.
- When the employee is unable to perform the essential functions of their due to a serious health condition.
- When the employee or a family member or designated person has been a victim of a crime, domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking.

Applicable accrued paid leave benefits, including sick and vacation leave, must be substituted for all or part of any otherwise unpaid FMLA/CFRA leave, unless the employee elects in writing to maintain a balance of up to ~~80~~ 120 hours of accrued paid sick and/or vacation leave. The total of paid and unpaid leave under this policy is not to exceed 12 weeks.

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions will serve:

Child: Anyone under 18 years who is the employee's biological, adopted or foster child, stepchild, legal ward or such a child who is over 18 but incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability. This may include a child for whom the employee has day-to-day responsibility.

Parent: Biological, foster or adoptive parents, stepparents, legal guardians, or any individual who stood in place of parents for an employee when the employee was a child.

Spouse: A husband or wife as defined by applicable state law. For purposes of the California Family Rights Act, spouse also includes registered domestic partners.

Designated Person: An individual related to the employee by blood or whose association with the employee is equivalent to a family relationship.

Serious Health Condition: An illness, injury, impairment, physical or mental condition that involves inpatient care, or any period of incapacity requiring absence from school or work of more than three calendar days and involving treatment by a health care provider.

Procedure for requesting Family and Medical Leave

1. A request for FMLA/CFRA Leave of Absence form must be completed by the employee requesting leave, and submitted to the Executive Director or their designee 30 days before commencement date. If 30 days advance notice is not possible, notice must be given as soon as possible.
2. When the leave is due to an employee's or family member's serious health condition, the employee must provide a Certification of Serious Health Condition form completed by the health care provider.
3. Re-certification of the serious health condition may be required during leave.
4. While on leave, employees are required to contact the Executive Director's office every 15 days to advise First 5 Ventura County of any change or improvement in condition.
5. When the leave is planned for medical treatment, the employee must attempt to schedule the treatment so as not to disrupt normal First 5 Ventura County business operations.

Status of benefits during leave

During leave under this policy, an employee is entitled to participate in the current First 5 Ventura County insurance plans, which will continue to be paid by First 5 Ventura County on the same terms and conditions as prior to the effective date of the medical leave, with employee paying any difference required. Federal law, state law and the Commission's insurance plan documents ultimately govern eligibility and entitlement to benefits. Prior to leave, the Executive Director or their designee will explain the payment obligations to the staff member.

If an employee fails to return to work at the end of the leave, the Commission may recover from the employee the cost of any payments made to maintain the employee's coverage, unless the failure to return was due to the continuation, recurrence or onset of a serious health condition that would entitle the employee to FMLA/CFRA leave or other circumstances beyond their control.

An employee on leave will not have a break in service and will not lose any employment benefits accrued prior to leave, unless a benefit is used by the employee during leave, such as accrued sick leave or vacation. The employee will be entitled to the same seniority as at the time the leave commenced. Sick leave, vacation, holidays, and personal leave do not accrue while a staff member is on unpaid FMLA/CFRA leave. No express or implied contractual rights should be inferred from this policy.

Return to work

Before being permitted to return to work from a leave for the employee's own serious health condition, the employee may be required to provide a certification from their own health care provider that they are able to resume work.

Upon return from leave, most employees will be reinstated in the following priority of position reassignment: if available, the same position held before leave, or reassignment to an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits and other conditions of employment.

If possible, employees on leave should notify their supervisor at least two weeks before the end of the leave to inform First 5 Ventura County of availability to return to work.

Failure to return from leave, or failure to contact a supervisor or the Executive Director on the scheduled date of return, may be considered voluntary termination of employment.

Leave Without Pay

Regular employees who have used all available eligible paid time off may be granted a leave of absence without pay on the advanced (when possible) written approval of their supervisor and the ~~Executive Director~~ Director of HR and Operations. Failure to return from an approved leave at the specified time may be construed as voluntary resignation.

An employee found to be employed elsewhere while on leave of absence may be terminated.

During a leave without pay, which is not a legally protected medical or family care leave, no benefits are accrued. This includes vacation time, holiday pay, personal leave, sick leave, health insurance, Life and AD&D insurance, and the retirement benefit plan. This may result in the employee making payments to continue insurance coverage.

Jury Duty and Other Required Court Appearances

Paid leave of absence for required court appearances shall be granted for all employees who have either:
1. Been officially summoned to jury duty, or
2. Been served a subpoena to appear as a witness (not a litigant) in a court case related to Commission employment.

