



NorthStar

Community Services

Employee Handbook
Updated June 2024
Effective June 2024

Table of Contents

Equal Employment Opportunity.....	6
Employee Handbook Renewal.....	6
Personnel Philosophy.....	6
Confidential Information Policy.....	6
Staff Qualifications.....	7
Staff Recruitment and Selection.....	7
Personal Vehicles, License and Vehicle Insurance.....	9
Employee Orientation and Training.....	9
Personnel Files.....	10
Work Time.....	11
Employee Status.....	11
Employee Categories.....	12
Payment and Deductions.....	12
Government Mandated Benefits.....	12
Paid Time Off/ESST Policy.....	13
Holidays.....	15
Leave.....	15
School Conferences and Activities Leave.....	18
Voting Leave.....	18
Election Judge Leave.....	18
Summer/Winter Working Schedules.....	18
Discretionary Employee Benefits.....	18
Conferences.....	19

Employee Assistance Fund.....	19
Reimbursements.....	19
Reimbursement for Program Fees, Meals, and Snacks.....	20
Salary Administration.....	21
Employee Injuries.....	22
Performance Reviews.....	22
Termination of Employment.....	22
Company Property and Financial Obligation.....	23
Gross Misconduct.....	23
Grievance Procedure.....	24
Dress Code.....	24
Policy For Supporting Breastfeeding Employees.....	25
Smoking and Tobacco Use.....	25
Professional Boundaries.....	26
Guidelines for Staff Use of Food, Laundry Facilities, Phone, and Personal Supplies.....	27
Cellular Phones and Other Electronic Devices.....	28
Cellular Devices and Passwords.....	29
Employee Guests.....	29
Personal Errands and Visits to Staff Homes.....	30
Drug/Chemical and Alcohol Policy.....	30
Firearms Policy.....	32
Solicitation.....	32
Harassment Policy.....	32
Sexual Harassment Policy.....	33
Employee Protection (Whistleblower) Policy.....	33

Policy and Procedure Pertaining to Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources	34
.....
Recording Your Time.....	36
Attendance Policy.....	36
Privacy / HIPPA Policy.....	40
Data Privacy.....	41
Confidential Information.....	43
Animal Policy.....	43
Food Preparation/ Meals/ Outside Food in the Homes.....	44
ADA Policy.....	44
Background Studies.....	44
Guardianship/Conservatorship.....	45
Workplace Bullying.....	45
Required Documentation and Training.....	46
ADDENDUM TO EMERGENCY RESPONSE, REPORTING AND REVIEW POLICY	
ADDENDUM TO INCLUDE MEDICAL PANDEMIC PLAN	

Welcome

This Employee Handbook has been established to help employees successfully manage their employment. It is important that every employee be familiar with the policies in this handbook. As part of New Employee Orientation, all employees will receive a copy of this handbook and training regarding its contents. This Employee Handbook is provided only for informational purposes. Although NCS believes in the policies, practices, and procedures described in this handbook, they are not conditions of employment and are not intended to create, nor are they to be interpreted to create, a contract between NCS and any of its employees. NCS reserves the right at any time to suspend, discontinue or change any or all policies, practices, or procedures. This handbook supersedes all previous editions of NCS's handbook. NCS and its employees have an employment relationship which is known as "employment at will." This means that either NCS or an individual employee has the right to terminate the employment relationship at any time, for any reason, or for no reason at all. Of course, NCS will not terminate an employee for any unlawful reason. Each employee is considered an important part of NCS. Employees should feel free to discuss the contents of this handbook with their supervisor. The NCS Employee Handbook identifies policies and guidelines for personnel of the organization. Please bear in mind the organization's mission and values as you review the pages that follow.

Nothing in this Employee Handbook is designed to interfere with, restrain, or prevent employee communications regarding wages, hours, or other terms and conditions of employment. Employees have the right to engage in or refrain from such activities.

Equal Employment Opportunity

NCS is committed to providing equal opportunity in employment to all qualified applicants and employees regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or age. NCS is also committed to prohibiting discrimination in employment on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation or age. This policy extends to all qualified applicants and employees in all aspects of the employment relationship including but not limited to recruiting, hiring, promotion, transfer, compensation, and termination. This policy applies to all regular full-time, regular part-time, temporary, casual, and employees of record/Fiscal Support Entity (FSE).

Employee Handbook Renewal

These policies will be reviewed by the management team on a periodic basis.

Personnel matters not addressed specifically in these policies shall be brought to the Executive Director, if necessary, who's decision shall be final and binding. These policies may be updated at any time, and it is the employees responsibility to review changes.

Personnel Philosophy

NCS seeks to offer the highest quality of service to each person it serves. The purpose of NCS is to provide an environment in which persons with disabilities will have the opportunity to live securely while acquiring as great a level of independence as is possible. Personnel who are qualified by training, experience, and conviction must be recruited and maintained to provide such service consistently and with accepted professional standards. NCS recognizes that in order to meet high standards of service, employees must be motivated, well trained, respected, and treated fairly. NCS embraces a team management philosophy which focuses on empowerment of all employees in the decision-making process. Each employee, regardless of job classification, is an asset whose input is necessary to assure the highest quality of services to each person.

Confidential Information Policy

Employees may not disclose confidential information without appropriate authorization. Confidential information pertains to all knowledge and information which an employee may acquire in the course of his or her employment which relates to the business, activities, plans,

products and services, or the financial affairs of NCS or any individual or firm doing business with or receiving care from NCS, including but not limited to: trade secrets; client information; financial information, such as purchasing, sales, earnings and profits, budget and audit reports, financial statements, budget and financial plans, pricing, billing information, tax data, sales and marketing information, business strategies and plans; and any discoveries, inventions, ideas, methods, products, equipment, developments, improvements, or programs which NCS holds confidential and has not publicly disclosed. In addition to the above, any information marked “Confidential” by NCS will be deemed to be covered under this policy. Any employee who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Staff Qualifications

There shall be written job descriptions for all positions within NCS. Job descriptions are available on the Staff Resources website. Job descriptions will be reviewed on a periodic basis. Assistant Program Directors shall have at least 2 years of experience working with people with disabilities.

Direct Support Professionals should have related education and experience to adequately fulfill the job description.

Support staff shall have the education, licensure, and experience required for the specific position they are being considered for.

Staff Recruitment and Selection

- **Recruitment:** Vacancy notices for full-time positions will be listed in the NCS newsletter and posted on our website. All employees have access to all other available openings through the NCS website.
- **Referral Incentive:** All current NCS employees are encouraged to refer potential employees to NCS for possible employment. An employee who refers a person to NCS who is subsequently hired shall receive a \$150 team member referral bonus. The referred employee must successfully complete one year of employment and be in good standing with NCS at the time the referral bonus is to be paid out. The team member referral form must be completed upon hire of referred staff. Staff who are responsible for hiring may refer applicants but are not eligible for the referral incentive if they hire the applicant. If someone else hires their referral, they are eligible for the incentive.
- **Application:** A web-based application, identifying education, previous employment and related experience, as well as employment references will be submitted to NCS. NCS will contact references prior to approving applications for consideration.
- **Applicant Background Checks:** NCS is required by law to conduct a Criminal Background Check on all employees who work directly with clients. Prior to being hired, prospective employees must have provisional background clearance. In the event that an

employee or applicant shows a history of criminal activity, which may include a history of abuse or neglect, NCS will follow the applicable guidelines established through Minnesota Rule and statute. In situations where employees provide respite services in their own home all household members 18 years of age and older must have a background check completed. Periodic background checks may be conducted at NCS's discretion at any time. A new background check is required for a returning employee, an employee who has a name change, or for an employee who has a leave extending beyond 120 days.

- Selection: After applications are reviewed a team headed by the immediate supervisor or Executive Director will interview and select the final candidates. Confirmation of employment, salary information, and guidelines will be given to each new employee in writing.
- Working with Relatives and/or Significant Others: NCS does not prohibit or discourage the hiring of family members or "significant others" of current employees. However, to avoid potential conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts of interest, NCS does not permit an employee to supervise another employee who is a family member or a significant other. Additionally, NCS does not want a family member or significant other of an employee to be hired to work within the same physical location or to work with the same client (in the case of SILS or IHFS) as another family member. For purposes of this policy, a relative is defined as a spouse, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle, first cousin, and corresponding in-law or step-relation.

Significant others are defined as individuals who are involved in a relationship, who typically live together, and who are not legally married. If, during the course of their employment, two employees within a program marry or become involved as significant others, NCS will work with the employees to secure a voluntary transfer at the earliest practical time. When a voluntary transfer is not possible, NCS will reassign one of the employees based on the importance of each job, business needs, and the availability of candidates to fill either job. Any exceptions to this policy must be approved in advance by the Executive Director. The IHFS and FSE programs are exempt from this policy with approval of an Executive Director.

- Probation: Any new, rehired, transferred, or promoted employee will serve a six-month probationary period. This period will be utilized to monitor the employee's performance and provide for the most effective adjustment of the employee to the position involved. During this time, the employee's immediate supervisor will provide verbal feedback on an ongoing basis and a written evaluation at the end of the probationary period. After three months the supervisor will meet with the employee and review his/her performance to that point.

At the end of the six-month period, the probationary period may be extended with the Executive Director's approval. This extension shall not exceed three months. Successful completion of the probationary period does not alter the at will employment relationship. An employee hired in a full-time position may not transfer to another NCS program

during the probationary period. A part time employee may accept additional hours at a second program or transfer to a new program during the probationary period if approved by the Program Directors and Executive Director(s). For an extraordinary circumstance, an exception may be considered by the Executive Director.

Personal Vehicles, License and Vehicle Insurance

- Personal Vehicles – License and Insurance: Employees who use their personal vehicle to transport clients must maintain current vehicle insurance (liability) and a valid driver's license. Should a driver's license be suspended or revoked or insurance coverage lapse, it is the employee's responsibility to notify their supervisor immediately. When an employee's license has been suspended or revoked, they may not drive a NCS vehicle or transport a client in their own vehicle. When an employee's vehicle insurance has lapsed, the staff person may not transport a client in their own vehicle. The employee is required to have insurance coverage that meets the guidelines of Minnesota Law. NCS provides liability coverage for the employees for those times when the employee is using his/her vehicle for work purposes. NCS's liability insurance does not cover damage to the employee's vehicle.
- NCS Automobile Insurance - NCS provides complete automobile insurance while driving NCS vehicles and liability protection when driving one's own vehicle for NCS.

- Other Vehicle Guidelines:

NCS does not pay for or reimburse for the following:

- * Towing personal vehicles
- * Damage to vehicles or personal items not caused by a client or as a result of actions by NCS or its representative.
- * Theft of personal items

NCS vehicles may not be used for personal use.

- Motor Vehicle Driving Record:

NCS's auto insurance requires that each driver's motor vehicle record be checked to make sure employees have good driving records. NCS will review each employee's record and assign points in accordance with the insurance carrier's schedule. Employees with more than 11 points may not drive as part of their duties unless they submit a letter to NCS and the insurance carrier explaining the violations and the steps they are taking to minimize the potential for future violations. The request must be approved by NCS's insurance carrier.

