Suggestions for Employee Handbook Content and Topics

Note: Not inclusive, not listed in specific order

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"Passion" Content

- Your agency's mission, vision, and values—guiding principles
- Welcome letter from Executive Director
- Agency's origin story and historical/operational timeline
- Photos of staff and workplace
- Statistics that would make an impact, e.g., agency size, growth trajectory, etc.
- Agency-sponsored events, e.g., annual outings, employee celebrations, volunteer efforts, etc.

Compensation, Benefits, and Perks

- General benefits overview: health care, dental, vision, life insurance, and retirement plans, including the eligibility requirements
- Education and training benefits
- Explanation of frequency, method, and time of payment
- Overtime policy
- Alternative compensation, e.g., "spot awards" or bonuses
- Performance reviews and salary/wages—be transparent about your review and raise processes
- Perks, e.g., agency-provided phones or laptops, free lunches, agency-provided uniforms, flexible schedules/remote work, etc.

Code of Conduct

- Ethical standards and policies
- Safeguarding of confidential information
- Use of phones, email, and internet during working hours
- Disciplinary procedures
- Corrective action process
- Meal breaks and rest periods
- Smoking, alcohol, and substance abuse guidelines
- Data management and customer privacy
- Conflict resolution policy
- Customer or vendor gifts (in any form) or bribes
- Dress codes

Schedule, Hours of Operation, and Paid Time Off (PTO)

- Amounts of time offered for vacation, sick days, any short-term leave
  - Include if PTO is an earned or accrual process and whether or not PTO "rolls over" into the next year
- Agency's hours of operation and when employees are expected to arrive and leave. "Clocking in procedure."
- Observed holidays, policies related to working during holidays or nonbusiness hours, and how employees will be compensated
- Hybrid or remote work policies

Anti-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity

- Explicit statement describing how the agency adheres to nondiscrimination and equal employment opportunity laws in accordance with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
- Anti-harassment and bullying/intimidation
- Anti-retaliation
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- CROWN Act
- Immigration and Nationality Act (INA)

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Workplace Safety and Security

- General safety and security policy
- Workers' compensation rules and procedures
- Operation of machinery or equipment
- Process for filing sexual harassment or bullying complaints
- Drugs and alcohol policy
- Violence in the workplace
- Emergency procedures (including facility evacuation)

Leaves of Absence

- Family and Medical Leave Act (If applicable)
- Medical leave (non-FMLA)
- Personal leave
- Bereavement leave
- Voting leave
- Jury and/or Witness Duty leave
- Military leave
- Parental leave
- Policies/programs that promote wellness and mental health, e.g., Employee Assistance Program
- Time away for education and training

Non-Disclosure and Conflict of Interest

- Protection of the confidential aspects of your business that make you unique and competitive
- Nondisclosure agreements (NDA), especially for key positions, to stipulate rules around information-sharing
- Permissible types of outside work

Digital Conduct and Social Media

- Define how your employees can (and cannot) talk about and represent your agency on social media
- Standards for protecting assets, internal documents, and resident, employee, vendor, and customer information

POLICIES TO AVOID

- Prohibiting employees from discussing their pay with coworkers
- English-only policies
- Prohibiting lawful off-duty conduct
- Blanket policies on criminal convictions
- Withholding final pay until agency property is returned
- Non-payment of unauthorized overtime/early punch-ins
- Requiring a doctor's note for every sick day
- Non-disparagement (under recent legal review)

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