The employee shall be granted leave time for regularly scheduled work hours provided the official court summons is presented to the immediate supervisor and a copy is forwarded to ~~the~~ Human Resources ~~Executive Director's~~ office. The employee shall receive full pay while on leave for an official court summons for a maximum of 5 working days. Additional paid leave for an official court summons may be granted at the discretion of the Executive Director. First 5 Ventura County encourages its employees to support our jury system by their participation. However, our resources to fill absences are limited. Therefore, employees summoned for jury duty are required to request that they be placed on call and return to work after the first day of jury duty as provided for by the Ventura County Jury

System. If full-time employees are scheduled to attend jury duty for half a day (four hours), they will be required to work half a day (four hours in the morning or afternoon) depending on the time they are scheduled to attend jury duty.

Employees subpoenaed as a witness in a court case related to Commission employment are required to return to work immediately following their testimony and release.

An employee involved in litigation or who has been subpoenaed due to non-work related events may use accumulated vacation or personal leave if the employee has prior approval of the supervisor. Also, a leave of absence without pay may be granted with approval of the employee's supervisor and the Executive Director.

Voting

If an employee does not have sufficient time outside of working hours to vote at a statewide election, the employee may, without loss of pay, take off enough working time, not to exceed two hours, that when added to voting time available outside of working hours, will enable the employee to vote. Such time off shall be taken by arrangement with the employee's supervisor.

Military Leave

Employees with one year or more of employment with the Commission may be eligible for up to 30 days pay while on a military leave of absence, excluding absences for inactive duty such as scheduled reserve drill periods.

First 5 Ventura County will comply with the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act of 1994 concerning all aspects of military leave. Questions concerning this Act should be directed to the Executive Director's office. Employees requesting military leave should notify their supervisor as far in advance as possible.

Bereavement Leave

According to California law, employees are entitled to five (5) days of unpaid leave for the death of a spouse, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, state-registered domestic partner, and parent-in-law. One (1) to five (5) days of paid bereavement leave, at the discretion of the ~~Executive Director~~Director of HR and Operations, may be allowed for a death in the immediate family of a Regular employee. Criteria for the amount of time off allowed include a variety of factors, including, but not limited to, the need for out-of-town travel and responsibility for handling funeral arrangements. The term "immediate family" includes the following: spouse, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, state-registered domestic partner, parent-in-law, and child-in-law, , and any individual who resides with the employee as a member of their family. Special consideration will also be given to any other person whose relationship with the employee was similar to any of the above. If an employee is responsible for funeral arrangements out of state, the Executive Director may approve up to seven (7) total days of paid bereavement leave. Employees who are granted less than five (5) days of paid bereavement leave in these relationships may choose to take the difference between five (5) and the number of days of paid bereavement leave as unpaid leave or may use accrued vacation, sick leave or personal leave to receive pay during this time. This leave must be taken within three (3) months of the person's passing.

Up to two (2) days of paid bereavement leave, at the discretion of the ~~Executive~~ Director of HR and Operations, may be allowed for a death of specific other family members. This includes the following: sister-in-law, brother-in-law, grandfather-in-law, grandmother-in-law, aunt and uncle. Special consideration will also be given to any other person whose relationship with the employee was similar to any of the above.

In the event of the death of some other, close personal friend or relative not named in the family list, the employee may request immediate use of available sick leave, personal leave or vacation leave time of up to five (5) days. At the discretion of the supervisor, the Executive Director and the Executive Director's office, such leave may be allowed.

F5VC may request documentation within 30 days such as a death certificate, a published obituary, or written verification of death, burial, or memorial services from a mortuary, funeral home, burial society, crematorium, religious institution, or governmental agency.

If more time off is required, employees may request any available sick leave, personal leave or vacation leave.

TRAVEL

Use of Personal Vehicle for Business

Reliable transportation may be required for some First 5 Ventura County positions in order to transact necessary business. This will be reflected in the job description for such positions. Positions that specifically include the transportation of clients will require, as a condition of hire, a copy of the applicant's DMV report. The cost of obtaining the report will be reimbursed by First 5 Ventura County at the time of hire.

It is the responsibility of the employee to maintain at their own expense a valid California driver's license and personal insurance coverage equal to or greater than the minimum coverage amounts required by state law while utilizing their private automobile for transaction of Commission business. The employee must provide proof of a valid driver's license and insurance to the Executive Director or their designee for inclusion in the employee's personnel file before being eligible to use their automobile for Commission business. The employee is also responsible to notify the Executive Director or their designee of any changes in license, insurance, or any DMV citations while driving on official Commission business. Employees are responsible for any parking, mechanical or moving violation tickets received while using their own vehicle on official Commission business.

Every passenger, including the driver, in a vehicle on official Commission business, is to be properly secured in a seat belt (as installed by the manufacturer for safe use), or be secured in an appropriate infant, or small child, car seat. It is the responsibility of the vehicle driver to ensure that seat belts and car seats are being properly used by each client/passenger.