Employee Orientation and Training

NCS recognizes the importance of training for all employees. The Staff Training Committee, which is composed of employees, develops training that meets the needs of new and existing employees, assuring that specific licensing requirements are being met. The following represents specific training activities:

New Employee Orientation and Training

Within 60 calendar days of hire, unless stated otherwise, NCS will provide training sufficient to create staff competency for direct support staff that combines supervised on-the-job training with review of and instruction in areas indicated within MN Statute 245D. NCS provides New Employee Training in a classroom setting as well as site-based training to assure that staff are competent to meet the needs of the individuals we serve.

Within 72 hours of first providing supervised direct contact services, employees must complete Vulnerable Adult training/Maltreatment of Minors training and review the Program Abuse Prevention Plan. Before providing unsupervised direct contact services all employees must receive basic first aid training.

Annual (minimum) Training Requirements

Program employees are required to continue training throughout the course of their employment with NCS. Therefore, NCS will utilize online courses, presentations and examinations by known educators and trainers to demonstrate competency.

NCS will assist employees with meeting training requirements; however, it is ultimately the employee's responsibility to complete any and all training requirements as set forth. Documentation of all training components will be filed within the individual employee's file and updated at least annually. The following trainings are required to be completed no later than within the same month as the previous year; Positive Support Strategies, HIPAA, Service Recipients Rights, Basic First Aid, and Person Centered Practices.

CPR & First Aid training will be provided to employees per client treatment plans and requirements. CPR is required in programs that have one or more individuals whose CSSP-A indicated staff will be certified to provide CPR.

Personnel Files

Each employee shall have a personnel file located in the main office which shall minimally include: documentation of training received, performance reviews, correspondence to the employee from NCS and to NCS from the employee, the original application form, resume, background check, and application materials.

- Confidentiality: Personnel records are confidential, with only the employee, supervisory staff, payroll staff, human resources staff, and agents mandated by law having access to them, unless both the employee and Executive Director approve specifically that some other person/agency may have access to specific parts thereof.

- Access: An employee may review his or her personnel file once every six months during his or her employment, upon submission of a written request. The written request should be given to the Executive Director. An employee's review of his or her personnel file will take place no later than seven working days after the receipt of his or her written request. An employee's review of his or her personnel file must take place in the presence of a supervisor. After the termination of an employee's employment, the employee may review his or her personnel file once per year, upon submission of a written request, for as long as the personnel file is maintained by NCS. After reviewing the file, an employee may make a written request for a copy of the record. If, after reviewing his or her personnel file, an employee disputes specific information contained in the record, NCS may agree to remove or revise the disputed information. If no such agreement is reached, an employee may submit a written statement of no more than five pages explaining their position. This position statement will be included in his or her personnel file, along with the disputed information, for as long as the record is maintained. NCS will not retaliate against an employee for asserting his or her rights under the Minnesota Personnel Records Statute. The full text of this statute, which sets forth all available rights and remedies can be found on the website of the Minnesota Office of the Revisor of Statutes.

Work Time

Specific job responsibilities and scheduling of hours worked for each employee shall be at the direction of the Executive Director or a designee.

- Work Year: NCS is in operation 365 days each year.
- Work Week: The work week shall be from Monday at 12:00 a.m. to Sunday at 11:59 p.m.

Employees scheduled to work "up and awake" shifts cannot sleep during the shift.

Employees who work sleep NOC shifts will be reimbursed at \$120 per night.

Employees, except those classified as exempt, shall be compensated at the rate of time and one-half for all hours worked over 40 hours each week. Such overtime work must, to the extent possible, have the prior approval of the employee's immediate supervisor.

Each employee shall keep an accurate record of hours worked on a daily basis. Each employee is to enter time worked in the NCS Time Entry System. It is the employee's responsibility to submit an accurate time card to his/her supervisor on time. If the submission is not timely, payment may be delayed until the following pay period. Under no circumstances should an employee enter another employee's time, share passwords, or falsify time worked.

False statements on time recording may be grounds for immediate termination.

Employee Status

All employees will fit under one or more of the following classifications, with indicated policies applicable to each:

- Regular, Full-Time: Employees who are regularly scheduled to work 35 hours (excluding sleep time) per week and are approved as full-time employees, are eligible for full-time employee benefits.
- Regular, Part-Time: Employees who are regularly scheduled for 30 or more hours per week or who average 30 or more hours per week during a specified measurement period and are approved as part-time employees, are eligible for part-time employee benefits.
- Temporary, Full or Part-Time: Employees who are hired for a specific and limited time period of less than six months are eligible only for benefits specifically provided in their employment agreement.
- Casual (Fill-in): Employees who are not regularly scheduled to work. These employees work on an as-needed basis to fill in for other staff. Casual employees are only eligible for casual benefits and will be required to work 2 shifts each month.
- Exempt: According to the Department of Labor standards, the following positions are considered exempt from overtime requirements: Executive Director, Chief Financial Officer, Director of IT and Program Director.

Employee Categories

- Administrative Employee-CEO, CFO, Human Resources, Hiring Coordinator, Department Heads
- Management Employee-Program Directors
- Professional Service Delivery Employee-Behavioral Health Staff, Employment Counselors, Activities Coordinator, Office Manager
- Direct Service Employee

Payment and Deductions

Employees are paid every two weeks. Payment is made by direct deposit to the employee's bank account unless the employee makes a written request for payment by check. Deductions will occur automatically from each paycheck for withholding taxes on income and social security. Deductions will also occur for discretionary withdrawals (401K, health care) as chosen by eligible employees. Payments may be changed to a paper version at the employers discretion.

Government Mandated Benefits

- Worker's Compensation: All employees are covered by Worker's Compensation Insurance in accordance with Minnesota Statutes and Amendments. Employees must report all injuries to their immediate supervisor as soon as possible. A first report of injury and

incident report needs to be completed and submitted to the CFO within 24 hours, or by the next business day.

- Unemployment Insurance: All employees are covered by Unemployment Insurance in accordance with Minnesota Statutes and Amendments.
- FICA: NCS participates in the Federal Insurance Contributions Act. Section 14.

Paid Time Off/ESST Policy

Employees are accountable and responsible for managing their paid time off (PTO) hours to allow for paid time off for vacation, illness, medical appointments, school conferences and related activities, safety leave, emergencies, FMLA and other situations that require time off and/or would be considered unpaid.

NCS's Paid Time Off program combines vacation and sick time and satisfies the requirements of the Minnesota "Earned Sick and Safe Time" (ESST) leave law effective January 1, 2024.

Employees accrue PTO based on the hours that they work during a calendar year. ESST eligible employees accrue PTO immediately upon beginning employment, regardless of full or part time or exempt status. All employees are entitled to PTO if they have worked 80 hours in Minnesota for NCS, and for every 30 hours worked employees shall accrue 1 hour of ESST with an employee able to accumulate up to a maximum number of hours as laid out below for full-time and part-time employees. The balance of an employee's PTO bank may carryover pursuant to Minnesota's Earned Sick and Safe Time Leave law, with a maximum of 80 hours available in any employee's PTO bank at any time.

The employee accrues PTO throughout the current fiscal year. A full fiscal year is defined as January to December.

Full Time/Exempt Employees Maximum PTO/ESST:

First and second full fiscal years of eligibility	80 Hours
Third and fourth full fiscal years of eligibility	100 Hours
Fifth and sixth full fiscal years of eligibility	125 Hours
Seventh through tenth full fiscal years of eligibility	160 hours
Eleventh through fifteenth full fiscal years of eligibility	190 Hours
Sixteenth through twentieth full fiscal years of eligibility and beyond	220 Hours

Part Time Employees Maximum Annual Accrued PTO/ESST:

First and second full fiscal years of eligibility	48 Hours
Third and fourth full fiscal years of eligibility	50 Hours
Fifth and sixth full fiscal years of eligibility	63 Hours
Seventh through tenth full fiscal years of eligibility	80 Hours
Eleventh through fifteenth full fiscal years of eligibility	95 Hours
Sixteenth through twentieth full fiscal years of eligibility and beyond	110 Hours

Administration & Management PTO allocations are negotiated upon hire. PTO will be accrued within the first 6 months of employment, and the 1st year's remaining balance will be added after 6 months. Balances will then automatically renew after the 1st year of employment.

PTO is provided to employees to have paid time off during the course of the year. Full-time and part-time employees may carry over up to 80 hours of PTO from one fiscal year to the next.

Upon voluntary separation of employment, NCS will pay the employee for any PTO earned but not taken so long as two weeks' notice is given and fulfilled. Upon involuntary termination of employment for cause, NCS will not pay the employee for any unused PTO.

It is the employee's responsibility to make PTO requests as far in advance as possible. If using PTO for vacation, employees must give notice no less than one month prior to the proposed vacation start date. NCS works to accommodate employee PTO requests; however, situations do occur (such as, several staff persons want the same day off, or the day program is closed) when the supervisor may need to deny a PTO request in order to ensure the program has appropriate staff available.

An employee may donate up to 24 hours of PTO (per year) to an employee who has no accrued PTO remaining and who is seriously ill/injured or caring for a family member or significant other who is seriously ill or injured. Before donations can be made, the employee needing sick leave must approve the request and the request must be approved by the Executive Director. The employee's paid time using donated PTO shall not exceed the employee's scheduled hours.

Available and used PTO will be identified on an employee's pay stubs. PTO will be paid at the same hourly rate employees earn from employment. The Company will not retaliate against an employee for using or requesting PTO for reasons established and recognized in Minnesota's Earned Sick and Safe Time statute. Employees have a right to file a complaint or to bring a civil action if ESST is denied or employees are retaliated against for requesting or using ESST. Sick and Safe Leave may be used as it is accrued and in the smallest increments of time tracked by NCS' payroll system for the following circumstances:

- An employee's mental or physical illness, treatment, or preventative care;
- The mental or physical illness, or preventative care of an employee's family member;
- Absence due to domestic abuse, sexual assault or stalking of an employee or their family member;
- Closure of an employee's workplace due to weather or public emergency or closure of their family member's school or care facility due to weather or public emergency; and
- When determined by a health authority or healthcare professional that an employee or their family member is at risk of infecting others with a communicable disease.

Employees are encouraged to keep a balance in their ESST "bank" of 40 hours to cover unexpected emergencies or illnesses.

Holidays

NCS observes the following holidays:

New Year's Day	Labor Day
Easter Sunday	Thanksgiving Day
Memorial Day	Christmas Eve (after 4pm)
Independence Day	Christmas Day

Staff persons who work on an observed holiday will be compensated with a holiday bonus. NCS will pay holiday pay from 12am to 11:59pm on the date of the observed holiday.

- 7 hour-9 hour shift - \$90.00 per shift
- Less than 7 hours & sleep overnight shifts- \$50.00 per shift

Those who do not work that day will not be compensated. Alternative religious holidays may be substituted upon approval by the Program Director and Executive Director.

