

**DeKalb County Community Action Department**  
**Personnel Handbook (updated 11/5/15)**



Welcome to DeKalb County Community Action Department (DCCAD). DCCAD has been addressing the causes of poverty and the needs of low-income households in DeKalb County since 1984.

DeKalb County Community Action Department is a Community Action Agency and is a part of the “Community Action Network” which seeks to increase opportunities and self-sufficiency for individuals and families who are living in poverty.

DCCAD has a fifteen member tri-partite CSBG Administrative Board that is comprised of 1/3 private community members, 1/3 public community members, and 1/3 low-income community members.

The mission of DCCAD is “To provide access to opportunities for low-income individuals and families in DeKalb County by empowering them with community resources and support to increase self-sufficiency and household stability”. This handbook is designed with this mission in mind.

This personnel handbook is intended to outline the expectations for conduct in the course of business at DCCAD. As an employee of DeKalb County, there are also procedures and benefits that are outlined and defined on the County website to guide your conduct.

Notification by e-mail of this handbook and other DCCAD policies, etc. will be sent to employees when updated. All pertinent employee policies, etc. will be available on the DeKalb County Community Action website on the “DCCAD Staff/Board Member” page.

**Orientation:**

All new employees will receive a general orientation program at the Sycamore Campus of the DeKalb County offices to review general benefits and procedures. In addition, new employees will receive a copy of this handbook, a job description, procedural manual, and a structured introduction to co-workers and the work environment.

All new employees will be evaluated during their initial period of employment with DCCAD. The supervisor will observe conduct and performance and suggest needed changes as appropriate. A new employee is considered on probation for the initial six month period.

**Performance Management:**

Performance management is a method of measuring an employee's past performance over a certain period of time and identifying future performance expectations. Ideally, the employee should receive feedback from his or her supervisor on an ongoing basis in terms of conduct, performance, and areas of improvement. While this may often be done informally, at certain times it is desirable to have a written evaluation of an employee in order to document past performance, identify strengths and deficiencies, establish performance objectives to guide future actions, provide a basis for merit salary increases and other personnel actions, and focus attention of the individual's career development. Written performance appraisals are to be conducted at least annually (or more frequently if deemed necessary by a supervisor). To be beneficial, the process should actively involve the employee with the supervisor. The supervisor will meet with the employee to discuss the performance review and future expectations. Each employee is encouraged to contribute her/his comments in the review.

**Involuntary Separation:**

Employees are at DCCAD at-will which means that their employment can be terminated with or without cause. Following is a non-exhaustive list of some examples of when DCCAD may elect to terminate at-will employment:

- insufficient funding for a position;
- loss of grant funding;
- change in DCCAD plans and/or priorities;
- completion of a project;
- employee unable to perform essential job functions;
- unsatisfactory performance by employee;
- violation of policies of DCCAD and/or DeKalb County Government;
- action inconsistent with the objectives of DCCAD.

**Pay and Benefits:****-Increases**

Salary increases are dependent on funding and are normally scheduled for the beginning of the CSBG Grant year, January 1.

**-Paid Hours Off (PHOs)**

After six months of probationary employment, employees will receive PHOs based upon the structure outlined by the DeKalb County policies. PHOs should be used to cover vacations, holidays, sick time, etc. It is expected that an employee will clear any anticipated time off with the Director with as much advance notice as possible so as to disrupt the flow of the office as little as possible.

**-Timekeeping**

Each employee needs to submit a timesheet each Friday before a scheduled payday (every two weeks). Daily total hours worked will be recorded on these forms. Employees should document their time worked in ¼ hour increments. Employees are expected to be on time each day and work up until their schedule daily leave time. If the employee is late getting into work or leaves early (due to extenuating circumstances), this should be reflected on the timesheet. The employee will sign the timesheet and then be signed by a supervisor before it is given to

the County for processing. An account of actual time attributable to various grants will be available through the designations on the daily DCCAD calendar.

#### **-Mileage/Expenses Reimbursement**

Employees will be reimbursed for approved expenses and mileage associated with their employment responsibilities. The reimbursement form needs to be completed and submitted to the Director on a monthly basis, due the first Wednesday of the month.