Use of an employee's private automobile shall be reimbursed at the current rate determined by the Internal Revenue Service. Private automobiles may not be used for travel for trips over 100 miles one-way except by permission of the Executive Director.

Mileage expenses must be submitted on a mileage report. Claims for mileage reimbursement must be submitted within 3 months of actual occurrence.

Mileage reimbursement rates may change in accordance with IRS regulations and/or contract and budget limitations.

Out of Area Travel

Employees shall be reimbursed for their travel expenses when they are required to travel on behalf of First 5 Ventura County in accordance with the policies and limits set forth below. Travel costs must be pre-approved by the employee's supervisor.

Cash advances for trips may be secured with approval of the Executive Director. The use of First 5 Ventura County credit cards must be pre-approved by the Executive Director.

Air Travel

Employees will be reimbursed for the coach rate for air travel. Employees may also request that the air travel be paid for on the agency credit card. First 5 Ventura County will reimburse parking fees or shuttle transportation to the airport from the employee's home, whichever is less. Employees shall make travel arrangements in advance, when possible, to obtain the lowest rates.

Ground Transportation

With approval prior to the expense, employees may also claim reimbursement for ground transportation at actual cost. Ground transportation includes expenses such as taxis, airport shuttles, rental cars, ride share, and other public transportation. For travel by train, employees will be reimbursed for the coach rate, unless the business class rate is approved by the Executive Director. Employees renting a car on Commission business will purchase physical damage insurance (comprehensive and collision but ***not*** liability) through the rental company. Such insurance expenses will be reimbursed at actual cost.

Private Automobiles

Private automobiles may not be used for travel for trips over 100 miles one-way except by permission of the Executive Director. Use of an employee's private automobile shall be reimbursed at the current rate determined by the Internal Revenue Service. Employees who use their private automobile for travel are expected to follow First 5 Ventura County policy on the use of personal vehicles for business, including providing the Executive Director with proof of a valid driver's license and insurance.

Lodging

First 5 Ventura County shall reimburse reasonable lodging expenses in accordance with reasonable market rates for a specific geographical area or based on the negotiated group rates, as available.

Meals

Reasonable meal expenditures will be reimbursed according to the following schedule (these rates include tipping)*:

Breakfast	up to	$20.00
Lunch	up to	$25.00
Dinner	up to	$40.00

Employees may receive reimbursement up to the combined total for those meals eligible for reimbursement, e.g., an employee eligible to receive reimbursement for both breakfast and lunch may receive reimbursement in excess of the above schedule for each meal as long as the combined total does not exceed $45.00

Eligible meals are defined as meals for which an employee incurs a cost due to a legitimate business reason, e.g., overnight travel, travel out of Ventura County. Meals, excluding continental breakfast, provided as part of a conference or seminar are not eligible for separate reimbursement. Employees need to submit itemized receipts for all meals for which they are claiming reimbursement. Meals related to formal business meetings are not subject to the meal reimbursement schedule as outlined in this handbook.

Reimbursement for meals will exclude alcoholic beverages.

Incidentals

Employees are eligible for reimbursement for incidentals up to $6.00/day when they are on business travel. Incidentals may include such items as: tipping for baggage assistance, non-alcoholic beverages, postage.

~~Telephone~~ Internet Expenses

Hotel internet expenses will be reimbursed when there is a business need for use by the employee while on business travel.

Revised October 2005/September 2006/February 2008/December 2009/February 2014/June 2015/January 2017/June 2021/
Oct 2021/Feb 2022/April 2022/Oct 2022/Oct2023/Mar2024/Nov2024

EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of First 5 Ventura County's Employee Handbook. I have read and understood the contents of this Handbook and have been given the opportunity to ask any questions I might have about policies that I do not understand. I understand that the statements contained in the Handbook are guidelines for employees concerning some of First 5 Ventura County's policies and benefits and are not intended to create any contractual or other legal obligations or to alter the at-will nature of my employment with First 5 Ventura County. I also understand that no employee of First 5 Ventura County has the authority to enter into any agreement for any specified period of time or to make any agreement contrary to the at-will relationship described above. Only the Commission may make any such agreement and only if in writing. I acknowledge that First 5 Ventura County may modify or rescind any policies, practices or benefits described in the Handbook, other than the employment at-will policy, at any time without prior notice to me.

I understand and agree that employment with First 5 Ventura County is at-will and can be terminated by myself or First 5 Ventura County with or without cause or notice. I further understand and agree that First 5 Ventura County retains sole discretion to modify the terms and conditions of employment. This is the entire agreement between First 5 Ventura County and me on these issues and it cannot be modified except by a new agreement in writing and approved by the Commission.

_____ _____

Employee Signature Date

_____

Employee Name