Leave

Funeral Leave: Upon request and depending on specific circumstances, a supervisor may grant an employee up to three consecutive calendar days of paid leave when a family member or friend dies. This may be increased to five days when the death is of an employee's spouse, significant other, or child. Paid funeral/personal leave is granted only for days the employee is scheduled to work. The amount of leave time granted will vary depending upon specific circumstances and needs of the employee. The employee is responsible for notifying his/her supervisor and making the request as soon as possible so replacement coverage can be arranged. If additional time off is necessary or desired beyond the approved leave the employee may use vacation or sick leave as approved by the Executive Director. Personal leave for other serious circumstances may be approved by the Executive Director.

Jury Duty: When an employee is required to serve on jury duty, NCS will pay the employee full wages and benefits for the number of hours actually spent on jury duty commensurate with the number of NCS hours scheduled each day served, less compensation received as a juror for up to four weeks.

Unpaid Family and Medical Leave: The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a federal law that provides eligible employees of covered employers with unpaid, job-protected leave for

specified family and medical reasons. Eligible employees may take up to 12 workweeks of leave in a 12-month period for one or more of the following reasons:

- The birth of a child or placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care, and to bond with the newborn or newly-placed child within one year of birth or placement;
- To care for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent who has a serious health condition, including incapacity due to pregnancy and for prenatal medical care;
- For a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the essential functions of his or her job, including incapacity due to pregnancy and for prenatal medical care; or
- For any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that a spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a military member on covered active duty or call to covered active duty status.

The hours-of-service requirement will be met if an employee has worked a total of 1,250 hours of service in the 12 months immediately preceding the start of the FMLA leave. An eligible employee may also take up to 26 workweeks of leave during a single 12-month period to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness when the employee is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of the service member. An eligible employee is limited to a combined total of 26 workweeks of leave for any FMLA-qualifying reasons during the single 12-month period. A serious health condition is defined as an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider.

Under certain circumstances, an employee is entitled to take FMLA leave on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis. Employers must permit employees to take intermittent or reduced schedule leave when there is a medical need for such leave for an employee's own serious health condition, to care for a spouse, parent, son, or daughter with a serious health condition, or to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness. An employee is also entitled to use intermittent or reduced schedule leave for qualifying exigencies. An employee is not entitled to take intermittent leave for the birth and care of a newborn child or for the placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care unless the employer agrees to the arrangement. If an employee needs leave intermittently or on a reduced schedule for planned medical treatment for their own serious health condition or for that of a qualifying family member, the employee must make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment so as to not unduly disrupt the employer's operations.

In addition to providing eligible employees an entitlement to leave, the FMLA requires that employers maintain employees' health benefits during leave and restore employees to their same or an equivalent job after leave.

The law sets requirements for notice, by both the employee and the employer, and provides employers with the right to require certification of the need for FMLA leave in certain

circumstances. The law protects employees from interference and retaliation for exercising or attempting to exercise their FMLA rights. During the leave period, when the employee has no earnings, NCS will not charge the employee any premium co-payment. Unless circumstances make it impossible, the employee must submit a written request to his/her supervisor for a Family Medical Leave. When the need for leave is foreseeable, such as for the birth of a child or a planned medical treatment, the employee must give 30 days' notice of the intention to take leave to their supervisor. When the need for leave is not foreseeable the employee must give as much notice as is practical.

1. Upon receiving a request or being made aware of the need for a Family Medical Leave, NCS will complete the Notice of Eligibility and Rights & Responsibilities (WH-381).
2. NCS will request medical certification unless there is enough information to know that an employee's absence is FMLA qualifying (e.g., birth of a child, in a serious accident). The appropriate certification form will be included with the Notice of Eligibility and Rights and Responsibilities. The following certification forms are available:
 - * Certification of Health Care Provider for Employee's Serious Health Condition (Form WH-380E)
 - * Certification of Health Care Provider for Family Member's Serious Health Condition (Form WH-380F)
 - * Certification of Qualifying Exigency for Military Family Leave (Form WH-384)
 - * Certification for Serious Injury or Illness of Covered Service member for Military Family (Form WH-385)
 - * Certification for Serious Injury or Illness of a Veteran for Military Caregiver Leave (Form WH-385V).
 - * Upon receipt of the applicable Certification (if required by NCS), NCS will Approve or Deny the Leave using the Designation Form (WH-382).
 - * For employees who had a serious health condition, NCS will require employees to present a fitness-for-duty certificate (Return to Work Medical Certification) to be restored to employment. When returning from a leave, the employee must give as much notice as possible to his/her supervisor of their intent to return. All forms, letters, and documents shall be maintained in the employee's personnel file.

Personal Leave Without Pay: Personal leave without pay may be granted to an employee for a period not to exceed three months by the employee's Executive Director for the following reasons: illness in the immediate family, personal illness, child care, military leave, continuing education, or for circumstances deemed to be appropriate at the discretion of the employee's Executive Director. Any leave of absence request extending beyond three months must be approved in writing by the Executive Director. Said written approval will state the following: specific dates of the leave, an explanation that the employee will not accrue benefits during the

leave, an explanation that continuation of medical insurance coverage during the leave may be purchased at the employee's expense (this applies to personal leaves of 30 days or more), and a statement that the employee may not be able to return to their exact position at the end of the leave but that NCS would attempt to restore them to an equivalent position with the same/similar benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment. Requests for an unpaid leave of absence should be made as far in advance as possible.

School Conferences and Activities Leave

Any employee who is employed at least one-half time will be granted unpaid leave up to a total of sixteen (16) hours per calendar year to attend school conferences or classroom activities, provided the conferences or activities cannot be scheduled during non-work hours. If the need for the leave is foreseeable, the employee must provide reasonable prior notice and make a reasonable effort to schedule the leave so as not to unduly disrupt the NCS program. An employee may use vacation for any part of this school conference and activity leave.

Voting Leave

NCS will provide a short period of paid leave to any employee who is eligible to vote for the purpose of voting on the morning of the day of a regularly scheduled state primary or general election, an election to fill a vacancy in the office of United States senator or United States representative, or an election to fill a vacancy in the office of state senator or state representative.

Election Judge Leave

NCS will provide paid leave to any employee who is selected as an election judge pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 204B.21. Although the leave is paid, NCS will reduce the wages of any employee serving as an election judge by the amount paid to the employee by the appointing authority during the time the employee was absent from work. In order to qualify for leave, an employee must provide NCS with at least 20 days advance written notice of the need for leave and a certification from the appointing authority stating the hourly compensation to be paid to the employee for his or her service and the hours during which the employee will serve.

Summer/Winter Working Schedules:

Northstar observes Summer working hours from Memorial Day- Labor Day. Hours are identified as flexible schedules working 4-10 hour days Monday-Thursday. This schedule is offered to Administrative and Management staff. Additionally, Professional Service Delivery employees may observe this schedule if it is in the best interest of individuals served, productivity goals are met, and team coverage is coordinated through all team members. Winter working schedules remain 5- 8 hour days Monday-Friday.

Discretionary Employee Benefits

NCS currently provides the benefits outlined in this section. All benefits are subject to the ongoing approval of the Executive Director.

Health/Dental Insurance: NCS offers single medical and dental insurance coverage to all full-time employees for which it covers 60% of the monthly premium. Two different plan options are available – each with different deductibles, coinsurance, coverage, and premium contributions. Specific information about the options and costs will be provided at the time of initial enrollment and during the annual open enrollment period. Family coverage is also available at an additional cost. Each employee who is covered by NCS's Health/Dental insurance will receive a copy of the summary plan description which details the specific coverage. A copy of the summary plan descriptions is available with Human Resources. Employees are advised to check the plan document prior to obtaining services.

Conferences

Opportunities will be given to employees to attend conferences, conventions, workshops, and other meetings at the discretion of the Program Director and Executive Director. Conference fees or other training expenses will be paid by NCS when training is either complementary to NCS purposes, or of special or needed benefit to the employee's position, and has had prior approval from the Program Director.

Employee Assistance Fund:

The Employee Assistance Fund is available to NCS employees who have worked for at least 1 year and are experiencing financial hardship. The work our employees do is vital to our mission. Therefore, a limited amount has been set aside each year to assist our employees in times of hardship. To access this fund, the following parameters must be met:

- * Maximum request amount is \$250.00
- * One request per calendar year
- * NCS will focus on transportation issues limited to: bus passes or vehicle repairs
- * All payments will be made to a certified garage or other licensed vendor
- * All payments will be made using the NCS credit card

The Employee must make a request using the Employee Assistance Grant Form. The employee will provide contact information, a description of the request and a statement of why it is needed. Included on the form will be the amount requested and the name of the vendor to be paid.

All requests will be reviewed by several Executive Directors within 3 days of submission, and the employee will be notified of the decision. Again, the request cannot exceed \$250.00 and will be paid directly to a certified garage or licensed vendor.

Reimbursements

- Mileage Expenses: Employees required to use their personal vehicle for official business will be reimbursed at the rate of .655 cents per mile for approved travel. Maintenance staff who use personal truck/cargo vans for work will be reimbursed at a rate of 70 cents per mile for approved travel. When available, staff shall use an NCS-owned vehicle.

Additionally, when two or more staff are traveling to the same destination (training), it is expected that car-pooling will be maximized. Claims for mileage (and petty cash) reimbursement should be entered into ADP every two weeks. The supporting documentation must be submitted before reimbursement can be approved. Once approved, the reimbursement will be paid on the next payroll check. Claims submitted after the 15th of the month for the previous month will not be paid. Employees are responsible for paying for traffic violations such as speeding or improper parking whether driving their own vehicle or a NCS vehicle.

Mileage Reimbursements Guidelines: Mileage may be reimbursed in the following situations:

- * Traveling with a client in your vehicle.
- * Traveling to get a client when that client lives 20 or more miles away from the staff. Staff may begin their paid work time as well as mileage at the 20 mile mark.
- * Being directed to run errands, using your personal vehicle during your work hours by your Program Director or other supervisory staff.
- * Attending seminars and training that are out of your home/work area. Examples include the following: If you reside in Cloquet and work for NCS in Cloquet then mileage to Duluth for training would be paid. Likewise, if you live and work on the Range, mileage would be paid to attend Duluth training. If you are a Duluth/Superior/Hermantown resident and are going to a Duluth training mileage will not be reimbursed.

Reimbursement for Program Fees, Meals, and Snacks:

One component of NCS's services is to provide the individuals we serve with opportunities to participate in the community. This includes shopping, concerts, movies, and dining out, to name a few of the most common activities. Typically, our staff need to accompany individuals to provide the support they need to be successful. NCS wants staff to participate with the client in the activity, to provide modeling for the client, and to make the experience comfortable for the staff and client(s). To meet this expectation NCS will reimburse staff for reasonable expenses that reflect good stewardship of taxpayer and NCS funds.

With this in mind, the following reimbursement guidelines are followed:

1. NCS will pay for or reimburse staff's cost of admission to events they are assigned to accompany clients to. This includes movies, concerts, plays, sporting events, etc. NCS does not reimburse for any additional expenses for programs, snacks, or beverages.
2. When a staff person is assigned to accompany a client to a fast-food restaurant or a small cafe/establishment where meals can reasonably be purchased for \$8.00 or less, reimbursement for the staff's meal will be limited to \$8.00 (including tax & tip).