DeKalb County Community Action Department staff will abide by the Community Action Code of Ethics at all times. This code is as follows:

### **COMMUNITY ACTION CODE OF ETHICS**

We, as community action professionals ever respectful of cultural diversity, dedicate ourselves to eliminate poverty in the midst of plenty in this nation by opening to everyone the opportunity for education and training; the opportunity to work; and the opportunity to live in decency and dignity, and commit ourselves to:

- Recognize that the chief function of the community action movement at all times is to serve the best interests of the poor.
- Accept as a personal duty the responsibility to keep up-to-date on emerging issues and to conduct ourselves with professional competence, fairness, and effectiveness.
- Respect the structure and responsibilities of the board of directors, provide them with facts and advice as a basis for their decision making, and uphold and implement the policies adopted by the board of directors.
- Keep the community informed about issues affecting the poor and to facilitate communication among the poor, the non-poor private sector, and locally elected public officials.
- Conduct our organizational and operational duties with positive leadership exemplified by open communication, creativity, dedication, and compassion.
- Exercise whatever discretionary authority we have under the law to promote the interests of the poor.
- Serve the community action movement with respect, concern, and responsiveness, recognizing that service to the poor is beyond service to oneself.
- Demonstrate the highest standards of personal integrity, truthfulness, and fortitude in our community action activities in order to inspire confidence in the community action movement.
- Perform our professional duties in such a way so as not to realize undue personal gain.
- Avoid any interest or activity, which conflicts with the conduct of our official duties.
- Protect confidentiality in the course of our official duties.

- Strive for personal professional excellence and encourage the professional development of our associates and those seeking to become community action executives.

#### Code of Conduct

No staff will require attendance at or solicitation of membership in or counseling on the beliefs of any organization (church, union, political, fraternal, etc.) as a requisite for receipt of services. Staff will not discriminate against any Program Participant on the basis of gender, age, race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation.

#### Conflict of Interest

The interest of the clients will be paramount. All staff will avoid any actual or perceived conflict of interest. A conflict of interest is a situation in which a staff person's private or economic interest interferes with or in any way influences the action of the Department.

#### Employee Assistance

Employees and immediate family members of DeKalb County may receive services from DeKalb County Community Action Department if determined eligible. No preferential treatment will be afforded any employee based upon employment by DCCAD or DeKalb County. No DCCAD employee is allowed to perform an assessment for services for a family member, friend or relative.

#### Appointments

When clients call or walk in seeking services, they will be directed to a Family Support Specialist for an appointment. During the appointment, the Family Support Specialist will complete an eligibility intake and assessment form to assess eligibility for DCCAD services. Key components of the assessment will include residential and income eligibility, and overall needs of the household. Upon assessment, the Family Support Specialist will discuss the purpose of DCCAD services, what the household should expect while working with a Family Support Specialist, and determine appropriate assistance and referrals for the family. Households are to be scheduled for appointments in an expedited manner that allows them to receive the services they need as soon as practically possible. Households are informed as to what documentation they need to bring in for their appointment and what to expect at the appointment time.

Program Participants will be scheduled during regular working hours and in the Department's offices. If that is not possible, staff can be asked to meet with the Program Participant at an alternative location and/or beyond regular work hours. Depending upon the nature of needs, a home visit may be scheduled. These appointments should be clearly documented on the calendar with an address and phone number in order to maximize safety.

An adult from the household must be the person signing the assessment.

### Aggressive Clients

All Program Participants will be treated with the utmost respect. If a Program Participant should become agitated, the staff person will make every attempt to de-escalate the situation. If that is not possible and the client becomes aggressive, the staff person should ask the aggressive individual to leave. If the aggressive individual refuses to leave or appears dangerous, one of the other staff is to call 911 immediately. If the information of a suspicious or dangerous person needs to be communicated in a confidential manner to another staff person or to Health Department staff, the code "Doctor Gray" or "the gray file" should be used.

If a phone caller becomes aggressive, the staff person is to warn the caller that they must stop or the staff person will have to hang up. If the aggressiveness continues the staff will politely tell the caller good-bye and hang up.