3. When a staff person is assigned to accompany a client to a family style restaurant (Perkins, Country Kitchen, etc.) reimbursement for the staff's meal will be limited to \$12.00 (including tax and tip).
4. Snack: When a staff person is assigned to accompany a client to go out for a snack or coffee (i.e. DQ, Starbucks, etc...), NCS will reimburse up to \$5.00.
5. Program Directors may approve exceptions to the above for special occasions or when the guidelines cannot cover the minimum costs (i.e.: buffets). Staff must get prior approval from their Program Director. NOTE: Staff's expenses should be lower than or equal to the clients.
6. NCS will not reimburse staff for beverages/snacks when just stopping for gas or groceries or when enroute to an activity.
7. When staff attend a full-day training locally where lunch is not provided, NCS will reimburse staff for their lunch up to \$10.00 (including tax and tip).

Staff cannot accept a client paying for a meal or snack for the staff person. Even though there may be times when this might seem very normal, staff cannot accept because of the paid relationship with the individual. An employee can express appreciation of the offer, but cannot accept the offer.

Out-of-Town Travel Expenses: Employees attending an approved out-of-town conference or meeting will be reimbursed for all reasonable expenses incurred at a rate previously agreed upon with the supervisor, based on the following guidelines: breakfast - \$8.00, lunch - \$12.00, dinner - \$14.00, and hotel rate available at the conference site unless cheaper lodging is readily available nearby. Receipts of such expenses must be submitted in order to receive reimbursement. All claims for mileage (and petty cash) reimbursement must be turned in at least monthly (no later than the 15th of the following month). Claims submitted after the 15th of the month for the previous month will not be paid.

Damage to Personal Property: If a NCS client causes damage to a staff person's personal property (such as torn clothing, broken eye-glasses, or is incontinent in their vehicle) NCS will reimburse the employee for the repair or replacement cost (the exception is cell phones and/or electronic devices, see section 27). The employee must complete an incident report and have the reimbursement request approved by his/her supervisor, the Executive Director, and the CFO.

Salary Administration

Salary Schedules: All employees will be paid according to the salary schedule for their respective positions. At the discretion of the Management Team, an employee may receive credit for previous related employment and be paid at a rate higher than the starting amount.

Promotions/Demotions: If an individual is promoted to a position with a higher salary range, pay will be adjusted upward to the starting salary of the new position. If pay already exceeds the

starting salary, the individual will enter the new position at a salary in accordance with guidelines established by the Management Team. Adjustments will be made at the beginning of pay periods. In the event that a person moves from one position level to a lower position level (e.g., Program Director to Assistant Program Director), that person's salary will be re-negotiated to a lower level that reflects the duties and responsibilities of the new position and years of service.

Under the Minnesota Wage Disclosure Protection law, you have the right to tell any person the amount of your own wages. Your employer cannot retaliate against you for disclosing your own wages. If the Wage Disclosure Protection law is violated, you may bring a civil action against your employer and/or file a complaint with the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry.

Employee Injuries

Employees must report all injuries to their immediate supervisor as soon as possible. An Employee Incident Report, NCS Injury Management Program policy and a First Report of Injury form (located here) must be completed and submitted to the Executive Director within 24 hours, or the first business day following the injury.

Safety Committee: NCS has a Safety Committee composed of employees. The Committee meets semi- annually. Its purpose is to assist in the creation and maintenance of a safe working environment for all employees. The Committee is involved with reviewing and making recommendations (as appropriate) for: all incident reports involving employee work-related injuries, reviewing and making recommendations concerning NCS's Safety Policies and Procedures and the training provided.

Performance Reviews

New employees will receive a personal and written performance review of their work from their immediate supervisor (which will include input from co-workers and clients) after probation and on each anniversary date thereafter. The objectives of this review are to provide feedback on an employee's performance, to assist the employee in career development, to answer any questions about the employee's work in general, and to establish a more complete understanding of the job responsibilities. These reviews will serve to assess continued employment and other matters relating to job performance.

A supervisor may elect to complete an employee's evaluation every two years with the approval of their supervisor and when the following conditions are met.

- a. The employee has held the same position for five years.
- b. The employee has consistently maintained above average work performance (as documented in previous written performance evaluations).

Termination of Employment

The end of an employment relationship with NCS will fall within one of the following categories, with the indicated policies applicable to each. Upon termination, each employee shall be given the opportunity for an exit interview.

- **Resignation:** This is a voluntary termination freely made by the employee for any reason. All Direct Support Professionals and Assistant Program Directors are required to give at least 14 days written notice of resignation, all Program Directors and Executive Directors are required to give at least 30 days written notice, and the Executive Director shall give at least 90 days written notice of resignation. Resignation is submitted to the immediate supervisor in writing.
- **Transfers:** Transfers within NCS from one program to another require 30 days written notice.
- **Mutual Agreement:** The termination is made when both the individual and NCS management think that it would be mutually beneficial to do so. Under these circumstances, a departure date is informally agreed upon within a reasonable time period.
- **Dismissal:** An employee may be terminated by written notice from the immediate supervisor, a Program Director, or the Executive Director. NCS and its employees have an employment relationship which is known as “employment at will.” This means that either NCS or an individual employee has the right to terminate the employment relationship at any time for any reason or for no reason at all. NCS will not terminate any employee for any unlawful reason.

Company Property and Financial Obligation

The employee acknowledges the assignment of company property/equipment. The employee agrees to maintain the company equipment/property assigned to them in good condition and promises to report any loss or damage. Loss or damage should be reported to your direct supervisor immediately.

Property may include, but is not limited to Laptops, Vehicles, Cell Phones, & Bank Cards. The employee further agrees to use said property/equipment only for work-related purposes during work hours and ensure NorthStar equipment/property is kept in a secure location when not in use.

Return of Property: In the event of termination of employment or by the request of NorthStar Community Services at any time, the employee will return all company property, upon the last day of work (or as specified by the supervisor). If any property/equipment belonging to Northstar Community Services is not returned by a reasonable time, the employee agrees and understands NCS has authorization to withhold compensation, including but not limited to final pay.

Once NorthStar Community Services' property has been returned, the hold on funds/pay will be lifted and paid in full.

Gross Misconduct

Gross misconduct includes but is not limited to: any abuse, mistreatment, or neglect of a client as defined by the Vulnerable Adults Act, the Maltreatment of Minors Act, and/or NCS policy; sexual contact with a client as defined by Minnesota law, use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs while on duty; falsification of documents; misuse of funds, either of a client or NCS; failure to report for a scheduled shift without notification; other misconduct as it relates to clients, and felonious activities. Gross misconduct will not be tolerated. Any employee who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Grievance Procedure

- **Grievance Definition:** A "grievance" shall mean a claim by an employee which results from a dispute or disagreement between that employee and NCS. Grievances apply only to non-dismissal types of matters.
- **Resolution of Grievance:** NCS and the employee shall attempt to resolve all grievances which may arise during the course of employment within NCS in the following manner:

Informal Discussion: NCS encourages open communication between employees and their supervisors. In the event that an employee believes there is a basis for a grievance, the employee shall first discuss the grievance with the immediate supervisor. If, as a result of the informal discussion with the supervisor, a grievance still exists, the employee may submit the grievance to the Executive Director within 20 days after the informal discussion. The Executive Director's determination of any grievance is final.

Dress Code

In general, due to the casual nature of the work NCS does, casual attire is acceptable and appropriate. NCS staff should always keep in mind that (a) staff need to set a positive example for the people we serve; and (b) staff are representatives of NCS in the community and should present themselves professionally. With these two considerations in mind, the following guidelines are to be followed:

1. Clothes that are worn on time off may not be appropriate to wear to work. Some examples of this would be short shorts or skirts, too tight or revealing leggings, lounge wear (pajama bottoms, sweat pants), tank tops, bare midriffs, low cleavage, T-shirts with profanity or controversial messages, and sloppy, frayed, or stained clothing items. "Distressed" jeans are acceptable as long as the holes are not excessive and/or revealing;
2. Staff are role models. NCS urges the individuals that we serve to dress nicely and staff need to set an example of this;

3. The individuals we serve sometimes develop crushes and emotional attachments. The way staff dress can fuel these feelings. Dressing conservatively reinforces our role as staff who are hired to support them;
4. Keep in mind that you never know what your workday may entail. You may go to work expecting to clean the garage or go to the beach, and unexpectedly be required to go to an appointment, interact with a family member, or attend a meeting. Please dress with these possibilities in mind. NCS would like to avoid being overly prescriptive in addressing style and appropriateness of employee attire. Our first approach is to rely on employee common sense regarding what to wear to work, always keeping in mind that NCS is a work setting. If common sense does not prevail, then each Program Director will address individual issues as needed.
5. Use of scented products: As with the guidelines for employee dress, NCS would like to avoid being overly prescriptive regarding the use of scented products. It should be noted however that many of our employees and the individuals we serve are sensitive to highly scented products. Staff should be aware of the effect that scented products may have on those around them and minimize their use. Employees who have adverse reactions to scented products should discuss it with their supervisor so that accommodations can be considered.

Policy For Supporting Breastfeeding Employees

Breastfeeding employees who choose to continue providing their milk for their infants after returning to work shall receive:

1. Milk Expression Breaks. Breastfeeding employees are allowed to express milk during work hours using their normal breaks and meal times. For time that may be needed beyond the usual break times employees may use personal leave or may make up the time as negotiated with their supervisors.
2. A Place to Express Milk. A private room (not a toilet stall or restroom) shall be available for employees to breastfeed or express milk. The room will be private and sanitary, located near a sink with running water for washing hands and rinsing out breast pump parts, and have an electrical outlet. If employees prefer, they may also express milk in their own private offices, or in other comfortable locations agreed upon in consultation with the employee's supervisor.
3. Milk Storage. Each employee is responsible for proper storage of her milk using a personal storage cooler or a company provided refrigerator. Employees should label all milk expressed with their name and the date collected. Supervisors are responsible for alerting pregnant and breastfeeding employees about NCS's worksite lactation policy and for negotiating practices that will help facilitate each employee's infant feeding goals. Employees who wish to express milk during the work period shall keep supervisors informed of their needs so that appropriate accommodations can be made to satisfy the

needs of both the employee and the company. It is expected that all employees will assist in providing a positive atmosphere of support for breastfeeding employees.

Smoking and Tobacco Use

Due to NCS's concern for the health and rights of people in NCS facilities, and ongoing research of second-hand smoke and tobacco use, NCS has a no smoking/tobacco use policy throughout the agency. Smoking/tobacco use is not allowed in any NCS facility or vehicle. This also applies to smokeless tobacco products such as tobacco pouches, chewing tobacco, e- cigarettes, vaping devices, etc. All NCS functions (staff meetings, in services, staff parties) will be tobacco free. Any smoking/tobacco use by staff persons, clients, or visitors will be done outside, out of sight from clients, a respectful distance (20 feet) from non-smokers, at the rear of the home/building, and at least 20 feet from entry doors. Smoking/tobacco use by a staff person in the presence of clients is prohibited. Designated receptacles must be used for cigarette filters and litter.

When clients are home, smoking/tobacco use shall be limited to one staff person at a time. Staff persons using their own vehicles to transport clients shall not smoke/use tobacco when providing transportation.

Professional Boundaries

Sharing Personal Information. Staff should use caution when sharing information about their personal lives in the work setting. Sharing some personal information about yourself is natural, but you should not share information about personal problems with clients. Sharing too much or very personal information may cause clients to see you as a friend rather than a paid staff person and may result in clients taking on your worries as their own.

Nicknames/Endearments. The way you address others indicates your level of professionalism. Some clients and co-workers may find the use of nicknames or endearments offensive and use of endearments might suggest a more personal interest than you intend. Ask clients how they would like to be addressed and avoid using terms like “sweetie” and “honey”.

Physical Boundaries. Touch is a powerful tool. It can be healing and comforting or it can be confusing, hurtful, or simply unwelcome. Staff should model age appropriate physical boundaries, taking care not to model behavior that clients could pick up on and imitate. Be aware that each person reacts to touch differently, and whenever possible ask the person’s permission before you touch them.

Gifts/Favors. Giving or receiving gifts, or doing special favors can blur the line between a personal relationship and a professional one. Accepting gifts from clients is not permitted. Staff should practice saying “no” graciously to a client who offers a gift. If you have questions in this area, speak to your supervisor.

Clothing. Clothing helps to define the boundaries of your role as a caregiver, and can either support or undermine your role as a professional. See section 24 for additional guidelines on employee attire.

Scheduled Time. Spending unscheduled/unpaid time with a client may indicate that professional boundaries are being blurred. Employees may not volunteer time “off the clock” to work with clients.

Romantic or Sexual Relationships. Clients may develop emotional attachments or “crushes” on staff. Poor physical boundaries or sharing personal information may encourage these attachments. Staff should discourage flirting or suggestive behavior by clients. It is never permissible for a professional caregiver to have a romantic or sexual relationship with a client.

Secrets. Personal secrets compromise role boundaries. Secrets between you and a client are different from confidentiality. Staff should make it clear to clients that you are a mandated reporter and that you may need to report any information shared with you, especially if it is regarding possible abuse or neglect.

Professional Boundaries As They Apply To Internet/Social Networking Sites (Facebook, Instagram, etc.). Due to the potential for disclosure of private or sensitive information, NCS employees may not request or accept clients or family members of clients served by NCS as contacts or “friends” on internet social networking sites. Similarly, supervisors should not be in contact or “friends” with employees whom they supervise. Depending on the level of personal information individuals choose to disclose, employees should also exercise caution when becoming “friends” with coworkers on social networking sites.

Guidelines for Staff Use of Food, Laundry Facilities, Phone, and Personal Supplies

NCS wants the programs it operates to truly be home for the individuals living there. An important part of each staff person's job is to help make the program or facility a comfortable home. To accomplish this, staff are asked to participate as a member of the household while they are working; eating with clients, helping with cooking/cleaning, and participating in community recreational activities. This is quite different from most traditional work environments. To help ensure that the use of resources is appropriate, the following parameters have been established to serve as general guidelines for staff in carrying out their jobs. The values underlying these parameters are: respect for the individuals we serve, fairness to employees, and being accountable in how NCS expends public funds.

Food

Live-in staff may use the food that is generally available to all individuals residing at the home. They may eat with clients or prepare their own meals at times when clients are absent using the food purchased for the home. Live-in staff are responsible for ensuring that their food usage does not interfere with items needed for planned menus. If specialty items are desired above and beyond what is typically purchased for the home, it is the staff person's responsibility to purchase those items out of their personal funds. Live-in staff need to consult with the Program Director to work out details. Other staff who work in programs where staff and residents share meals as part of the program's design may eat meals when it is part of their job responsibilities. It is expected that staff will eat with clients in a family-style manner, eating the same food. The same

parameters also apply to snacks - if residents are having a snack, it is fine for staff to join in and have a snack too. It is not acceptable for staff to use NCS funds to purchase "special" items that are exclusively, or almost exclusively, for staff use (staff meetings or special circumstances excepted). Some examples of this are: pop/snacks/candy purchased that are not regularly available to clients, staff having steak while clients are having hamburgers, yogurt purchased as a diet substitute for staff, etc.

Laundry

Laundry facilities are for use by the program's clients. Live-in staff are the only employees who may use the laundry facilities for their personal use.

Phone

The home's phone is primarily there for clients' personal use and for the ongoing operation of the home. All staff using the phone during work time must be respectful of the amount of time spent on the phone. Personal long distance calls are not to be made. Live-in staff may use the home's phone for personal calls as long as it does not significantly interfere with the home's need for the phone or job performance. If calls are frequent and/or of extended length, the live-in staff will be expected to arrange for their own personal phone line at their expense.

Personal Supplies

Personal supplies (soap, shampoo, toothpaste, etc.) are the responsibility of the staff.

Cellular phones and other electronic devices

For program staff, cellular phones and other electronic devices (tablets, handheld devices, music players, laptop computers, games, etc.) are not to be used during work hours (this includes text messaging), and must be on silent or turned off during work time. No personal mobile devices will be used for non-work activities in the presence of clients.

Program Directors have the option to use personal cellular phones for work purposes during working hours. Program Directors should not use their cellular phone in the presence of clients. If necessary to take a call or respond to a text message when with a client, ask permission and give a short explanation. When using a personal cellular phone for work purposes, Program Directors must follow all NCS policies regarding employee conduct, confidentiality, and information technology use. Under no circumstances are phones to be in use (calling, answering, or texting) while driving.

In residential programs, cell phones cannot be with the employee, rather the phone must be kept on silent and in a designated location at the program or employee's vehicle. Employees may check messages (in the designated area) during a five-minute break every two to three hours depending on what works best for the program. The program phone is available for short personal calls. When leaving the residence, employees may bring their cell phones but the phone can only be used for emergency situations /essential functions.

In non-residential programs, because of the unique character of some NCS programs, it may be advantageous to families and clients for staff to make use of mobile communication. Conditions and etiquette must be discussed with the Program Director. Phones, when in use, must be set on vibrate/silent. If, under unusual circumstances, it is necessary to accept incoming cell phone calls while at work, you should ask for permission, provide a brief explanation and always be courteous and sensitive to our clients' needs. When you interrupt time with someone to answer a phone call, the implied message is "this call is more important than you are." Many of our clients have spent an inordinate amount of their lives feeling unimportant and marginalized. NCS does not want to contribute in any way to those negative feelings; it is our job to bolster a client's self-esteem, not diminish it. If you must take a call, ask permission and give a short explanation. Under no circumstances are pictures or videos of a client or staff to be taken on, or transmitted by an electronic device without written consent. If it is desired or necessary to take photographs or videos of clients it should be done with a program camera and not with a personal cell phone. Exceptions to this practice should be prearranged with the employee's Program Director.

Any exceptions to the above must be approved in writing by the Program Director and the Executive Director. NCS will not be responsible for damage to cell phones or any other electronic devices.

Cellular Devices and Passwords

Upon starting employment with NorthStar Community Services, if one needs to access client information via cellular device to complete their duties, Northstar requires that the cellular device in use must have a passcode to unlock the device, as well as password protection to all accounts used, such as Rtasks, Egnyte; or Procentive, etc. This password is personal to you and kept to only yourself. Passwords may not be electronically saved to your device per NorthStar Community Services technology policy.

Password encryption may be utilized in such ways as passcode (numbers), password (letter/number/symbol combination), or face identification. Northstar also requires all employees to use as little identification as possible when making notes by using initials instead of full names as well as using no identifying wording as it may pertain to an individual.

After each use of an account, Northstar requires that you log out, close/exit out of the tab that you are using your account in to keep all client/business information private per HIPAA and data privacy policies.

If a cellular device or laptop is lost or stolen, individuals will have 24 hours to notify their direct supervisor and technology official of lost/stolen devices.

Employee Guests

Any employee guest visiting NCS programs must have prior approval of the Program Director. It is acceptable for an employee to have guests at a facility for limited periods of time, provided that:

1. Guests are interacting with persons living at the program.
2. Guests' presence does not interfere with the employee's completion of duties.

Guests should be for the benefit of the program and not for staff convenience. The employee is responsible for the behavior of his/her guests at all times.

Overnight stays by guests are not allowed. As a rule, an employee's children should not be at work while the employee is working. Specific exceptions must have the approval of the Program Director and Executive Director. Employees who live-in at a NCS home may have guests in their living area. Overnight guests are permissible on days off, however, overnight guests must first pass the BCA check. Guests must not be disruptive to the program.

Personal Errands and Visits to Staff Homes

Errands

As part of regular job responsibilities, staff are often required to assist clients in completing routine errands in the community. This may include cashing a check at the bank, shopping for weekly groceries, or participating in a recreational activity. There are times when it might be convenient for staff to conduct a personal errand at the same time as assisting the client. For example, if a client is shopping for groceries the staff person may want to get an item or two at the same time – or the staff person may want to deposit their check in the bank while the client is cashing their check. Below are some general parameters to observe:

- * The primary reason for being in the business must be related to the client's needs/wants. The errand must be incidental to the primary purpose. It is not acceptable for staff to shop for their own groceries if the client does not need anything at the store.
- * It must be very limited and relatively quick. It may be all right to pick up an item or two, but not to make significant purchases.

It is important to always remember that, while on duty, staff are being paid to support clients. NCS's services are paid for with taxpayer money so we are accountable to the public and must not violate the trust placed in us.

Visits to Staff Homes

There may be times when it would be desirable and beneficial for an individual to spend time with staff at the staff person's home. Again, it is important that the primary reason for being there is to serve the client's needs and not for the convenience of staff.

If spending time at a staff person's home is going to occur, the Program Director and the client's guardian (as applicable) must grant prior approval for this. The approval shall include a rationale for the visits and a general understanding of what the staff and client will be doing.

Drug/Chemical and Alcohol Policy

It is the intent of NorthStar Community Services to provide a drug-free working environment to promote and protect the wellbeing of employees, clients, family, and visitors. A drug-free workplace prohibits employees from manufacturing, distributing, dispensing, or possession or use of controlled substances except as part of their job.

It is expected that all employees will report to work and perform their job duties without illegal drugs in their system or under the influence of alcohol. Employees shall not sell, buy, manufacture, transfer, dispense, consume, or possess drugs or alcohol while the employee is working or while the employee is on any work premises or using NorthStar vehicles or property. Additionally, employees may not work when under the influence of a prescription or over-the-counter medication which impairs or could impair the employee's ability to provide care or services. NorthStar reserves the right to test employees on a random basis if it is suspected that the employee is using, selling, possessing, transferring, or under the influence while at work or on premises.

Pursuant to Minnesota law, NorthStar does not discriminate against employees who are enrolled in the Minnesota cannabis registry unless the employee used, possessed, or were impaired by medical cannabis during their shift.

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to termination. Employees are responsible to:

- Inform a supervisor or Human Resources immediately if they suspect that a co-worker is under the influence or impaired by drugs or alcohol in the workplace.
- Inform a supervisor or Human Resources immediately if they suspect a co-worker possesses, dispenses, or consumes any illegal drugs, prescriptions that are not the employees, or alcohol.

If NorthStar Community Services learns that an employee is selling, buying, manufacturing, transferring, possessing, dispensing, or consuming illegal or controlled substances while at work or on premises, the proper authorities will be notified.