### Doors

The main front door of the Community Action office space shall remain open when business is being conducted with the following exceptions:

- A. The noise or commotion outside the door interferes with the business of the Community Action Department in which case the "Come In" sign is placed in the window with the door closed and unlocked;
- B. A Community Action staff person is not available to patrol the doorway, in which case the clock stating when staff will be available is displayed in the window with the door closed and locked.

Individual office doors may be closed only when a worker is on lunch, has a Program Participant in an appointment, or is on a conference call, webinar, etc. The door will remain unlocked.

### Personal Property and Privacy

Staff members are encouraged to feel comfortable in their workspace. Family pictures and small decorative items are acceptable. The office area should feel welcoming to other staff and to Program Participants. Nothing can be hung on the walls without Executive Director approval.

Staff should have no assumption of privacy in any office area including information residing in the computer system.

### Personal Phone Calls, Texts, and E-mail

While staff may occasionally need to use the phone or e-mail for personal business, every effort should be made to assure that these do not interrupt the work of the agency. Mobile phones should be either turned off or on vibrate during an appointment with a Program Participant. At all other times, mobile phones should either be on vibrate or at the lowest possible sound setting.

### Work Hours

The office is open from 8am-4:30pm. You are expected to be on time to the office. If you arrive later than your designated start time due to an unforeseen circumstance, it is expected that will be reflected on your time sheet. Lunch may be taken whenever it is convenient in the middle of the day. Your time sheet should reflect the time that you are not working. Work days and hours are set to maximize agency function, efficiency and Program Participant accessibility. Situations may arise that require some flexibility of hours. If this occurs, you need to speak with the Director for approval of switching hours. In the event that the Director is not in the office, approval may be given by the Office Coordinator. The Department follows the DeKalb County Government plan for Paid Hours Off. However, staff does not start to accumulate PHOs until after their six month probationary period. Staff is discouraged from scheduling time off during this period; however situations may arise to where this is unavoidable. Part-time staff is strongly encouraged to schedule personal appointments, etc. outside of their normal work hours. When time off is appropriate, staff is to request time off at the earliest date possible. The work schedule of the Department should be considered when planning time off. All requests for time off are made to the Executive Director using a time off request form. In the event of emergency time off, the Executive Director should be notified as soon as possible.

### Mandated Reporting

All staff members of the Department are mandated reporters of child abuse. If child abuse is witnessed or suspected the staff is to immediately call the DCFS Hotline and report the incident. Witnessed or suspected elder abuse, when the older adult is unable to choose and/or report for her/himself, will be reported to Elder Care Services.

The Executive Director is to be informed of any abuse report as soon as possible.

### Purchases

The Office Coordinator will keep a list of needed office supplies and order office supplies within budget. Other supply needs should be brought to the Executive Director.

The Department credit card can only be used for legitimate Community Action expenses and all transactions must have Executive Director approval and follow DeKalb County Government regulations. The agency credit card should be signed out and signed back in after use.

Staff may be personally responsible for purchases made without proper approval or documentation.

### Fraternization

It is important for staff to maintain a professional distance with clients. Staff is prohibited from fraternizing. Fraternizing is defined as pursuing a close friendship or intimate relationship with a current Program Participant. The transferring of money or goods between staff and persons currently or formerly served as Program Participants is prohibited.

#### Services for Staff, Family of Staff, or Persons with a Relationship to Staff.

If a staff person, a family member of a staff person or someone who has a relationship with a staff person applies for assistance from any Department services, another staff person must handle all assessment and approval. The staff person involved must divorce himself or herself from the case. All requirements for service must be met. No special waivers will be granted.

#### Attire and Personal Hygiene

It is expected that staff will maintain a clean and neat appearance and will project a professional and businesslike image. Our dress code is “business casual”. Appropriate jeans are allowed on Fridays.

#### Speaking to the Media

It is our goal to give the press clear, consistent, and up-to-date information. It is important not to give the press information that is inaccurate or misleading. All calls from reporters for the media are to be directed to the Executive Director unless the staff person has been specifically directed otherwise.

#### Legislative or Political Activities

This Department is regulated by the Hatch Act, which limits the political activities of persons employed using CSBG funds.