NorthStar Community Services will not tolerate the solicitation of legal or illegal, prescription or non-prescription medications/drugs on its premises under any circumstances.

Definitions

Drug: any illicit chemical, medically unauthorized prescription or controlled substance as defined in Minnesota Statutes.

Drug and Alcohol test: Laboratory analysis of urine and blood samples (as approved by Chapter 181 of Minnesota Statutes) for the purpose of measuring the presence or absence of drugs, alcohol, or their metabolites in the sample tested.

Personal Property: including but not limited to: vehicles, backpacks, purses, computer bags, tool boxes, clothing/jackets, lunch boxes/bags, or any other container or object brought to and from NorthStar property or worksite.

Firearms Policy

Employees shall not bring firearms into any NCS facilities or have a firearm in their possession (including any conceal and carry weapons). A conceal and carry weapon must be kept locked within a secondary locked area of the vehicle (i.e., trunk, glove box).

Solicitation

Employees and/or their families shall not sell, or otherwise promote for self-gain, products to people served by NCS. If a staff person sells a product or service to NCS, it must have prior approval of the Executive Director. Further, staff may not borrow money from a person served. NCS shall not require any person it serves to purchase items for which NCS is eligible for reimbursement. Employees may not purchase any personal items owned by individuals served by NCS. Employees may purchase items from individuals served if they are selling those items as part of an established business (i.e., Avon, Tupperware, Mary Kay) or if they are selling items on behalf of a charitable organization other than NCS (i.e., ARC, Special Olympics).

Any questions about specific situations should be directed to the employee's Executive Director.

Harassment Policy

NCS is committed to the belief that all people have human value and are entitled to equal dignity and respect. Because of this commitment, NCS is particularly concerned about the possibility of employee harassment. Whether the harassment be sexual, physical, verbal or visual - it is strictly against company policy and will not be tolerated. NCS encourages employees to report any suspected or substantiated cases of harassment to their Program Director or any Executive Director for investigation by NCS. If the immediate supervisor is the harasser, the employee can report to the Executive Director or the President of the Board if the Executive Director is the harasser. Supervisors of NCS shall notify the Executive Director and request an internal investigation in the event they suspect or witness harassment of any of their employees. Their responsibility for this notification applies even if the employee does not report the harassment. The wishes of the employee will be taken into consideration regarding any investigative action.

Procedure. If an NCS employee believes that he/she has been a victim of harassment, or knows of one who has, a verbal report, followed by a detailed written statement from that employee, should be given to either their immediate supervisor or the Executive Director. The report will include specific data including, but not limited to: 1) dates, 2) name(s) of involved persons, witnesses, 3) location of incidents, and 4) nature and type of harassment. The immediate supervisor will involve the Executive Director in the handling of the complaint. A prompt and

complete investigation will be conducted by a member of the management staff in consultation with the Executive Director. Suspension with pay may be necessary in order to ensure an objective and thorough investigation.

Consideration of appropriate action, if the investigation confirms the complaint may range from a written reprimand to termination.

Sexual Harassment Policy

In addition to the Harassment Policy, NCS has a specific policy dealing with sexual harassment.

"Sexual harassment" is defined as unwelcome sexual advance, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical contact, other verbal or physical contact or communication of a sexual nature, or displaying of sexually suggestive photographs or sexually-related personal items when:

1. Submission to that conduct or communication is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment;
2. Submission to, or rejection of, that conduct or communication by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting that individual's employment; or that conduct; or
3. That conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive employment environment. Sexual harassment can occur in any situation whether it be supervisor to employee, employee to employee, or involve client to employee.

Employees who feel they have been sexually harassed can make their concerns known by following the procedure outlined in the Harassment Policy. Additionally, the employee may do the following:

1. If the employee feels comfortable doing so, he or she should directly inform the person engaging in the behavior that it is offensive, against NCS policy, and must stop. This may be done verbally and/or in writing.
2. If the employee does not wish to communicate directly with the person, or if such communication has been unsuccessful, the employee should speak immediately to their immediate supervisor and/or the Executive Director.

Any attempts by any supervisor to discipline or retaliate against an employee for making such a report (this applies to any claim of harassment) should be communicated immediately to the immediate supervisor, Executive Director, or the Personnel Committee of the Board of Directors. The facts surrounding the incident shall be investigated and documented as identified in the Harassment Policy. Every effort will be made to keep the name of the participant confidential and resolve the problem without drawing attention to the employee.

All NCS employees will receive training on this policy as part of their orientation and annually thereafter.

Employee Protection (Whistleblower) Policy

If any employee reasonably believes that some policy, practice, or activity of NCS is in violation of law, a written complaint must be filed by that employee with the CFO, the Executive Director, or the Board President. It is the intent of NCS to adhere to all laws and regulations that apply to the organization and the underlying purpose of this policy is to support the organization's goal of legal compliance. The support of all employees is necessary in achieving compliance with various laws and regulations. NCS will not retaliate against an employee who in good faith, has made a protest or raised a complaint against some practice of NCS, or of another individual or entity with whom NCS 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. An employee is protected from retaliation only if the employee brings the alleged unlawful activity, policy, or practice to the attention of NCS and provides NCS with a reasonable opportunity to investigate and correct the alleged unlawful activity.

Policy and Procedure Pertaining to Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources

Information technology resources include, but are not limited to: personal computers, tablets, cellular phones, servers, applications, software, printers, scanners, networks, electronic mail (e-mail), the Internet, fax machines, voice mail, , and the files (both electronic and hard copy) created with, and/or accessed by, these resources. Occasional and limited personal use is acceptable, particularly in the case of personal emergencies. Employees may not use any company-owned information technology resources in a manner that: interferes with an employee's work performance, compromises the credibility or reputation of NCS, or is intended for personal monetary gain.

All currently existing company policies apply to employee conduct when using information technology resources, especially those policies that deal with sexual harassment, misuse of NCS resources, intellectual property protection, privacy, information and data security, and confidentiality

While NCS's information technology resources offer employees a wealth of potential benefits, these same resources can pose significant risks to our data and systems, especially if end users (i.e., those who use a computer, fax machine, etc.) do not follow appropriate security discipline.

- I. All Information Technology Resources are the Property of NCS
 - A. Information technology resources should be used for valid NCS business.
 - B. NCS reserves the right to monitor and inspect information technology usage. As such, employees should not expect privacy with respect to information stored on NCS information technology resources. NCS has the right and the ability to access all computer files, including e-mail messages and Internet activity, without prior

notification. NCS may scan messages for the presence of computer viruses and/or to maintain system integrity.

- C. Any software and/or files introduced to NCS personal computers and/or servers becomes the property of NCS. The Executive Director and IT Coordinator must approve installation of any software program, in advance.
- D. Use of any NCS information technology resources for illegal activity is grounds for immediate dismissal, and we will fully cooperate with any and all legitimate law enforcement activity.
- E. Employees who voluntarily resign or are terminated, suspended, or laid off do not have rights to data or files stored on their computer, e-mail messages, and they are not allowed access to NCS's information technology resources upon separation of employment. Upon leaving the employ of NCS, any and all access to NCS information technology resources will be terminated.
- F. Willful damage and/or tampering with NCS computer resources, hardware, and/or tampering, alterations, or deletions of software files from any NCS system may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination.

II. Information Access and Passwords

User names, passwords, access codes, and other types of authorization are assigned to individual users and must not be shared with others. Using another person's username, password, or access code to secure access to information technology resources is strictly prohibited. Password information should not be stored on the PC. This includes having programs 'remember' your password and login for you.

III. Electronic Mail (E-mail)

E-mail correspondence and communication should reflect appropriate workplace conduct and enhance employee performance. This includes email sent from personal accounts on a work computer.

- A. E-mail messages on NCS information technology resources will not be used for personal gain, the harassment of others, or for any illegal activity.
- B. Users will avoid sending and receiving e-mail that could be construed as scandalous, defamatory, libelous, sexually explicit, obscene, or in violation of intellectual property rights such as copyrights and trademarks.
- C. All e-mail should be viewed as being written under NCS letterhead. Employees will refrain from discussing topics or conveying opinions that they would not put in written form or share with a wider audience.

- D. If you do not recognize the sender of an e-mail, cannot understand the content/context of the message accompanied with an attachment, or cannot identify an attachment, do not open the e-mail and/or attachment. In such situations, the IT Coordinator should be contacted immediately.

IV. Document Management

All documents written to fulfill the requirements of applicable licensing requirements of NCS programs must be provided to the IT Coordinator and saved as appropriate. Employee personnel information (performance reviews, counseling letters, etc.) and other confidential material must be password protected.

V. Internet

It is important to remember that while using the Internet, employees represent NCS.

- A. NCS has software and systems in place that can monitor and record all Internet usage while at work. NCS will review Internet activity and analyze usage patterns.
- B. Sexually explicit material may not be displayed, archived, stored, distributed, edited, and/or recorded using NCS information technology resources, as this is a violation of NCS's policy on sexual harassment (refer to Harassment Policy and Sexual Harassment Policy).
- C. It is important to remember that anything online (Facebook, Instagram, forums, blogs, any other social network, etc.) is possibly viewable by others outside the organization.

Discussing NCS, or the work you do here, should be treated as if your executive directors, directors, client family members and others can hear you.

Recording Your Time

All Scheduling and time recording is completed through Deputy. Staff is required to frequently check schedules for updates and changes. Please note that the administration can see who made the changes in the schedules. You are responsible for the accuracy in your time recording. Intentional recording of hours not worked will result in immediate termination.

Attendance Policy

In order to ensure proper staffing for all of our programs, we ask that employees adhere to the following rules:

1. Staff must call the office at least 4 hours in advance of the start of his/her shift if the employee will be late or miss work.
2. More than 3 call-ins within a 3-month period may result in the forfeiture of your preferred hours on your regularly scheduled case(s) (if you cancel for

consecutive days; due to flu, accident, etc., this will be considered 1 cancellation). Frequent call-ins will also result in a corrective interview.

3. An absence with no call-in (no call/no show) will result in immediate termination.
4. Unless prior approval is given, the staff on duty is expected to remain on duty with the individual until the end of his/her shift and/or until relief arrives. In the event that relief does not arrive by 15 minutes after the scheduled start of the next shift, the team lead is expected to work with the program director for coverage. Arrangements will be made to relieve the staff on duty. Leaving the individual unattended will result in immediate termination.
5. All staff are expected to arrive at least 10 minutes before the start of their shift for report.

Habitual lateness, with complaints from co-workers, will result in the immediate removal from the active list of staff.

6. Any changes in your scheduled times must be brought to the attention of NCS staffing coordinators.
7. Endangering the patient in any way, will result in immediate termination.
8. Staff who accept a shift or visit on a holiday are expected to fulfill their commitment.

Call-ins on the Holiday and up to 2 days prior to the Holiday are grounds for immediate dismissal from this Agency. If staff cancel, they must provide a doctor's note.

9. Staff who call-in for a shift may be scheduled on a not traditional day to attempt to offset the hours of staff covering.

Any employee who is unable to fill the requirements of their shift is required to do the following:

- NCS operates on block scheduling. You are expected to plan ahead for your required time off. If you look through your block it will allow you a significant time to plan.
- All schedules are posted on the 15th of the month prior. Your PTO requests must be in ADP & DEPUTY by the 10th of the month. Your supervisor will not deny your request without talking to you about it. If you do not see it approved or you are still scheduled please reach out to your supervisor to discuss the request.
- If you must call-in for your shift you MUST call in prior to 4 hours before the start of your shift to allow management to fill the shift.

Required Tasks in the Event of a Call-In

- It is required that you attempt to self-replace your shift: Please call/text/ Deputy message your team. It is ok to place a message on Deputy to your location or others to request assistance.
- In the event you cannot self-fill your shift, you must call your House Lead (Week 1) or Co-Lead (Week 2) at a minimum of 4 hours prior to your shift.
- Once a call-in has been received the Lead or Co-Lead are unable to fill this shift with standard employees you must notify your Program Coordinator or Director:

Primary Contact & Emergency Staffing

Residential : 218-460-6069

Community & Employment : 218-460-6640

Housing : 218-590-4637

Northstar Wellness: 218-591-0596

- If staff have attempted to self-fill, the House Lead/ Co-Lead has attempted to fill, and no fill-in staff is available the primary Coordinator/ Director must be contacted for next step.
- In the event none of the above options listed are an option, the emergency Staffing Administrator will attempt to fill the shift themselves.
- If all above efforts have been exhausted the Emergency Staffing Administrator will make the determination to mandate a staff to work the shift as minimally as possible. They will make an effort to continue to call staff, request the following shifts come in earlier, and release the staff as soon as the staffing pattern is determined safe.
- All staff at any location running with a rotating on-call schedule, will receive an extra \$2/hour for any shift they fill. The house lead will need to notify a Director so the Director is able to notify someone for payroll.
- All of the above steps must be documented and presented to administration and the employee who is required to be mandated to prove all efforts had been exhausted prior to a mandate.

- More than 3 call-ins within 1-month period may result in the forfeiture of your preferred hours on your regular block schedule. If you cancel for three or more consecutive days; due to flu, accident, ect., this will be considered one cancellation. If an employee misses three or more consecutive days, a return-to-work clearance may be required. Frequent call-ins will result in a corrective action up to and including termination.
- If an employee does not show up to a scheduled shift within three hours from the start of the shift and is not heard from, this will be viewed as a "no call/no show" and viewed as a voluntary resignation.
- Calling-in for a shift to avoid a mandating will be an immediate written warning.
- Unless prior approval is given, the staff on duty is expected to remain on duty with the individual until the end of his/her shift and/or until relief arrives. In the event that relief does not arrive by 15 minutes after the scheduled start of the next shift, the Team Lead is expected to work the program director for coverage. Arrangements will be made to relieve the staff on duty. Leaving the individual unattended will result in immediate termination.
- All staff are expected to arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of their shift for report.
- Habitual lateness, with complaints from co-workers, will result in the immediate removal from the active list of staff.
- Any changes in your schedule times must be brought to the attention of NCS staffing Coordinators.
- Endangering the patient in any way, will result in immediate termination.
- Staff who accept a shift or visit on a holiday are expected to fulfill their commitment.
- Call-ins on the holiday and up to 2 days prior to the holiday are grounds for immediate dismissal from the Agency. If staff cancel, they must provide a doctor's note.
- Staff who call-in for a shift may be scheduled on a not traditional day to attempt to offset the hours of staff covering.
- All staff will be required to use PTO when sick and calling in for a shift.
- If an employee has no PTO accrued but still needs a day off, they will need to switch a shift with another employee within the same week. The employee may also give the shift away to another employee so long as it does not put the other employee into overtime. This process would also be used if the schedule has already been posted and an employee needs an emergency day off.
- Enforcement of the attendance policy, concerns regarding absenteeism and the level of corrective action that will be taken will be at the direction of the executive director.

In the event of a natural disaster, or severe staffing crisis Northstar will follow the following procedure:

- Northstar will not mandate an employee for more than a 24 hour period.
- In the event there is an anticipated emergency staff will call available employees to see if anyone is willing to stay at the home long-term to assist with the staffing crisis (COVID exposure, expected snow storm, flooding}.
- Northstar will manage the staffing patterns to ensure individuals needs are met, and safe, however standard staffing patterns may be affected.
- NorthStar will access all employees through Deputy to assist with filling shifts, and several individuals are cross trained through homes to assist with coverage. In the event all staff is unable to fill the coverage needed the Coordinator and Director are expected to cover all shifts and work with administration to manage the crisis.

PRIVACY/ HIPAA POLICY

Each NCS employee has a responsibility to clients and NCS to uphold client privacy rights and maintain the security and integrity of client protected health information.

ACCORDINGLY, CLIENT PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION WILL BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL AND HELD, USED AND DISCLOSED ONLY IN COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAWS/REGULATIONS AND AS SET FORTH WITHIN NCS NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES (AND AS THE SAME MAY BE AMENDED AT ANY TIME BY NCS AT ITS DISCRETION).

All employees will collect, use, disclose, maintain and store client protected health information in an honest, ethical, secure and confidential manner. All employees must comply in all respects with the requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act ("HIPAA"), the Standards for Privacy and Security of Individually Identifiable Health Information promulgated at 45 CFR Parts 160 and 164, and all other applicable similar federal, state and/or local statutes, laws, ordinances, regulations, rules and interpretive guidance, and any and all amendments to any of the foregoing. All NCS employees will uphold and safeguard the rights of clients to the privacy of client protected health information by ensuring that client protected health information is used and disclosed only under the following conditions:

- Each client or client's authorized personal representative has been provided with a copy of NCS Notice of Privacy Practices and has signed a written confirmation of such receipt. •
- Each client or client's authorized personal representative has read, completed and signed the NCS Admission Service Agreement.

- All NCS employees must take all reasonable precautions to safeguard the confidentiality of client protected health information, including without limitation strict compliance with NCS Notice of Privacy Practices and all federal, state and/or local statutes, laws, ordinances, regulations, rules and interpretive guidance relative to health information, including without limitation HIPAA and all regulations promulgated thereunder, as well as any amendments to any of the foregoing.
- The use and disclosure of client protected health information is permitted without specific authorization only when required for treatment, payment, and healthcare operations as set forth in NCS Notice of Privacy Practices and/or applicable laws/regulations.
- Disclosure of client protected health information to any person or entity for other purposes may be made only on written authorization of the client or, if appropriate, his/her parent or legal guardian. After termination of employment with NCS for any reason or no reason, former employees must continue to protect the privacy of client protected health information. All departing employees must immediately return to their supervisor any and all documents (i.e. timesheets, care plans) and media containing client protected health information. Terminated employees must never disclose, without proper authorization or as required by law, any client protected health information after leaving employment with NCS. Non-compliance with this policy and associated procedures is a serious matter and may result in civil and criminal actions to the employee, in addition to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination of employment.

DATA PRIVACY

It is the policy of NCS to recognize the rights of clients to confidentiality and data privacy. All employees are subject to comply with NCS Data Privacy Policy. Noncompliance with this policy and associated procedures is a serious matter and may result in civil and criminal actions to the employee, in addition to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination of employment. Private data includes all information on persons that has been gathered by NCS or from other sources for NCS purposes as contained in the client data file, including their presence and status in this program. Data is private if it is about the client and is classified as private by state or federal law. Only the following persons are permitted access to private data:

- The client who is the subject of the data or a legal representative.

- Anyone to whom the client gives signed consent to view the data.
- Client's case manager.
- Employees of the welfare system whose work assignments reasonably require access to the data. This includes employees of NCS.
- Anyone the law permits can view the data. Data collected within the welfare system about clients are considered welfare data. Welfare data is private data on clients; including medical and/or health data. Agencies in the welfare system include, but are not limited to: Department of Human Services; local social services agencies, including a client's case manager; county welfare agencies; human services boards; the Office of Ombudsman for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities; and persons and entities under contract with any of the above agencies; this includes NCS and other licensed caregivers jointly providing services to the same client. Once informed consent has been obtained from the client or the legal representative, there is no prohibition against sharing welfare data with other persons or entities within the welfare system for the purposes of planning, developing, coordinating and implementing needed services. Data created prior to the death of a client retains the same legal classification (public, private, confidential) after the client's death that it had before the death.

NCS has an established process in obtaining informed consent or authorization for release of information from other licensed caregivers or primary health care providers. Questions regarding this process should be referred to the Supervisor.

Employees do not automatically have access to private data about NCS clients or about other employees. Employees must have a specific work function need for the information. Private data about persons are available only to those NCS employees whose work assignments reasonably require access to the data; or who are authorized by law to have access to the data. Any written or verbal exchanges about a person's private information by employees with other employees or any other persons will be done in such a way as to preserve confidentiality, protect data privacy, and respect the dignity of the person whose private data is being shared. As a general rule, doubts about the correctness of sharing information should be referred to the Supervisor.

After termination of employment with NCS for any reason or no reason, former employees must continue to protect the privacy of client protected health information. All departing employees must immediately return to the direct supervisor any and all documents (i.e.

timesheets, care plans) and media containing client protected health information Terminated employees must never disclose, without proper authorization or as required by law, any client protected health information after leaving employment with NCS.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Throughout employment, employees will acquire and have access to confidential information belonging to NCS relating to such matters as NCS client lists, contracts and other information (including without limitation personal contact information and health care information); Employees; accounts; trade secrets; procedures; handbooks; pricing information; customer information; accounting and bookkeeping practices; office policies and practices; financial information, data, records and reports; sales data and expense information; business plans; prospect names and lists; existing and potential business opportunities; confidential reports; litigation and other legal matters; intellectual property; and other information specific to NCS and its business. Such information is proprietary, special and unique as well as valuable to NCS. NCS expects employees to maintain the utmost integrity regarding all such confidential information. All such information will be held in the strictest confidence and will be released only by authorized employees to persons who recognize these confidentiality obligations and agree to abide by them in writing. All requests for any information relative to any NCS employee or client must be referred directly to the Executive Director. Only the Executive Director, or the Executive Director's authorized designee, is authorized to release information concerning administrative, technical or financial data relative to the operation of NCS and/or any information (including without limitation personal and health-care related information) regarding NCS employees and clients. If any representative of the media (newspaper, television, radio) requests any information, such request must be directed or referred to the Executive Director.

As a condition of employment with NCS, employees agree that all confidential information described in this Handbook, and/or any other information which employees know or reasonably should be aware constitutes confidential or proprietary information regarding NCS any NCS client or any NCS employee, is the exclusive property of NCS and that employees will not at any time use, divulge or disclose to anyone, or attempt to use, divulge or disclose to anyone, except in the responsible exercise of the job, any such confidential or proprietary information, whether or not such information has been designated specifically as "confidential" or "proprietary."

Any violation of these confidentiality restrictions is grounds for disciplinary action, including immediate termination.

Animal Policy

Part of the NCS programs include animal therapy of which clients and staff are interacting

with animals. NCS expects employees to treat our animals with as much respect and compassion as our clients. Staff are expected to complete all chores each day that are posted in each house.

Food Preparation/ Meals/ Outside food in the homes

All food prepared in NCS homes and in community settings must be prepared with proper sanitary and safety measures. Everyone must practice proper hand washing, surfaces cleaned, and appropriate food storage. Individuals are encouraged to help prepare meals, but please help direct them to safety measures. While individuals are preparing meals they must be monitored, and redirected to make appropriate portion sizes.

Each NCS location has a developed menu each week. This menu is planned within a budget and with nutritional guidelines. Staff are expected to follow these menus to ensure individuals are meeting their basic needs and funds are being utilized appropriately.

Staff are allowed to bring food to work, but it must be consumed in the office, outside or in your vehicle out of clients' views.

Staff are encouraged to eat all snacks and meals with clients. You must also follow the menu, and staff are not allowed to make additional food for personal consumption outside of the menu.

ADA Policy

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAA) requires that employers do not discriminate against applicants and employees with disabilities and, when needed, to provide reasonable accommodations to applicants and employees who are qualified for a job, with or without reasonable accommodations, so that they may perform the essential job duties of the position. NCS will comply with all federal and state laws concerning the employment of persons with disabilities and act in accordance with regulations and guidance issued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Furthermore, it is our company policy not to discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in regard to application procedures, hiring, advancement, discharge, compensation, training or other terms, conditions and privileges of employment. When an applicant or employee with a disability is requesting an accommodation, the applicant or employee must complete the Request for Reasonable Accommodation form and turn it in to their primary supervisor and the Human Resource Manager. NCS will reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with a disability so that they can perform the essential functions of a job unless doing so causes a direct threat to applicants, employees or others in the workplace and the threat cannot be eliminated by reasonable accommodation and/or if the accommodation creates an undue hardship to NCS.

Background Studies:

NCS is licensed by the Department of Human Services which requires background studies to be conducted for employees and contractors providing direct contact services. Volunteers and individuals participating in educational programs will have background studies conducted if they are providing direct contact services and they will not always be within sight or hearing of a staff person. Direct contact is defined as providing face-to-face care, training, supervision, counseling, consultation or medication assistance to the people being served by NCS. NCS will follow regulations set forth by 245D when initiating background studies for all employees at the time of hire or assignment. Employees, volunteers and people participating in educational programs will not be allowed to provide direct contact services until NCS has been notified in writing or by electronic transmission that the individual may provide direct contact services for NCS. Employees, volunteers and people participating in educational programs will not be allowed to provide direct contact services for NCS if they have received a disqualification or a study that requires continuous direct supervision. Continuous direct supervision is defined as an individual being within sight or hearing of the program's supervising employee to the extent the program's supervising employee is capable at all times of intervening to protect the health and safety of the persons served by the program. If NCS receives notification that an employee has been disqualified from providing direct contact services, NCS will immediately remove the employee from their position at NCS. NCS does not allow employees to be employed with a disqualification; thus, if an employee is disqualified, the employee's employment will be terminated upon NCS receiving notification from the Department of Human Services. If NCS receives notification that an employee is required to be under continuous direct supervision, NCS will immediately remove the employee from their position at NCS. NCS does not allow employees to be employed under continuous direct supervision; thus, if an employee is required to be under continuous direct supervision, the employee's employment will be terminated upon NCS receiving notification from the Department of Human Services.

Guardianship/ Conservatorship:

NCS prohibits its employees from entering into guardianship/conservator arrangements with people who are currently supported and/or who have been previously discharged through the termination of services process through NCS. If a new or current NCS employee is or becomes a guardian/conservator of a person supported by NCS the employee will:

- Report or disclose any guardianship/conservatorship arrangements to his/her Supervisor.
- Not be permitted to work with the person with whom they have a legal relationship.
- Not be paid for time during which they carry out guardian/conservator duties.
- Not be permitted to engage in both roles at the same time. NCS shall be held harmless for acts or decisions by the employee acting in the role of guardian/conservator.

Workplace Bullying

NCS defines bullying as repeated behavior (as defined below), either direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against others, in the course of employment. Such behavior/s violate NCS High Performance Objectives, which clearly state that all employees will be treated with dignity and respect. Bullying may be intentional or unintentional. As in sexual harassment, it is the effect of the behavior on the individual that is important. NCS considers the following types of behavior examples of bullying:

- Verbal bullying: Slandering, ridiculing or maligning a person or his or her family; persistent name calling that is hurtful, insulting or humiliating; using a person as the object of jokes; abusive and offensive remarks.
- Physical bullying: Pushing, shoving, kicking, poking, tripping, assault or threat of physical assault, damage to a person's work area or property.
- Gesture bullying: Nonverbal threatening gestures.
- Exclusion: Socially or physically excluding or disregarding a person in work-related activities.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary actions, up to and including termination of employment.

Required documentation and training

Upon hiring employees must complete the following documentation and training:

- Minnesota W4
- Federal W4
- I-9 Form
- Direct Deposit Form
- Copy of current Auto Insurance Policy
- Copy of Driver's License
- Copy of Social Security Card
- General Employment application
- Employee Information form
- DHS Background study
- Medication Administration Training
- CPR
- 245 D orientation training
- 245D annual training
- Vulnerable Adult Online training certification
- NCS Mental Health training
- Review of Employee Manual
- Review of House specific Manual
- Completion of new Employee checklist training

**ADDENDUM TO EMERGENCY RESPONSE, REPORTING AND REVIEW POLICY
ADDENDUM TO INCLUDE MEDICAL PANDEMIC PLAN**

COVID-19 Update

Residential Settings

In the event of a pandemic, or declared public health emergency, the following plan will be followed:

1. Providers will keep informed, and follow all recommendations from the CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/>, Minnesota Dept. of Health MDH coronavirus website, and local authorities regarding social distancing and self-isolation. <https://www.stlouiscountymn.gov/departments-a-z/public-health-human-services/public-health/coronavirus-information>
 - a. Recreational outings will be limited to areas with populations of less than 100, where social distancing can be practiced, and masks must be worn at all times.
 - b. Social visits will be limited in the home. No visitors will be allowed in the home who may be experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, who are required to quarantine, or where there has been a positive COVID-19 test in the home or with the visitor.
 - c. Each location will keep a log of everyone who enters the home with, date, name, contact, and temperature.
 - d. If an employee or a resident has been exposed to an individual that has tested positive for COVID-19, masks must be worn at all times until 14 days have passed from the contact and everyone inside the home is symptom free for 14 days.
 - e. Houses will be stocked with extra sanitizer, masks, and cleaning supplies to maintain disinfected environments.
 - f. During quarantine periods: Staffing will be lowered to crisis staffing numbers to limit exposure, individuals will be asked to stay in their bedrooms as often as possible, no visitors will be allowed in the home, and all appointments that can be rescheduled should be. Administration will complete all shopping needs and drop supplies off at the house.
 - g. Individual temperatures will be taken daily and placed on the attendance log.
 - h. Shopping will be completed as much as possible by online shopping, or curbside pickup.

- i. All staff and residents must follow all state and federal guidelines at all times
2. In the event any resident or staff in the home tests positive for COVID-19, NCS will notify Carlton County Licensing as soon as possible, and at least within 24 hours. If any resident is symptomatic but unable to obtain testing, NCS will do a medical assessment. If NCS believes the resident should be assumed to have COVID-19, County Licensing will be notified as detailed above.
3. If a resident of the home has tested positive, but not hospitalized, that individual will be placed in isolation at home. Additionally, if an individual is showing symptoms of illness but is unable to obtain testing, NCS will treat the case as assumed positive. Care will be provided primarily in the individual's bedroom for the duration of the illness. When the individual must leave his/her bedroom, a face mask and gloves will be used by the individual to prevent the transmission of the disease as much as possible. When a caregiver enters the individual's bedroom, a face mask and gloves will be worn, and contact will be as limited as possible.
4. If a live-in provider contracts the virus, we will revert to emergency plans already in place for provider or home emergencies. This includes seeking alternative housing for the residents in the home and quarantining.
5. Any routine meetings (45-day, semi-annual, annual, etc.) will attempt to be conducted by distance communication (conference call or video meeting, etc.). If unable to accomplish through distance meeting, meetings will be postponed until all parties agree the period of isolation has passed. All parties will keep communication open and work together to make arrangements.

Additional Community Based Setting Recommendations

- If an individual is exposed to a person that has tested positive for COVID-19, is on quarantine, or is experiencing symptoms, all services will be suspended until 14 days have passed
- All community-based providers will document during each shift: date, who they were with, and location.
- All staff and individuals must wear masks at all times, practice social distancing, and practice proper hand washing techniques.
- Individuals receiving services should be asked to ride in the backseat of the vehicles when being transported to limit contact.

Employee Guidance if Exposed to COVID-19 Positive

Industries in critical infrastructure sectors

Upon starting every shift staff temperatures will be taken and recorded. If you have a fever of over 100, you will not be allowed to return to work until you have been fever free for 72 hours.

According to CDC guidelines for implementing safety practices for critical infrastructure workers who may have had immediate exposure to a person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, employees of critical infrastructure sectors who are contacts of cases are not required to quarantine for the 14-day period if they meet all of the following criteria:

1. Their absence would create staffing shortages.
2. The employee is symptom-free.
3. The company strictly follows facility COVID-19-prevention protocols.

Upon returning to work, employers must continue regular screening and other mitigation practices using MDH and CDC and workplace guidelines.

Employees who are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or who have received a positive test will not be allowed to return to work until the following have been met:

- It has been at least 10 days since your symptoms first started, AND
- You are fever-free for 24 hours, without using fever reducing medicine, AND
- Your symptoms of COVID-19 are better.

If there is exposure to a person with positive COVID-19, staffing numbers will be lowered to crisis staffing numbers to limit exposure. Staff who are leads or may have also been exposed will be first offered the crisis shifts. These staff will not be considered high risk, or be allowed to rotate between houses during the quarantine period.

This pandemic plan may be amended in the future, to reflect recommendations from authorities.

Policy developed and authorized __9/1/2020____ (date); updates __11/5/2020____ (date). Email to County Licensor.



NorthStar

Community Services

By signing below, I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to have read and understand the policies and any changes outlined in the NCS Employee Handbook. I understand that the handbook is intended only as a general reference, and not as a full statement of NCS procedure or a legal contract. I understand that this handbook supersedes any and all prior handbooks, manuals, policies, processes and practices of NCS.

I agree to abide by the policies and procedures contained therein. I understand that the policies and benefits contained in this handbook may be added to, deleted, or changed by NCS at any time. I understand that neither this handbook nor any other written or verbal communication by a management representative is in any way intended to create a contract of employment and that this handbook is for informational purposes only. I also understand that NCS abides by employment-at-will, which permits either NCS or the employee to terminate the employment relationship at any time, for any reason, with or without notice.

I understand that I may access the NCS Employee Handbook at any time either on the NCS website or at any program location. I understand that upon request, I may receive an updated copy of the Employee Handbook for my personal use. I understand that each handbook is the property of NCS and that copying any section of the handbook is against NCS policy.

Note: In order to record that you have received a copy and been informed of the changes made to the NCS Employee Handbook, please print your name, sign, and include the date below.

Please Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

DATE: _____

